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Folder List

<u>Box Number</u>	<u>Folder Number</u>	<u>Document Date</u>	<u>No Date</u>	<u>Subject</u>	<u>Document Type</u>	<u>Document Description</u>
17	2		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Foreign Policy	Book	A book entitled, "The Nixon Years" by Victor Leaky. RE: Chapters 9-16 detailing President Nixon's economic reforms, campaign reports, and foreign policy dealings. 176 pgs.

DOCUMENT WITHDRAWAL RECORD [NIXON PROJECT]

DOCUMENT NUMBER	DOCUMENT TYPE	SUBJECT/TITLE OR CORRESPONDENTS	DATE	RESTRICTION
N-1 [DOC#2]	MSS	The Nixon Years by Victor Lasby, chapters 9-16	n.d.	C.

FILE GROUP TITLE

HRH

BOX NUMBER

267

FOLDER TITLE

The Nixon Years by Victor Lasby [Part 2 of 3]

RESTRICTION CODES

- A. Release would violate a Federal statute or Agency Policy.
- B. National security classified information.
- C. Pending or approved claim that release would violate an individual's rights.
- D. Release would constitute a clearly unwarranted invasion of privacy or a libel of a living person.
- E. Release would disclose trade secrets or confidential commercial or financial information.
- F. Release would disclose investigatory information compiled for law enforcement purposes.
- G. Withdrawn and return private and personal material.
- H. Withdrawn and returned non-historical material.

Presidential Materials Review Board

Review on Contested Documents

Collection: H. R. Haldeman
Box Number: 267

Folder: The Nixon Years by Victor Lasky [Part 2 of 3]

<u>Document</u>	<u>Disposition</u>
2	Return Private/Personal

CHAPTER 9

Prior to taking office, President-Elect Nixon called together the members of his incoming Cabinet and their wives, along with top staff people, to listen to briefings on some of the problems they would all face once in power.

One of the problems was the economy. And it was Dr. Paul McCracken, the incoming Chairman of the President's Council of Economic Advisers, who shook everyone up with the facts and figures. In effect, McCracken said the nation was at the edge of an economic abyss and strong measures would be required to save us from disaster.

Then everyone went over to the White House where Lyndon Johnson's people tendered a reception for Richard Nixon's people. It was a happy occasion. The champagne was flowing and everyone was in good spirits. And Peter Flanigan, one of the President-Elect's top aides, recalls talking with Joseph Califano, one of President Johnson's top aides.

"You know, Pete, there's one thing we've really done right," Flanigan quotes Califano as having said. "And that is the economy. You're really going to have trouble trying to better our performance."

"Now, Joe," Flanigan says he told Califano, "this is a friendly party, but I just can't let that one go by. If you've done anything wrong, it's the economy and you people loused that up to a fare-thee-well."

"That isn't so," Califano responded. "If you don't believe me, just ask Dr. McCracken."

It happened that Dr. McCracken was walking by and Flanigan grabbed him. He recounted what Califano had told him about the state of the economy. "Paul," Flanigan asked, "would you care to comment?"

McCracken then launched into a short, but incisive, lecture. He said the incoming Administration faced an enormous, and most difficult, problem precisely because the outgoing Administration had bugged out on the responsibility of doing what was essential to keep the economy on an even keel.

According to Flanigan, that terminated the conversation.

Not everyone in the Johnson Administration had been sanguine about the economic challenge bequeathed to Richard Nixon. In fact, Lyndon Johnson himself, in his final economic report to the Congress, made this pertinent observation: "The immediate task in 1969 is to make a decisive step toward price stability. This will be only the beginning of the journey. We cannot hope to reach in a single year the goal that has eluded every industrial country for generations -- that of combining high employment with stable prices."

President Johnson then called for a strategy aimed at slowly reducing both inflation and the excessive boom in business. The principal ingredients were a small budget surplus, he asserted, as well as a Federal Reserve Board policy of permitting the supply of money and credit to expand less than it had in the past three years. However, Johnson warned that "an overdose of restraint" could well lead to recession.

The new President also inherited serious global economic problems. In 1968, the nation had suffered a serious setback in

international trade. According to the Treasury, the trade surplus had shrunk "to a miserable \$500 million, down \$3 billion from 1967's respectable but relatively poor showing and down more than \$6 billion from the 1964 level." Largely to blame were inflation, Vietnam and higher imports. The nation's balance of payments did show a \$150 million surplus in 1968, the first such surplus in eleven years, but that was because of foreign investments in the U.S. In all, a very bleak picture.

President Nixon faced up to the problems in the early months of his Administration. ~~He made what he described privately as a most risky decision.~~ After four successive years of inflation, he resolved to slow down the economy by reducing Federal expenditures and by holding back business expansion, moves which unavoidably would increase unemployment. For a Republican, supposedly beholden to business interests, this took courage. For some businesses undoubtedly benefited from continuing price and wage inflation.

The President's decision, basically, was between rigid wage and price controls and the more subtle restraints of balanced budgets, high taxes and high interest rates.

The President felt he had no choice. ~~He knew he was gambling with hard times.~~ But he hoped to get the economy moving again, once he arrested an inflation which he publicly described as a "form of economic aggression against the very young and the very old, the poor and the thrifty. It is these Americans who are largely defenseless against the kind of price increases for food, clothing, medicine, housing, and education that have swept over the nation in the last few years."

The President made his economic decisions on the basis of considerable discussions with his advisers in the Cabinet Committee on Economic Policy. The second meeting of Cabcomcepol took place February 13, 1969 in the Cabinet Room. Present were Secretaries Shultz, Stans and Hardin; Drs. McCracken, Houthakker and Stein of the Council of Economic Advisers; Budget Director Mayo, Arthur Burns and speechwriter Bill Safire.

The first thing Safire noticed was that a portrait of Dwight D. Eisenhower had replaced that of Thomas Jefferson which was moved to another part of the room and that a portrait of Woodrow Wilson had been substituted for Daniel Webster.

The President noticed something else. He noticed that Secretary Kennedy was missing (he was away on business). So he requested that Under Secretary of the Treasury Charis Walker be called into the session. Walker, who was in his office in the Treasury Building down the street from the White House, rushed over.

First item on the agenda was the formation of a subcommittee to study what might happen to the economy after the Vietnam war was over. "Everybody wants to be in on the cutting up of the pie," the President said, adding that while he would not want to say it publicly, "this war will not cut off suddenly. But we should get a military estimate of the falling-off of expenditures. The Defense people have other places they want to put the money, not just AEM."

Budget Director Mayo pointed out that the military was only one of the claimants desiring a slice of the "peace dividend."

"Unless we watch out," he went on, "a few big ideas of [the military] could wipe out the urban claim completely." And Secretary Stans ventured to say that after a war "the plateau of military spending is always higher." Arthur Burns, drawing on his pipe, observed that the reason was partially caused by veterans' expenditures and war debt expenses.

Herb Stein, whom the President named to head the post-Vietnam subcommittee, said he would have a report prepared in about six months. Burns asked that the work be done in three months.

"Cover all bases, Herb," the President told Stein, who replied sadly: "I think I am the only one who has done this in three wars." This was a reference to the fact that Stein had done postwar planning during World War II and the Korean conflict.*

* Among other things, Stein concluded in his post-Vietnam report -- to the dismay of some other economists and politicians -- that most of the Government's money savings from the winding down of the war had already been gobbled up by spending in other Federal programs.

Dr. McCracken then reviewed a statement on economic policy which he intended to make before the Joint Economic Committee of the Congress. The CEA Chairman was troubled about a question he was certain would come up, one dealing with unemployment. He observed: "We can hardly say that we can cool down the economy without any adverse effects."

McCracken proceeded at length to summarize his forthcoming testimony before the Congressional Committee. The President, his fist wrapped around a pencil, leaned it against his chin, and then rested one finger along his cheek. Occasionally chewing the end of his pencil he responded to McCracken's briefing with nods, shakes of the head and little smiles.

Dr. Burns, who had recommended McCracken to the President, said when the CEA Chairman was finished, "I think you have to make the point, Paul, that fighting inflation is part of the anti-poverty program." The point was that poor people were hit the hardest by rising prices. "My neighbors in Vermont just don't know what to do."

McCracken, continuing, made the point that inflation favors the sophisticated investor. The President agreed, saying, "Hell, it doesn't worry the bankers -- they make it both ways."

"When you start talking about inflation in the abstract," the President went on, "it is hard to make people understand. But when unemployment goes up one-half of one percent, that's dynamite."

During a discussion on foreign trade problems, Secretary Hardin noted that shipping farm produce on American ship bottoms made our produce awfully expensive.

"We haven't had a maritime policy in twenty years," said Maurice Stans, adding that he was getting a new "maritime man."

The President said he hoped the new man would not be a captive of the past. And Secretary of Labor ^{Shultz} added, "We will be tested severely by the middle of the year, because maritime

policy all depends on subsidies. The unsubsidized lines are much more efficient."

The President turned to Stans and said, "Maury, before you come to the moment of truth on maritime, get together with Shultz and Hardin."

Stans, saying he would, continued, "The subsidized ship owners know that they can pass along their wage increases to the Government. So they don't fight union demands too much."

The President, shaking his head, asked Shultz if that was indeed the case and the Secretary of Labor nodded yes.

Turning to another subject, McCracken said the new Administration must seek to tie monetary and fiscal policy together.

The President: "You mean the previous Administration didn't?"

Dr. Burns: "They never even talked to each other about money supply."

McCracken said that until 1966 the Federal Reserve System was too expansive, being under the domination of the President. Then, the central bank was on its own. Overreacting, it caused the credit crunch.

On this subject, the President said: "We had better influence the Fed, not dictate to them. But we have a very touchy situation coming up. If some of the predictions come true, then we'll be in a hell of a shape. Some influence ought to be exercised."

Dr. Burns observed that President Eisenhower always liked to talk about the independence of the Federal Reserve and "they began

to believe it. Let's not make that mistake and talk about the Fed's independence again."

Earlier the President had mentioned "fine tuning" of the economy. Which led McCracken to warn that "fine tuning," while a good term had fallen on evil days.

"I get the point," said the President. "No more 'fine tuning.'"

Returning to Dr. McCracken's forthcoming testimony, the President coached him as follows: "Don't get tied down to any number on unemployment. We cannot even accept the inevitability of unemployment in cooling down inflation. Now, sophisticates will say, 'Who are they kidding?' But we will be in real trouble if we begin making predictions along those lines." The President said he wanted to avoid a situation where the Administration would be "heroes" on inflation and "villains" on unemployment.

Dr. Burns proposed that the Administration begin to emphasize more strongly the economic problems it had inherited. And the President agreed: "We should point out that we do have serious problems now -- inflation, the balance of payments and the rest. Otherwise, if things go wrong, they will say we fouled it up."

The President went on to point out that many columnists were saying that the Administration was facing an international monetary crisis: "Is there something short of a summit meeting that I can do to show my concern in that area?"

McCracken replied: "The Europeans always talk about 'new initiatives' in this area but never say what." He suggested that

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discreet inquiries be directed to the leaders of four or five countries to determine what kind of "orderly process" would be required to bring about a new international monetary system.

But the President said that would not be enough and Dr. Burns said that he would have formulated a proposed foreign economic policy within a month.

On March 7, 1969, following his trip to Europe, the President convened another meeting of Cabcomcopol. This time the Vice President was also present along with Secretary Romney and Dr. Moynihan.

Opening the session with an account of economic matters covered during his trip, the President said he had found "a curious British reaction worth reflecting on." He had expected considerable talk about getting our house in order, including inflation and that sort of thing. And he explained how he hoped to do it.

"The British replied, 'We think this is fine -- but don't go too far. If the American economy slips, it would have a devastating effect on all of us.' This was repeated in varying degrees by every sophisticated observer I talked to. They are keenly aware of the impact of depressing our economy too much; the American economy has enormous stroke. When you consider that our economy grows each year by the size of Italy's economy, you get some sort of idea of its size."

The President said he "pointed out the great pressures we are under here for quotas on imports, and I told them this was not

the time for new breakthroughs in trade procedures; that a new Kennedy round was not in the cards; that it was time to digest what we already have on the plate."

The President also told the Europeans "that we cannot continue to have hanging over our heads a monetary crisis every year or so." He also said that an international monetary crisis at this time would be wrong. "And they all agreed, particularly General de Gaulle." However, the European powers would send over financial representatives for separate talks with Treasury officials. "In terms of monetary policy we can't just muddle through," the President emphasized. "This will require some hard thinking and we have to exercise some leadership."

The President said that he had made arrangements for Commerce Secretary Stans to fly to Europe to discuss trade. "Maury, be sure to include the Dutch. They're about our best friends in NATO. Take along Samuels of the State Department.* As a matter of fact,

* Nathaniel Samuels, Deputy Under Secretary for Economic Affairs.

it would be a nice touch for you to go over to State to get a political briefing before going."

Then the President advised Secretary Hardin that while in Europe he had made a commitment "for you to go to Europe about a month after Maury gets back." And the reason was "that agriculture goes to the heart of European problems."

"And they're going the wrong way," Hardin said.

"You mean more supports?" the President asked.

"Yes."

The President said it was "very important" for his Cabinet officers traveling abroad not to talk economics without a political briefing. For example, "let's not get involved in the fight between Britain and France on the issue of the Common Market. While I think Britain ought to obtain entry, it's not going to happen soon -- so let's stay out of it."

A memorandum on the subject of agricultural trade with Europe then was discussed. Pointing out that American agriculture was comparatively efficient, Hardin said, "We should move to free up trade because it will help our balance of payments."

The President agreed, saying: "State invariably looks at this from the point of view of the other country. It is your job, and Stans', to look at it from our point of view. State traditionally leans the other way. From a foreign policy point of view, of course, I wish I didn't have to worry about soy beans. But I do. You in Agriculture and Commerce have to present your views along with State. The answer will lie somewhere in the middle."

Dr. Burns suggested that Stans have a position paper prepared on the advantages to Europe of freer agricultural trade. The President said that made sense, adding: "You're never going to get anything out of Europeans by hitting them over the head."

At a Cabinet meeting on March 20, 1969, the President pointed out that some of his economic advisers had become considerably more pessimistic about controlling inflation.

Asked to present his view, Secretary Kennedy said there were "unmistakable signs" that too many people in business had come to the conclusion that the Nixon Administration was merely winking at inflation. And this had fueled a further inflation psychology on the part of business. Expecting the economy to remain overheated, corporations were building higher costs and higher prices into their plans. The Administration, therefore, by its actions, must leave no doubt that it was indeed thoroughly serious about halting inflation.

If the Administration did not act now, said the Treasury Secretary, there could be serious trouble in the necessity for far stronger medicine later. And the result could well be a recession.

Yes, the President said wryly, that time could be about September or October of 1970, just before the next Congressional elections. The President recalled that the 1958 recession had done serious damage to the Republican party in that year's election. That's the political context, the President said. But there were good economic reasons for acting now.

Kennedy said the economic facts of life called for: (1) an immediate move to extend the surtax, and (2) firm action to reduce expenditures. In reducing expenditures, said Kennedy, the approach should not be to cancel programs but to defer them.

What we should have, said the President, are programs that are ready to go at the right time. He said there should be a set of priorities as to what should be done when the economic picture clears up. In 1958, during the Eisenhower Administration, "we weren't ready" when the time came for Government expenditures to fuel the economy. "Now we must have contingency plans."

Budget Director Mayo said that he would recommend cuts amounting to several billion dollars out of the budget for fiscal year 1970. Those cuts, he said, should involve postponement rather than cancellation of programs.

"Don't have a heart attack, John," he told Transportation Secretary Volpe. "We are not going to stop all highway construction."

"No," said the President, "just half of it."

Perhaps showing a budget director's bias, Mayo said that economic policy may be more important than military policy so far as the long-term security of the American way was concerned. "There is nothing our adversaries would rather see," he said, "than the collapse of our economic system."

At this point, the President excused himself from the meeting for a few minutes, saying as he left, "I have to step out here and make an award, but I'll be right back. Don't worry, it doesn't cost any money. Not even one flashbulb this time."

When the President returned, Commerce Secretary Stans said, "My heart bleeds for Bob Mayo because I've been through the process in that job." Stans had been Deputy Budget Director under Eisenhower.

"Does your heart bleed for the Cabinet members he is taking blood out of?" asked the President.

"Yes," replied Stans, "because I'm one of them."

On this note, the Cabinet began to discuss the painful details of how to cut the budget.

That very afternoon, the President himself conducted a probe of the budgetary needs of the Justice Department. Present in the Oval Office were Attorney General Mitchell, John Ehrlichman and Budget Director Mayo. The President sat at his desk with the others in chairs around him.

The Attorney General immediately made it clear that if the fight against organized crime were to be conducted properly more money was needed. For example, there were only seven anti-crime strike task forces in as many cities, leaving many big cities without coverage. And the processing of over seven hundred Mafia cases was delayed for a lack of U.S. Attorneys. The Mafia was now a \$50 billion-a-year "business," and the Justice Department did not have the necessary personnel to cope with it. Though Italians were the hard core of the Mafia, it was not exclusively Italian since others operate under its license. Gambling was its biggest take.*

* The following year, under pressure from Italian-American civil rights groups, the Justice Department ceased referring to the Mafia as the Mafia.

The President asked whether the underworld was also known as "the syndicate." Mitchell said it was, adding that police protection permitted it to thrive. And he was hoping for Federal legislation designed to reach and punish "paid-off" police. Organized crime, he added, weakens the nation's fiber and must be

attacked by the full resources of Government. The Attorney General said that even some New York judges were known to have been on the take.

"Can we make progress on this?" asked the President.

"I believe we can," the Attorney General replied.

"We need more attorneys, stronger leadership, some standards and guts to wage this fight," the President said. And he wanted the wiretap and electronic surveillance used more often against the syndicate bigwigs who, he believed, were now enjoying a privileged sanctuary. He recalled something that New York County District Attorney Frank Hogan had once said about the necessity of wiretapping with proper safeguards.*

* The President during the campaign had quoted Hogan as saying that wiretapping was "the single most valuable weapon in law enforcement's fight against organized crime. Without it, my own office could not have convicted Charles 'Lucky' Luciano, Jimmy Hines, Louis 'Lepke' Buchalter, Jacob 'Gurrah' Shapiro, Joseph 'Socks' Lanza, George Scalise, Frank Erickson, John 'Dio' Dioguardi, and Frank Carlo."

Elsewhere the President wanted to save money. He felt that some departments were vastly overstaffed and ought to begin slashing personnel. HEW, particularly, was "swarming with people," he told a Republican leadership meeting. "If you come across some area that can be cut," he told the Congressmen, "let us know and

we'll cut it. There are no sacred cows around here -- including the military." Likewise, State, AID and USIA could stand trimming with probably a greater boost to efficiency. The President said that Marshall Green, as Ambassador to Indonesia, had done an excellent job with just fifteen people in the Embassy -- one-fourth the normal complement for a nation of that size.

The President, himself, was trying to cut down White House expenses. He pointed out that he travelled abroad with the smallest staff possible, thus effecting a savings of at least \$100,000 for the European trip alone. And there were many small ways to save money. For example, he had gotten rid of an army of White House photographers that had been kept around in the previous Administration.

On April 16, 1969, the President discussed tax reform with a group of experts assembled in the Cabinet Room. The session was carried on the President's schedule as a "meeting with Dr. Charles Walker, Under Secretary of the Treasury." Thus, when the President arrived and saw Secretary Kennedy he expressed mild surprise, saying, "Well, I didn't know you were going to be with us today, Dave." The Secretary replied that he was anxious to listen to the recommendations developed by his staff during the period of his just-completed eight-day visit to Australia.

After outlining the Administration's tax reform proposals, Walker moved quickly to what he described as the more controversial investment credit issue. This was a tough one, indeed. The credit,

adopted under Kennedy in 1962 to stimulate the economy, provided tax relief for ^{corporations} industrialists investing in new plant and equipment. No longer was it popular with the Democrats who now contended that the investment credit had proved to be a windfall for business.

The President, commenting on the tax package as a whole, said: "Well, we help the poor and hurt the rich but do little for the middle-income man. He's right where our political heart is --- where our friends are. Of course, eliminating investment credit would allow us to scale down the surcharge and that would benefit the middle-income family." *

* The Administration was under great pressure to repeal the seven percent surtax passed by Congress in 1968 to help finance the Vietnam war. Mr. Nixon, however, during the campaign, had called for ending the surtax once the war was over.

However, the President said he had not made up his mind about the credit and asked for discussion from the assembled experts.

Those who favored retention of the credit were Budget Director Mayo and Arthur Burns.

Mayo: I think we'll need the investment. We should fight to keep it even though the Democrats are going to use it to apply pressure for reduction of the surcharge.

The President: There's no doubt about it. We're going to have a rough time on the surcharge issue. Even Republicans are talking about keeping it only until January. We can't stake Presidential prestige on an impossible fight.

Mayo: ...the investment credit has stimulated and encouraged long-run business investment. Its continuation will supply the economy with some very vital long-range needs.

The President: I'm interested in helping those in the middle-income bracket. The business world is doing all right now and I just feel there has to be a redirection of priorities from business investment to social needs.

Arthur Burns: Well now, you've got to remember you have a vulnerable stock market. It's declining gradually now and the only thing that's keeping it from collapsing altogether is the anticipation of increased inflation. It's a psychological matter.

The President: I don't know about that, Arthur. I think you might be approaching it more cautiously than is necessary.

Burns: Well, that's just my feeling. I think that repeal of the investment credit might well lead us into a recession.

Mayo: I have to go along with that.

The President: What are your thoughts on this, Herb?

Herb Stein: Well, Mr. President, as you know I'm in favor of eliminating it. I do not believe we should continue to subsidize private business investment. Elimination of the tax credit will assist the Government in serving national objectives that to my way of thinking are of much higher priority...

Addressing Walker and Burns, the President asked them to "prepare two messages" for transmittal to Congress "and we'll be ready to go either way."

"I'll tell you what I think," the President went on. "I think the Congress will end up kicking the business community and the budget, and we'll still have inflation. I know the Congress. That's one thing I do know. You work out a plan both ways but the more I think about eliminating the investment credit, the more I like it."

Five days later, the President sent a message to Congress on tax reform. In it, he recommended that Congress immediately repeal the investment tax credit. He said "this subsidy to business investment no longer has priority over other pressing national needs."

Another problem, one of probably more far-ranging significance, which the President decided to confront head-on was the population explosion. Largely because of religious considerations, this was an extremely sensitive political issue. Previous U.S. efforts had been focussed towards population control in the underdeveloped nations. Even his critics conceded it took guts for the President to turn the spotlight on the problem in the United States. As Pat Moynihan told Mr. Nixon, he was the first President to come out against motherhood.

It was Moynihan who had been assigned by the President in February to make recommendations in the area leading to a possible Message to the Congress on the subject. And at an April 21 meeting of the Urban Affairs Council, Moynihan reported that "this is an area of massive consequences. We're facing a growth of one hundred million in our population in the next thirty years."

"I thought you said it was tapering off," said the President.

"This is a tapering off," replied Moynihan. "One percent a year will do this to you."

"Malthus may have been right after all," the President said.

"If you wait long enough," Arthur Burns interjected, "every one of us will be right, Mr. President."

~~This was one of the morning's lighter moments.~~

The rest of the session was devoted to the problems of how to feed the hungry, which the President described as "a rough one" in view of budgetary considerations, but one which had to be confronted; crime in the streets; and Vietnam-era veterans.

Moynihan noted that the Council was looking into statistics which indicated that Vietnam vets were not using GI Bill educational benefits at anything like the rate of those of World War II and Korea; he also said we were just beginning to get some figures on the effect of armed forces service on earnings. The first major study indicated that ten years after Korea, veterans of that conflict were earning one thousand dollars a year less than non-veterans. "This suggests that service in the armed forces may amount to a life-time fine," he said.

The President then said he had been disturbed by an item in the Daily News Summary three days earlier, suggesting that little had been happening on the Administration's plans for the District of Columbia.

Attorney General Mitchell replied there had been progress on the crime front. Crime was down, which he traced to three factors:

more police on the streets; an improvement in the attitude and procedures of the courts; and the "general psychology of the situation" was better.

Arthur Burns, always somewhat of a maverick, maintained there was less crime on the streets simply because people were staying off the streets. The Attorney General said this wasn't so. In fact, Mayor Walter Washington had informed him there were more people on the streets now than there were six months ago.

This led to a discussion, initiated by the President, of the situation at the D.C. Stadium. The President had been informed that ball-park attendance at night had been cut in half because of the high rate of crime in the unlighted parking lots. Calling it "one of the most beautiful ball parks in the nation," he suggested lighting the parking areas. (The facilities are under control of the Department of Interior.)

The Attorney General here noted a paradox: just at a time we needed more police, the Interior Department police were being cut back because of budgetary limitations. The President assigned Budget Director Mayo, Attorney General Mitchell, Interior Secretary Hickel and Bud Wilkinson to look into the question.

Turning to the central city redevelopment plans that the President had announced some months earlier for the District of Columbia, the President asked Secretary Romney for a progress report. Romney said that we were ready to move on a small park; but that problems had been encountered as a result of rivalry among citizens groups over the question of who speaks for the people in the black

community. The President urged more intensified action. "We set out to make Washington the example, and we've got to do it."

Pat Moynihan shook his head. "Mr. President," he said, "the Federal Government has built more damn obstacles into the process of urban change than you can imagine."

The President was personally intervening to remove road-blocks in other areas. At a May 16 meeting of Cabcomscopol, ~~he disclosed he had begun to meet separately with the regulatory agencies -- "something never before done by a President."~~ He had met with the SEC, for example, "not on specific cases," but to make them feel "part of the whole show." He went on: "Do you know that two of the SEC members had never been in the President's office before?" Noting that "the FCC, the FPC, all of them have an enormous impact on the economy," he said. "We cannot control them, but we should try to influence them."

Rocco Siciliano of Commerce interjected: "They refer to themselves as 'the headless branch of Government.'"

Addressing Secretary Kennedy, the President said: "Dave, have them over for lunch. Just to talk. I've learned a lot from them, and it's good therapy for them. Frankly, some of those fellows are a little lonesome. And George" -- the President turned to Labor Secretary Shultz -- "we ought to sit down with the NLRB."

The President turned to Assistant Attorney General Richard McLaren for a report on anti-trust activities. A task force he headed, McLaren reported, favored repeal of the Fair Trade Acts.

Since retail prices in fair trade areas tend to be fifteen percent higher, repeal would be a step in the war against inflation.

The President didn't appear to buy this, observing that fair trade laws help keep some businessmen going who otherwise would go under. "This is a tremendously potent political problem which doesn't mean we don't tackle it," the President went on. "Does it mean that Mom and Pop stores are on the way out -- and supermarkets are all we'll have? This is an old-fashioned attitude, Dick, I know -- but I would rather deal with a small entrepreneur than a manager of a big store." *

* This attitude undoubtedly reflected the President's background. As a youngster he worked long hours in his father's general store in Whittier, California, performing such chores as delivering orders to customers for miles around.

The President then raised the question of whether McLaren's anti-trust division had not become over-zealous in its activities. "I realize there is the law, and you make Brownie points by convictions, but think about it."

McLaren was taken aback. "Actually," he began, "our policy is extremely pro-business---." The President interrupted, "Better not say that publicly." McLaren, defending his department, went on: "Most businessmen don't want to be dominated by suppliers or competitors. We hit the policies that clog competition. This is good for business."

"Write me a paper on this -- so I can explain this to business people," the President said. "I was trying to play the Devil's Advocate for a moment."

McLaren then offered a second recommendation: to raise the fines for violations of the Sherman Anti-Trust Act. He said that \$50,000 was not much of a penalty. He recommended \$500,000. "Is that enough?" asked the President. "Why not go to a million?" Secretary Shultz added: "Then tie it to the cost of living."

Commerce Under Secretary Siciliano urged restraint: "I know Secretary Stans feels that \$500,000 is too high." Arthur Burns countered: "Tell them to behave themselves and they can escape the fine entirely." Finally, the President said: "For the big ones a million is not enough; for the little ones, \$50,000 is too much."

The problem of conglomerates then was discussed. The President conceded he was in a quandary. At a leadership meeting the Administration had been taken to task for "going too far" in "the war on conglomerates." A few weeks before at Camp David he had discussed the problem with John Mitchell. "If anybody is business-oriented, it's John. Yet he vigorously defended what the anti-trust division was doing. I really wonder what we want here."

At this point, a note was handed to the President. "I have to take a call from Mr. [George] Meany," he said. "Don't say anything important while I'm gone." No one did.

On his return, the President picked up: He had learned "a little bit about mergers" since his law firm had represented companies involved in such actions. "Look at it from a Wall Street

lawyer's viewpoint. I see the immense profits going to those who pull off these conglomerates. We were for conglomerates when it was our client taking over, and we were against them when someone else was taking over our client. Of course, these are not factors that should concern us here." But he most definitely didn't like to leave these problems to the tender mercies of lawyers in Anti-Trust. "Inevitably, every one of these decisions made at the lower level reflects one man's view of what kind of society he wants. I think it needs to be looked at at a higher level. We need to know the philosophy of what we are doing. We ought to have more certainty in the law. I think that lawyers should have the conviction that the law will be applied impartially without wheeling and dealing. The feeling now is that the law is too capricious."

Secretary Kennedy agreed. He said he was concerned "about the power of the staff down the line to make the policy." He had seen it happen.

McLaren, somewhat sharply, responded that it was he who made the decisions.

"Do you go over them with Mitchell?" the President asked.

"He signs all the orders."

"But does he read them?" the President asked, noting he had signed things he hadn't read. Then he eased the pressure with a smile, saying, "Of course, I know he reads them."

Then the President came to the point: "On an interim basis let's approve the report of the task force. But I do see the

need for another study -- and frankly I hate to use that word 'study' -- but one with a broader base."

Dr. Burns felt that ~~the~~ new study "should indicate what the effect of mergers has been on the unit cost of products."

The President shook his head. "I need something deeper than that. Supermarkets may be able to sell Wheaties at a cent less, but I just don't think we want a nation of Supermarkets. On the other hand, some conglomerates have kept little companies alive by private financing -- we want to keep that."

The President added: "Who knows, maybe we can help some independent people to survive." He assigned McCracken, Burns, McLaren and Samuels to organize the new study group. "I would like to know what the facts are before we go 'gung ho' on anything."

CHAPTER 10

A few hours before he addressed the nation on Vietnam on May 14, 1969, the President received a letter of resignation from Associate Justice Abe Fortas of the Supreme Court of the United States. The following day, after briefing the Cabinet on his speech, the President disclosed receipt of the letter.

Everyone in the room knew the background: a series of published revelations about Fortas' extra-curricular activities included one allegation that the Justice had accepted a \$20,000 fee from a family foundation headed by Louis Wolfson, who had been convicted for illegal securities dealings. The fee had been returned, but not until Wolfson had been indicted. Following publication of the fee story in Life magazine, Attorney General Mitchell paid a private visit to Chief Justice Warren, conveying "certain information" about the case. Mitchell, who did not confirm the visit until after it was disclosed in Newsweek, quickly became a target of criticism.

The President told his Cabinet officers that he had played no role in the Fortas matter except to instruct his Attorney General to handle it. He noted that it would have been easy enough to turn the case into a sensational affair involving an embittered impeachment proceeding, but that he felt this could only have hurt the country. He added that he thought the Attorney General had handled the affair with great circumspection.

Thanking the President for his confidence in him, Mitchell pointedly noted that his information about Fortas indicated that the

Justice had not been involved in any criminal activity but that he had been involved in "unauthorized practice of law." Mr. Mitchell said he hoped that now the matter was essentially at an end. He indicated the Justice Department would take no action.

The problem facing the President, of course, was filling the seat left vacant by Fortas. That was to prove to be much tougher than anyone in the Cabinet room realized that day.

The Fortas case had another far-reaching repercussion. As far as the President was concerned, it meant that he could not appoint a friend to take the place of Earl Warren, who was to retire as Chief Justice at the end of the session. Fortas had been a very close friend of the man who appointed him to the Court, Lyndon B. Johnson.

But there was one man whom Mr. Nixon had in mind as a possible replacement for Earl Warren. He was a little known U.S. Court of Appeals judge in Washington who had served as an Assistant Attorney General during the early years of the Eisenhower Administration. His name was Warren E. Burger.

It was back in the summer of 1967, a year before he was nominated for the Presidency, when Richard Nixon first became interested in Burger. The jurist had delivered a commencement address at Ripon College in Wisconsin, in which he deplored long, drawn-out trials and called for major reforms in our judicial system.

Excerpts of the speech were published in U.S. News & World Report for August 7, 1967. Pat Buchanan marked up the magazine, calling the Burger speech to Mr. Nixon's attention. Mr. Nixon thought

it to be one of the "best things" he had ever read on the subject.

One of the Burger statements that impressed Richard Nixon went like this: "But Governments exist chiefly to foster the rights and interests of its citizens -- to protect their homes and property, their persons and their lives. If a government fails in this basic duty, it is not redeemed by providing even the most perfect system for the protection of the rights of defendants in the criminal courts."

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~~A considerable amount of Burger's thinking went into Richard Nixon's campaign oratory the following year. Candidate Nixon sharply criticized the Supreme Court for its rulings widening the Constitutional rights of those accused of criminal offenses and for limiting the power of police, in areas such as the right of arrested persons to counsel, the court admissability of confessions and the power of police to frisk suspects. Various other political figures including many police chiefs had argued that the Warren Court's decisions on such matters had contributed to a national crime wave.~~

About a month after Richard Nixon was in the White House, Judge Burger was invited over to swear in a group of Federal officials, including Arthur Burns as Counsellor to the President. There was nothing unusual about this. Federal Judges are frequently asked to perform such chores. What was unusual about this occasion was that President Nixon not only attended but asked Burger in for a private chat. The President brought up the Ripon speech and asked Burger's

views on the need for reorganizing the Washington court system. Burger, who had been active in Republican politics, knew something was up.

For several months Burger heard nothing. Then, out of the blue, he was invited to attend a White House dinner honoring retiring Chief Justice Warren. When he arrived at the flower-bedecked mansion on the evening of April 22, Burger definitely knew something was up. For, with the exception of the members of the Supreme Court including Fortas, he was the only judge present. Also present were four Nixon friends whose names were high up in published speculation as possible candidates to replace Warren. They were Bill Rogers, John Mitchell, Thomas E. Dewey and Herbert Brownell.

"I turned to my wife," Burger later recalled, "and told her just to be natural if she got the feeling people were looking us over."

It was an interesting evening for other reasons. The President had invited Edmund G. (Pat) Brown, who had beaten him in the 1962 California race, and as the former Governor put it, "We buried the hatchet a long time ago."

But, above all, it was interesting because the President paid a warm tribute to Earl Warren in a let-by-gones-be-by-gones spirit. Ever since 1952 there had been evident hostility between the two men. That year Warren had gone to the national convention in Chicago as California's favorite son delegate. Nixon was firmly committed to Dwight Eisenhower for the nomination and sought to persuade California delegates to abandon the favorite-son situation and help Ike get the nomination. Warren was outraged.

Toasting the Chief Justice after dinner, President Nixon observed, "If I had defeated Pat Brown in 1962, I might still be Governor of California." The President reviewed the Chief Justice's fifty years of public service during the toast, and Warren in his reply said he was retiring "without malice in my heart."

"The toasts made me cry," Abe Fortas said. He and his wife had sat near a window in the East Room, and Fortas, who placed a handkerchief over his wife's bare back, said, "The Republicans may have turned on the lights, but they have turned off the heat. Next time I will bring a fur-lined handkerchief."

Burger left the dinner with the feeling he was being considered for a seat on the Supreme Court, but the thought of Chief Justice never entered his mind.

At a Republican legislative meeting on May 20, the President spoke up briefly with regard to the Supreme Court. He said that in his selection of a Chief Justice and future Justices he would be leaning very heavily on suggestions made by the Attorney General. He, the President, felt it would be advantageous to make the appointments without becoming too personally involved in the selections. He indicated he felt there should be some distance between the President and his appointees to the Court.

Emphasizing that he believed his appointments to the Court would be the most important he would make as President, even more important than the Cabinet, the President urged the legislators, if they had any ~~possible~~ thoughts on possible appointees, to make them to the Attorney General.

Then the President pointed out he could not consider any member of the House or the Senate for the seats vacated by Warren and Fortas. One of those present, Virginia Representative Richard H. Poff, had been talked about as a possible appointee in press speculation. The reason the President could not consider any lawmaker, he said, was because the law barred appointment of any member of Congress to any position for which Congress, during a current term, had increased the salary.

The President had already decided on his new Chief Justice. He had talked with Bill Rogers and Herb Brownell, both of whom had known Burger when they were running the Justice Department. Both were very high on the Minnesotan's qualifications. And a check of Burger's Court of Appeals opinions had met with John Mitchell's approval. In the President's view, Burger fitted in with his concept of what the times called for, i.e., for all of us to "lower" our voices. Burger was a quiet, strong public figure, not easily rattled, not guilt-ridden about America's real or exaggerated social deficiencies.

On Monday, May 19, the President called Mitchell. "Let's go with Burger," he said, adding that he very discreetly should notify J. Edgar Hoover to begin the required FBI investigation. Shortly after noon on Wednesday, Burger was sitting in Mitchell's office. After ten minutes of conversation, the Attorney General telephoned the President to say Judge Burger would be prepared to accept the appointment.

The President decided to make the announcement that very evening. And so, at 7:00 p.m. with television cameras covering the

"historic announcement" live in the East Room, the President introduced Warren E. Burger to the American people, observing that "our history tells us that our Chief Justices have probably had more profound and lasting influence on their times and on the direction of the nation than most Presidents have had."

The next day the President disclosed that four men, who had been seriously considered for the post, had turned it down. They were John Mitchell, Herbert Brownell, Thomas E. Dewey and Associate Justice Potter Stewart. A fifth candidate, Charles S. Rhyne, former President of the American Bar Association and one of Mr. Nixon's classmates at Duke University Law School, was rejected because he and the President agreed that their personal relationship was so close that charges of "cronyism" might be raised.

What sold the President on Burger was the fact that he was a "strict constructionist." And the President happens to believe that the Constitution should be strictly construed. "The kind of judge" he was looking for was a man like Justice Felix Frankfurter. "I am not concerned about whether the man is a liberal or conservative in his economic or social philosophy. My interest is how does he regard his role with regard to the Constitution."

Generally the nomination met with approval. Though conservatives viewed Burger as one of their own, few liberals complained. In fact, Mayor John Lindsay endorsed Burger as "an excellent choice" and recalled him as a good friend with whom he had worked closely in the Justice Department under Eisenhower.

The Senate Judiciary Committee hearings were routine. And the Senate itself took only three hours to discuss the Burger nomina-

tion, finally voting seventy-four to three to approve. Then on June 23, in the presence of the President, Warren E. Burger was sworn in as the fifteenth Chief Justice of the United States in a ceremony that included a tribute from Mr. Nixon to Earl Warren.

But, for all intents and purposes, the "Warren Court" was now the "Burger Court."

On August 18, President Nixon nominated Clement F. Haynsworth Jr. to be an Associate Justice, filling the vacancy left by Abe Fortas' resignation. For weeks the nomination had been common gossip -- so common, in fact, that the President let Ron Ziegler make the announcement at his daily news briefing.

Though there had been some pre-announcement criticism from liberal sources, the President did not expect to have any great difficulty in getting Haynsworth confirmed by the Senate. A Harvard Law School graduate and the distinguished Chief Judge of the Fourth Circuit Court of Appeals, the fifty-six-year-old South Carolinian was the kind of "strict constructionist" the President had promised during the campaign to appoint.

At least Haynsworth was considered "distinguished" until the critics, most of whom had never heard of him before, decided to have a go at him. First of the salvos was fired by Joe Rauh of Americans for Democratic Action, who denounced Haynsworth as a "hard-core segregationist."

Which, of course, was nonsense. An analysis by Fred Graham, Supreme Court reporter for The New York Times, noted that Rauh and

other civil rights leaders "seem to have overstated their case. He has never attempted to delay or thwart desegregation, but he has also never mustered the impatience and righteous indignation over the slow pace of desegregation that has prompted some Federal Judges in the South to tighten the legal screws on Southern officials before the Supreme Court orders this to be done."

The President had decided on Haynsworth after studying a list of over two hundred names that had been submitted to him by the Attorney General. Ironically, one of the things that had impressed Mr. Nixon about the South Carolinian was the fact that he was described as a "moderate" on racial matters. In fact, a reading of Haynsworth's decisions made it difficult to figure whether he was a "conservative" or "liberal." In the final analysis, as the President saw it at the time, Haynsworth would make his own record on the High Court and no one -- not even Haynsworth himself -- could possibly know what that would be.

But Haynsworth would never get the chance. The argument against him moved from the ideological to other grounds. The judge, unfortunately, provided at least the semblance of such grounds by having participated in a handful of decisions in which he had interests, even though those interests were either tiny or highly tenuous.

In doing so, Haynsworth had greatly complicated matters for those Republican Senators who, on conflict-of-interest grounds, had attacked the appointment of Abe Fortas as Chief Justice the previous year.

That the difference between the two cases was tremendous was the point made by Clark R. Mollenhoff, Deputy Counsel to the President. A Pulitzer prize-winning investigative reporter who had been added to the White House staff, Mollenhoff had been assigned by the President to track down the various allegations against Haynsworth.

"Those who contend there is any similarity in the ethical questions raised in connection with Judge Haynsworth and Justice Fortas simply have not done their homework on the facts," Mollenhoff reported to the President. He said the American Bar Association had found last May that Fortas had "acted 'clearly contrary' to the canons of judicial ethics in his dealings with Louis E. Wolfson." And, he went on, "by contrast the Haynsworth nomination has been supported by the A.B.A."

Not all liberals were opposed to Haynsworth. One of the most persuasive witnesses to appear before the Senate Judiciary Committee was John Bolt Culbertson, an attorney from Haynsworth's home town of Greenville, South Carolina, who described himself as a "double-dip Democrat," a long-time member of ADA, an attorney for labor unions and a sympathizer with the NAACP. Even though Culbertson differed philosophically with Haynsworth, he told the Senators that the nominee "is absolutely honest and a man of impeccable integrity ...He will be one of the greatest Justices in the history of the Supreme Court...If I didn't believe that he was fair and honest, a thousand mules couldn't drag me up from South Carolina to say this."

The Washington Post, an unlikely but early Haynsworth booster, noted editorially, as things heated up in the Senate, that some of the opposition "while cloaked in those [ethical] terms, is based on a rather more primitive impulse to humiliate the President."

But that did not concern the President as much as what a Senate rejection would do to Haynsworth. At a Republican leadership meeting on October 14, the President said he cared deeply about "the fate of this man." For, if he were refused appointment, Haynsworth would have to get off the circuit bench and he will have been ruined. Of course, the President said, the liberals would praise him to high heaven if he withdrew the Haynsworth nomination, but he did not intend to do that. He intended to stick by Haynsworth even if there were only one vote left for him in the Senate, and that was Agnew's. The President said he didn't get where he was today by running away from a fight.

The President also pointed out that if Haynsworth were removed for his investments, then we could start right now to impeach at least six Justices for owning stock. Then he said that if Haynsworth were not confirmed no one he would nominate in the future would escape the onslaughts of the opposition.

Leading the fight against confirmation in the Senate Judiciary Committee was none other than Senator Edward M. Kennedy, who only a few short months before had pondered abandonment of public life in the wake of the Chappaquiddick incident. Now he was sitting in solemn judgement of Haynsworth, a fact which was not lost on at

least one leading Southern newspaper, the Richmond News Leader, which considered the Massachusetts Senator "to be morally and mentally unfit to be in the United States Senate."*

* President Nixon was much kinder to the Senator, who was among those greeting him at Andrews Air Force Base on his return from his trip to Asia and Rumania on August 3. The President whispered to the Senator to be of good cheer and urged him not to permit adversity to cripple his effectiveness.

In the end, the Haynsworth nomination was rejected by a fifty-five to forty-five vote, after a long and acrimonious Senate debate. One of those who argued in behalf of the South Carolinian was Senator Robert C. Byrd, the West Virginia Democrat, who said that the rejection of Haynsworth would make it extremely difficult to find another eminently qualified "strict constructionist" who would risk the abuse that would be heaped upon him by the Senate liberals.

The President had been prepared for the defeat. After authorizing a statement in his name regretting the Senate vote and emphasizing the need to restore "proper balance" to the Supreme Court, Mr. Nixon telephoned a dejected Haynsworth in Greenville and asked him to remain as Chief Judge of the Court of Appeals for the Fourth Circuit. Haynsworth wondered whether his usefulness had not been impaired by the Senate's action. He said he needed time to think. Eventually, he agreed to remain.

On December 4, Haynsworth met with the President at the White House. Also present was John Ehrlichman, whom the President introduced as "our chief Counsel around here and one of your principal supporters." The President noted an analogy in the case with that of Judge John J. Parker, who had been turned down by the Senate after he was nominated to the Supreme Court by Herbert Hoover. According to the President, some of the most famous liberals of the period later expressed regret for their votes against Parker back in 1930.

Ironically, Haynsworth said, as a young man he had been quite friendly with Judge Parker.

Haynsworth reported he had received an enormous amount of mail supporting him from all kinds of people. The President said, "You can't let those folks down."

The President also noted that Senators Cook, Hruska, Baker and Hollings had been mainstays in the fight for confirmation. "You even got Fulbright," he added.)

~~The President said he had no regrets; that he had to do what was right.~~ And Haynsworth responded by observing that his wounds had pretty much healed and "only gratitude lingers."

What intrigued him most about the entire episode, Haynsworth went on, was the press coverage. He got so involved in reading The New York Times' descriptions of his "wrong-doing" that he determined for himself that anybody who was that bad didn't deserve to be on the Supreme Court.

CORSWELL?

Ron Ziegler, who entered the room at that point, then accompanied the President and Judge Haynsworth to the Roosevelt Room for a press conference.

Another challenge to the President's prerogative was embodied in the so-called National Commitments Resolution sponsored by Senator J. William Fulbright. At his June 19, 1969 press conference, Mr. Nixon acknowledged that, as a former lawmaker, he understood the sentiment behind Congress' desire to limit the power of the President in the foreign affairs field. And this, of course, was what the Fulbright Resolution would have done, with its requirement that all commitments be supported by "affirmative action" of the Senate.

From his present "vantage point," Mr. Nixon told the press, he doubted the wisdom "for a President of the United States to have his hands tied in a crisis in the fast-moving world in which we live..." He was all for consultations with the Senate, and in particular with the Foreign Relations Committee headed by Fulbright -- when there is time. But he cited Lebanon and the Congo as cases where two Presidents "had no time to consult." Both Eisenhower and Johnson had to move quickly to protect American lives and interests.

At the Republican leadership meeting on June 24, the President again stressed his opposition to the Fulbright Resolution. He indicated that when the necessity arose to act in the future, he undoubtedly would have to do so quickly and decisively and that consultation with the Foreign Relations panel could only prove inhibitory.

The President then talked briefly about his own powers as Commander-in-Chief. He pointed out that, ironically, an American President had a distinct advantage over the collective leadership of the Soviet Union in that he could act quickly and decisively whereas the current Soviet leadership, as in the case of Czechoslovakia, did require a certain amount of debate. He said that while we didn't have too many advantages in the contest with the Soviets, this most certainly was one of them.

Now, he went on, if the Senate did not like the way things were being handled they should change the President rather than the system. The President felt that behind the resolution was a bitter battle between the Fulbright Committee and the Armed Services Committee headed by Senator John Stennis of Mississippi. There was another problem involved, according to one of the Senators: top-secret information provided the Stennis Committee is held in confidence; but the Senate Foreign Relations Committee leaks like a sieve.

The President said that any resolution that comes out of the Senate with regard to national commitments will be interpreted abroad as inhibiting the President, and therefore could be injurious to the cause of peace.

A week later, at another leadership meeting, Ev Dirksen reported that Bill Fulbright was planning another investigation of Vietnam with Clark Clifford as his lead-off witness. Dirksen wondered why the Republicans allowed that Committee to consist of one and one-half members, essentially Fulbright and Albert Gore of Tennessee.

The President said he had heard through Bill Rogers that Clifford would not testify at the hearings. Moreover, Rogers had talked to Fulbright and had the impression that he might be changing his mind about conducting the investigation. The President then said that anybody who really wanted the war to end ought to keep his mouth shut. The implication was that Hanoi's hard-liners were seizing on anti-war statements uttered in high places and thus were unwilling to enter into meaningful negotiations. One Congressman ventured the opinion that certain "peace" Senators really didn't want the war to end because then they couldn't go around on their white chargers playing the role of knights. And a Senator noted that some of his Democratic colleagues who had been all-out hawks on Vietnam only a few months before were now beginning to sound like doves -- "a most remarkable metamorphosis." Examples cited were Birch Bayh and Ed Muskie. "All of a sudden, they have decided they had been wrong all these years." The President laughed.

Congressman Les Arends of Illinois then reported that a House Committee was currently holding hearings on military construction abroad and it was his feeling that appropriations here could be cut appreciably. The President said to go ahead. He had noticed on his travels that U.S. spending abroad was really excessive and we could use the money far better for something else.

Discussion now turned to the Trade Expansion Act and the President said that he basically was satisfied with it as it was. With regard to trade with the Soviets, however, he felt that at a time when the Czechoslovakia issue was still a burning one he would

not be interested in liberalizing trade with the Soviet Union. The President said that there will be plenty of time to give these things away, but not at present.

Turning to House Minority Leader Gerald Ford, the President said that in the future he might consider extending the most favored nation status to one or two countries for reasons that are, let us say, "conspiratorial" in nature. The President, therefore, would like Congress to give him as much latitude as possible with the assurance that he would use discretion and not give away something for nothing as had been done for the past eight years. As an example of what he meant, he said that just yesterday the State Department had asked him to authorize a license to export some oil drilling equipment to the USSR, which he felt to be strategic material. The President asked: Why give it to them now? What are they doing for us? He said he had refused permission.

On July 10, the President greeted his Cabinet and asked, "Is the Vice President here?" The Vice President arrived at that very moment and the President asked him to preside at the beginning of the session. "There is a matter that I am now dealing with that will take a bit longer," he said. He asked that a report by General George A. Lincoln, Director of the Office of Emergency Preparedness, be placed first on the agenda since "I can get what I need from that directly from General Lincoln later on."

The President left the room and Lincoln discussed the continuity of the Federal Government during emergency situations.

One interesting item in his report was the fact that on his last day in office President Johnson had called Lincoln in to say he had not paid too much attention to emergency preparedness and that he hoped the new Administration would give the matter more attention.

Paul McCracken then reported on the economic outlook. Making the point that substantial steps had been taken to restrain inflation, McCracken made two rather dramatic comparisons: (1) from fiscal year 1968 to fiscal year 1970, the Federal Government's budget swung from a \$25 billion deficit to a \$5 billion surplus -- a \$30 billion shift with enormous implications; and (2) Federal expenditures rose from between thirteen percent and eighteen percent a year in the 1966-68 period and now while still rising, the trend had been reduced to about three or four percent a year.

When the President returned, McCracken was making the point that much of the discussion about high interest rates was distorted. The distortion arose from the assumption that the Federal Government was using high interest rates as a means of combatting inflation. The point that should be understood, McCracken said, was that "we have high interest rates in response to inflation; we do not calculate their use as a weapon."

According to McCracken there were now some early indications that the Administration's monetary and fiscal restraints were beginning to be felt. But he added this note of caution: "We are engaged in a difficult balancing act. At the moment, we are still contending with a pervasive inflation psychology. However,

this is a short run problem. We have done a great deal to meet it. Now we must be ready with countermeasures when inflation has been conquered. There won't be much time to turn around to policies that will prevent a recession or a recessionette."

Next on the agenda was the fantastic rate of world population growth. Leading the discussion was Philander P. Claxton Jr., Special Assistant to the Secretary of State for Population Matters. The President asked how the world population distribution would look by the year 2000 if present trends continue. Claxton replied that this would mean that four-fifths of the population would be in underdeveloped countries. However, if the nations of the world would cooperate in a control program, the population by year 2000 could be held to a total of five and one-half billion instead of seven and one-half billion with much of this slower rate in the underdeveloped countries.

The President noted some encouraging signs. On his last visit to Pakistan he had noticed a greater acceptance of population control. He was struck by the fact that there were billboards along the roads espousing the cause of birth control.

According to Defense Secretary Laird, one reason for the problem was the success of the World Health Organization in prolonging life through such projects as its programs to combat malaria and to provide clean water. These projects were largely financed by the United States, "so you might say that while doing a very good thing, we have created a problem." Now, said Laird, there should be a strong effort to involve WHO in promoting birth control.

The President pointed out that Chester Bowles, retiring U.S. Ambassador to India, was advocating a massive effort on the population problem. The President thought this made sense but he wondered where this effort ought to be centered in the U.S. Government. He assumed it should be handled in HEW with the Agency for International Development carrying the cause abroad. State's Claxton agreed, saying that was exactly the pattern he felt should be followed.

The President then told of a discussion he had had with "a group of women who were enraged about our failure to hire enough women."* Indicating the complaint was justified, he instructed

* Two days before, the President had conferred with Congresswomen Catherine May, Florence Dwyer, Margaret Heckler and Charlotte Reid, all of whom complained that the Nixon Administration had not appointed enough women to high positions. The President said he was interested in more women appointments, particularly in the regulatory agencies and the judiciary. He said he was even thinking in terms of a woman for the Supreme Court. As an earnest of his intentions, he said he would appoint Mrs. Reid to the FCC after her current term in Congress expired. She was appointed in October 1971.

the Cabinet members to inform their personnel officers to go out of their way to find competent women for available jobs. "We don't want to just appoint women to the traditional women's jobs," he said. "We want to put qualified women in whatever positions they can properly hold."

"You want to say something to that, Rog?" the President asked Republican National Chairman Rogers Morton. "I told them you were responsible."

Amid the laughter, Morton grimaced and said that he thought it was a dangerous responsibility. But the President gave him no relief. "You, Rog," he said, "are in charge of women."

Practicing what he preached, the President ordered his White House subordinates to begin bringing in qualified women. Once he asked Pat Moynihan how many women were on his staff.

"Mr. President," the irrepressible urbanologist replied, "the Civil Rights Act of 1964 forbids me to inquire as to the sex of our employees."

CHAPTER 11

For many months Richard Nixon had wrestled with the problem of welfare reform. What concerned the President were figures showing that while unemployment went down in the sixties the welfare rolls zoomed upwards at enormous cost to the taxpayers. Even more troubling to Mr. Nixon was the fact that welfare discouraged work, forced men to leave their families and encouraged a migration from the rural South to troubled cities in the North. And there seemed no end to it. Welfare was becoming a permanent way of life, creating a permanent caste of the dependent, a colony within the nation.

Finally, after a monumental debate within the Administration, one which saw Pat Moynihan pitted against the more conservative Arthur Burns, the President decided to unveil his program. As a favorite aphorism around the White House went those days: "Moynihan proposes, Burns exposes and Nixon disposes."

The Moynihan-Burns debates on welfare and other subjects enlivened what otherwise would have been a dreary business of high-level decision making. Moreover, they were in line with the President's penchant for hearing all views expressed on major matters. First came the carefully written briefs and then the oral arguments. Rarely had the White House witnessed such brilliant verbal slugging as when these two powerful intellects, Moynihan and Burns, had a go at each other.

In the case of welfare reform, Moynihan won the argument. "I'm sorry," the President told a worried Burns, "I am not going down the same [welfare] road a single step."

And so the President called the Cabinet together on August 6 for a significant session under the trees at the Presidential retreat at Camp David. It was significant because not everyone in the Cabinet was happy about the welfare reforms proposed by the President. The President knew he had to win over the waverers and that would take a selling job. Moreover, he wanted the dissenters to have their say.

On hand to do the selling was a team headed by Edward L. Morgan, Deputy Counsel to the President, who began by calling the overall proposals, which included such things as revenue sharing and manpower training, "a bold new program -- a vital restructuring of the entire domestic scene."

The first and major part of the program -- welfare reform -- was presented by Robert E. Patricelli, a 29-year-old Assistant Secretary of HEW. He listed the proposed plan's six principal advantages: (1) it provides a national welfare minimum; (2) promotes family stability; (3) assists the working poor; (4) provides expanded job training; (5) calls for strong work requirements and effective work incentives; and (6) provides fiscal relief to the states.

Of all of these, the President cited "the incentive to work" as probably the most important. "It's the one point that I have been most insistent upon," he said. "I could not under any

circumstances support a program that told a man he could get something whether he works or not."

Another facet of the plan that prompted considerable discussion was a provision for day care for children of welfare mothers who took job training or a job. When it was pointed out that the plan originally called for such care to be provided for four hundred and fifty thousand children, one Cabinet officer remarked that this was a "very small" number of children. The President replied that the purpose was to begin on a small basis and see how the plan works.

Another Cabinet officer, suggesting he thought very little of the idea, asked, "How big will it be in five years?" This brought from George Shultz the answer that, "It depends on how the program evolves. We just can't say." Then the Secretary of Labor, sensing the need to convince the Cabinet of the value of the day care provision, said it was "an extremely important part of the plan. The opportunity to get a child into a day care situation is in itself a great incentive for the mother to work, for there the child will learn and will have a new contact with other children. These people, like others, are ambitious for their children."

The President broadened the area of discussion. "What we are trying to do here," he said, "is to break that deadly cycle in which generation after generation knows nothing but welfare. A big point in this plan is to give the family a little dignity. I remember that in the Depression a lot of families would not go on welfare. This psychology has now changed, particularly among the

group that we are talking about here. We are not sure whether we can restore that kind of pride. But what we are trying to do is provide the best new plan that is possible and hope that it will work."

"We've just got to try," he went on.

When the briefing team came to the matter of costs, the President remarked that they had been "saving the worst for the last." He also observed that while the new package would be expensive the fact was that if the welfare program continued on its present course, costs might soar beyond any level that could now be estimated.

~~In discussing future spending, the President went on, "it's important to keep in mind that the level of spending for foreign and military programs will change. The assumption that we are going to have huge defense complements overseas is no longer valid. That doesn't mean that we are going to disarm the U.S. -- we will continue to have a huge defense establishment -- but total defense and our overseas costs are going to be substantially changed."~~

~~And, he predicted, one way or another, American involvement in Vietnam would be wound down.~~

At this point, Mel Laird said he did not like the working title "Family Security Plan" which was being used for the welfare program. Nor did he like the "Fair Share Plan" which had been the working title for the overall domestic package. For one thing, "Fair Share" sounded too much like Harry Truman's "Fair Deal." Other Cabinet members agreed. And then, somewhat like a Board of Directors trying to think up a trade name for a new product, the

Cabinet began running through possibilities which included "Family Security and Work Incentive Program," "Incentive Opportunity Program," "Work Incentive System," and "Full Opportunity System."

None of these seemed to satisfy the President. Several days later he decided on "Family Assistance Program," which soon became known by its acronym, FAP.

Several of those around the table including the Vice President stated their objections to aspects of the proposed welfare program. One noted that it would add thirteen million people to the welfare rolls. He asked: "Isn't it possible to fix the deficiencies of the present system -- with regard to work incentives and day care -- without adding these thirteen million people to the rolls? Can't we repair and improve the present system?" A Cabinet officer said he thought "middle income people" would "resent" the plan. The dissenters had their say and the President listened carefully, but at that time he made no direct reply.

The meeting went on with a discussion of the other facets of the domestic program the President intended to announce in his forthcoming television speech: reorganization of the Office of Economic Opportunity; a new Manpower Training Act; and a proposal for revenue sharing with the States.

Then came a break for lunch. The Vice President, meanwhile, had to leave for the Hill to be available in the event the Senate vote on the Safeguard Missile System resulted in a tie. As he left, Agnew turned to the President and said with a grin: "If it's a tie,

Mr. President, I'll call and see if you have changed your mind about the welfare program." Everyone including the President laughed.

Towards the end of the Cabinet meeting, the President returned to the welfare program. He was aware, he said, that there was substantial support for both the revenue sharing and manpower proposals, and that the welfare proposals were highly controversial. And he realized that the high cost was the principal reason for the opposition. But he iterated his previous statement about finding the funds in slashing appropriations in the defense and foreign areas.

"As for the general principle involved here," the President said, "I know that the welfare road we have been on is the wrong road. It is a total disaster. I don't want to just patch it up; we must move in a new direction. We don't know that the program we have decided upon will solve the problem, but I like the balance between work and security. And now that the decision has been made, I ask that everyone join in the process of selling this as a very exciting new domestic program. As it was with the moon program, the word here should be 'Go.'"

It had been a long, tiring session. But, despite the majority of the Cabinet's being opposed to him on this issue, the President did not budge. As he later told Moynihan, he felt like President Lincoln who, faced with a Cabinet reluctant to go along with the Emancipation Proclamation, was supposed to have said, "The eyes are one, the nays are nine; the ayes have it."

The Cabinet and the Vice President did rally around the President, becoming effective salesmen for a package of reforms which the President in his television address of August 8 was to call the "New Federalism," a name suggested by his conservative speechwriter Patrick Buchanan.*

* The President also bought the idea of "a computerized job bank...to match job seekers with job vacancies" from Buchanan, who had first proposed it during the 1968 campaign.

The President's most immediate problem was conservative Republican Congressmen. The President met with a small group of them in his office. He stressed the fact that while there was no fully satisfactory answer to the welfare problem, the present program was obviously a "disaster." And he said he was trying to accomplish two principal things -- first, to stop the endless migration of the poor from the rural areas into the cities; and second, to develop practical incentives to get people off the welfare rolls and onto payrolls.

When a Congressman observed that many of his colleagues were hypersensitive to any program that smacked of "guaranteed annual income," the President said he was flatly opposed to the concept and would stay completely away from it.

But the Congressman did not appear to be satisfied. "Mr. President," he said, "it will be hard as hell to sell this in Congress." The President said he was aware of the Congressional

temper, but he asked the Congressmen present to look carefully at the new program, not simply for itself, but in comparison with what now existed, and he expressed confidence that if this were done his new program would look very good.

The immediate reaction to the President's "New Federalism" speech and a series of subsequent messages to Congress was generally enthusiastic. Such newspapers as the Chicago Tribune and The New York Times, which rarely see eye to eye on social issues, applauded the breakthrough on welfare. Even conservative columnist James Jackson Kilpatrick applauded the speech, though he was to have a change of heart in early 1970.

The day after the speech, the President flew to San Clemente for a month-long "working vacation." Later in the week, he telephoned Moynihan in Washington to ask for further reaction. Moynihan said the response was overwhelmingly in the President's favor and noted that Roscoe Drummond had observed that the "New Federalism" could well lead to a new Republican majority. Moynihan, who remained a Democrat, told the President he wasn't too sure "that is a good idea."

A more complete report on reactions to the President's proposals was presented by Moynihan at the Western White House at a meeting of the Urban Affairs Council, of which he was executive secretary. He reported that "never in the history of the White House telegraph office" had there ever been "a response of this dimension and unanimity" on a domestic program. The telegrams, coming from all regions and from people of all economic levels, were running twenty-to-one favorable.

"We even got one that said, 'I never trusted you before but now I think you're great,' and it was signed 'Social Scientist,'" Moynihan said.

"Sorry I can't reciprocate," the President quipped, to a round of ~~heavy~~ laughter.

Editorial reaction, according to Moynihan, continued to be highly favorable, not only in the United States but also in Europe. With Congress in recess, Congressional reaction perforce was limited, but largely favorable. Ultra-conservative California Congressman James Utt and ultra-liberal Michigan Congressman John Conyers both voiced approval.

Nevertheless, Moynihan could detect the beginning of opposition from the liberal left on the grounds that the level of payments under the Nixon plan was not enough and, anyway, too much would be going to the South, etc.

This led to a general discussion, sparked by the President, of the need for a vigorous follow-through by the entire Administration. One of the major mistakes in Government was to make a good speech, then sit back without following up, the President said. That's when the opposition moves in. What was needed in the case of the "New Federalism" proposals was a continuing public relations campaign in the country and, to the extent possible, within the Congress.

The President also suggested that special emphasis be given to less spectacular parts of the package as well as to the

more glamorous welfare reform proposals. Sharing Federal revenues with the States, for example, was something which both Republicans and Democrats had favored for years. His manpower training proposals would mean decentralization on a massive basis, he said.

But the principal item of business that day was a discussion of forecasts and projections affecting program priorities in the post-Vietnam period. And the President began by noting that during World War II there were various studies of what post-war readjustment would entail; but that they went into the ashcan. What had happened was that everyone had assumed there would be enormous unemployment and that controls would have to be continued into the postwar period, but the studies had failed to predict the vigor of the civilian economy.

During the Eisenhower years, the President went on, an effort was made to grapple with the problem of future goals and priorities with the establishment of a commission headed by Charles Percy, then president of Bell & Howell. The commission's report did have some impact on the writing of the 1960 Republican platform and would have had some influence on the new Administration had the Republicans won that year. But nothing previously done compares with what we now have under way. Over a period of months, he said, a competent group of professionals headed by Herb Stein have pulled together "a very perceptive analysis" which suggests that we will have considerably less capability of doing what we would like to do in the post-Vietnam period.

The Stein report also made it clear that some overblown Federal programs would have to be cut. The President noted that everyone seemed to assume that the place to cut budgets was in defense. Admittedly some of defense could be slashed, but not nearly as much as the critics would wish. The President suggested that education should not be considered a sacred cow either; that while HEW commendably has been moving in such areas as community colleges and vocational education, the old concept of college-education-for-everybody was patently absurd. In fact, some of the worst frustrations were suffered by those who get a college education and then find there is nothing they can do -- "except join the revolution."

Later, Secretary Stans recalled that when he was Budget Director under President Eisenhower, a target list of one hundred and eighty-seven Federal programs that could be eliminated had been compiled. At the end of eighteen months, Stans said, they had succeeded in eliminating exactly one -- a \$50,000-a-year program for eradicating weeds on Indian reservations.

At the Vice President's suggestion, a subcommittee was to be formed on foster care. At present, Mr. Agnew pointed out, the Federal Government pays only two percent of foster care costs; the rest is picked up by States, localities and private agencies. The Vice President urged that a Federal Aid to Foster Children program be launched, one that would fit the Administration's basic concept of channeling aid so that it benefited the children themselves. Also, he suggested that HEW should be directed to undertake

a study of how best to achieve a relaxation of adoption procedures. Los Angeles County, where procedures have been relaxed, has had notable success, with adoptions increasing from two hundred and fifty in 1952 to two thousand four hundred in 1968, the Vice President said.

A report on poverty characteristics was presented by Moynihan. In general, he noted, the American family was doing well; with sixty-one percent having incomes of over eight thousand dollars a year, and one third of non-white families having similar incomes. Outside the South, however, the non-white figure was forty-three percent. There had been a real closing of the income gap between white and non-white. In 1965, Negroes had barely one-half the white median income; now they have sixty percent (and in the West, eighty percent). The age factor seemed significant; those black families in which the head of the family was thirty-five or under had eighty percent of the white median income. And more blacks were being educated. In 1960, thirty-six percent of young black males graduated from high school; now it was sixty percent. And since 1960, the number of non-whites listed occupationally as professional, technical, managerial etc. had increased ninety-four percent; with clerical up ninety-two percent.

But there were still two intractable problems that had to be solved. One was the regional problem. Half the poverty in the nation was in the South and Southwest; twenty-eight percent was in the Atlanta region of the Office of Economic Opportunity.

The other problem was that while the number of male-headed families in poverty had dropped by half, the number of female-headed families in poverty had risen. And, parenthetically, Moynihan noted that the data he had presented several months ago showing a slowing-down of Negro migration into the central cities had been revised by the Census Bureau; it now appeared that the movement was continuing, and even increasing.

The President then asked OEO Director Donald Rumsfeld to get a study under way on poor Mexicans; unless the Administration began cracking on it, the problem of Mexican-American poverty could sneak up on us and explode.

The President also got deeply involved in ecological problems. At an August 26 meeting of the Environmental Quality Council, he began by saying that the subject was like the weather -- everybody talks about it but nobody does anything about it. Since the problem was so broad, the President suggested the Council should pinpoint areas where something could be accomplished quickly; rather than get bogged down with a shotgun approach to all environmental problems.

And at a September 4 meeting of the Cabinet, the President took note of opposition expressed by some Republican leaders towards the President's programs. He said the problem was that the Republicans had been out of power so long they only knew how to be against rather than for something. He closed the meeting by asking his Cabinet officers to be optimistic, aggressive, buoyant and confident

in their speeches and personal contacts, ticking off the accomplishments of the Administration -- a new approach in foreign policy, welfare reform, revenue sharing, a "cool summer," new opportunity in the courts and hoped-for progress in the inflation fight.

Quoting General George Patton, the President said: "I have never seen a tired Division; but I have seen many tired Commanders."

But there was nothing tired about the President. And, in effect, he took issue with his predecessor who had dubbed the Presidency an "awesome burden" by declaring, "I know the job I have is supposed to be the most difficult job in the world. But it has not yet become for me that great, awesome burden that some have described it."

Perhaps one reason for his buoyancy was the feeling he had most things under control. Another was his extraordinary efficiency, thanks to a staff system headed by Bob Haldeman, which gave him time to relax. Thus, after his reception in New York for United Nations delegates, the President took Bill Rogers, Henry Kissinger and Chief of Protocol and Mrs. Emil (Bus) Mosbacher Jr. to the "21" Club for dinner.

The President was in a relaxed, jovial mood. He greeted some of the celebrities including Charles Conerly, the retired Giants quarterback. The President recalled the Mississippian's talents as a player. "They surely could use you right now," the President said.

Leonard Lyons was also there and the President gave him a particularly warm greeting, asking about one of the columnist's sons whom he had met in California some years before. "Remember me to your boy," he said.

On seeing Zsa Zsa Gabor, Mr. Nixon could not help but tease her about having been dated by Henry Kissinger. "I did nothing vicked, I tell you," she said. The President laughed and said, "Don't tell me -- tell Leonard Lyons right over there."

Zsa Zsa told Lyons that the President had been acting the matchmaker, trying to promote a marriage between her and his national security adviser. Kissinger, by now, had developed a reputation as the Administration's number one "swinger," a fact that amused Richard Nixon no end.

CHAPTER 12

At breakfast one morning in his tastefully-decorated office on the ground floor of the northwest corner of the White House, Henry Kissinger was asked how in the world he had managed to become known as the Nixon Administration's number one "swinger."

To this writer, who had observed him working long hours for days on end at the White House, it didn't make sense.

"It's all very amusing," Kissinger said. "Occasionally I do take a young lady out to dinner. Therefore, in the eyes of the press, I'm some sort of 'swinger.' The truth is that most dinners I go to are semi-business."

Then, almost as an afterthought, he said: "Perhaps I'm following Dobrynin's advice."

This was a reference to a photograph that the Soviet Ambassador had given him. The photograph, hanging on a wall, showed a veterinarian about to inoculate a frightened bulldog. Kissinger had admired it at a Soviet exhibition and Dobrynin had sent it over with an inscription: "Henry. Don't be too serious. Take it easy. Relax."

Kissinger is one of the wittiest men among the President's close advisers. To a visitor squeezed into his tangle of appointments, he said, "There cannot be a crisis next week. My schedule is already full." And noting the fact that some people have dubbed him "Dr. Strangelove," he says such self-kidding things as: "Excuse me. I have to go down to the Situation Room and plot the war. And that sounds even better in German."

Even before his appointment as the President's national security adviser, Kissinger had given a great deal of thought to extricating the United States from the Vietnamese quagmire. In an article published in Foreign Affairs shortly after his appointment, Kissinger outlined a two-track strategy -- which met with the new President's approval -- providing for an attempted negotiated settlement at the Paris peace talks while simultaneously beginning a gradual, unilateral withdrawal of U.S. troops from the battlefield.

In 1967, as a consultant to the State Department, Kissinger was able to establish, through French friends, a direct contact between President Johnson and Ho Chi Minh. As a result of this contact, the stage was set for the Paris peace talks.

While still President-elect, Richard Nixon used similar channels to make two private offers for a rapid, comprehensive settlement with the North Vietnamese. Hanoi's reply was untenable: surrender before negotiations.

In July 1969, seeking to break the deadlock in the Paris talks, the President met with Jean Sainteny, a World War II French resistance hero who had known Ho Chi Minh for nearly a quarter of a century. The President wanted to know everything the Frenchman knew about Ho and his personality. And he wanted to know whether a personal letter from him to Ho, sent privately and without publicity, could do any good. The Frenchman said it was worth a try. Would the Frenchman then be willing to take such a letter to Ho? The Frenchman said yes.

Within hours, the Frenchman was on his way with the letter. Dated July 15, 1969, it read:

"I realize that it is difficult to communicate meaningfully across the gulf of four years of war. But precisely because of this gulf, I wanted to take this opportunity to reaffirm in all solemnity my desire to work for a just peace. I deeply believe that the war in Vietnam has gone on too long and delay in bringing it to an end can benefit no one -- least of all the people of Vietnam. My speech on May 14 laid out a proposal which I believe is fair to all parties. Other proposals have been made which attempt to give the people of South Vietnam an opportunity to choose their own future. These proposals take into account the reasonable conditions of all sides. But we stand ready to discuss other programs as well, specifically the 10-point program of the NLF.

"As I have said repeatedly, there is nothing to be gained by waiting. Delay can only increase the dangers and multiply the suffering.

"The time has come to move forward at the conference table toward an early resolution of this tragic war. You will find us forthcoming and open-minded in a common effort to bring the blessings of peace to the brave people of Vietnam. Let history record that at this critical juncture, both sides turned their face toward peace rather than toward conflict and war."

A week or so later, the letter was in Ho's hands. For over a month the North Vietnamese leadership pondered a reply. Finally, on August 25, Ho signed a letter which, in effect, rejected

President Nixon's initiative. The letter arrived at the White House on August 30. Three days later Ho Chi Minh was dead at the age of seventy-nine.

A top-level meeting of Vietnam experts chaired by the President was then held at the White House. All aspects of the new political situation in Hanoi, in the wake of Ho's death, were discussed. There was speculation about a possible contest for power within the North Vietnamese hierarchy. But it was generally agreed that an immediate change in Hanoi's attitude toward meaningful negotiations was not likely. There were encouraging signs, however, the most significant of which was the failure of the enemy to stage a summer offensive, as had been widely predicted.

During an intermission in the strategy talks, the President remarked with some pleasure that he had just shot one hundred and twenty.

"Ah, Mr. President, your golf game is improving," Kissinger ventured diplomatically.

"I was bowling, Henry," the President dead-panned.

And then, meeting on September 27 with Republican legislative and party leaders beside the figure-eight swimming pool at Camp David, the President suggested that, now that Ho was gone, North Vietnam must reappraise its war strategy, and that a united U.S. front -- or at least a diminution of home front criticism -- would make Hanoi more tractable. Attacking those who would "bug out," the President said:

"The other side doesn't seem to realize it, but I'm in here for another three years and three months. I'm not going to be the first American President who loses a war."

Moreover, the President told visitors at this time most non-Communist world leaders whom he had met since taking office favored his Vietnam policy, no matter what they may be saying publicly. For example, he said that India's Prime Minister Indira Gandhi had told him the last thing her country wanted was to see the United States humiliated in Vietnam. Likewise, he said, Israel's Golda Meir fully understood the disastrous world implications of a U.S. defeat in Vietnam.

Of Mrs. Meir, the President said, "What a woman -- I'm glad she's on our side."

The indomitable Israeli Prime Minister had visited the President in late September to put in a strong plea for more planes and economic aid. "She makes quite a case," the President said.

An immediate consequence was a barrage of personal attacks leveled at the President in the Arab press. Mr. Nixon was accused, among other things, of deceit and political folly. The warmth of Mr. Nixon's reception of Mrs. Meir added to the Arabs' wrath.

The irony of all this was that there were those in Congress who, while hawkish in terms of saving Israel, were dovish toward Vietnam. A prize example was Senator Charles Goodell, the New York Republican appointed to the assassinated Robert F. Kennedy's seat by Governor Nelson Rockefeller, who regretted it almost immediate-

ly. As a Congressman, Goodell had been one of the nation's leading hawks, denouncing the possibility of peace talks as giving aid and comfort to the Communist enemy. He favored tough military measures against North Vietnam, including stepped-up air bombings of Hanoi and Haiphong.

All of a sudden, the war became "immoral" to Goodell. In 1969 he sought to take over the leadership of the Senate "bug out" brigade by sponsoring what he called the Disengagement Act of 1969, one that would set December 1, 1970 as the absolute deadline to have all American troops, both combat and non-combat, removed from Vietnam.

And thus, after nine months of a lowering of voices on Vietnam, and with the schools reopening across the country, the critics were at it again, accusing Mr. Nixon of having failed to end the war and threatening reprisals. Some Democratic leaders sought to have it both ways. Senator Fred R. Harris of Oklahoma, Chairman of the Democratic National Committee, disclosed this strategy in a candid remark to the press.

"We will hold Nixon responsible," he said, "if he turns South Vietnam over to the Communists."

But simultaneously Harris, along with other Democratic Senators like Ted Kennedy, George McGovern, Gene McCarthy and Bill Fulbright, were continuing to demand such a rapid pull-out of U.S. troops that the end result could well have been to give the Communists control of South Vietnam.

What was particularly interesting about Senator Harris was the fact that he had long been one of President Johnson's most ardent defenders on the question of Vietnam. As late as 1968, for example, the Oklahoma legislator declared: "Arguments of critics of President Johnson's policy in Vietnam have little validity. The biggest factor in prolonging the war is division at home."

Which was what President Nixon was trying to say a year later.

Mr. Nixon did take certain steps designed to defuse the growing chorus of dissent. He ordered another thirty-five thousand troops home from Vietnam. "Tokenism," his critics charged. Then he reduced draft calls by fifty thousand for the rest of the year and promised draft reform. After which, he announced the long-planned retirement of Lieutenant General Lewis B. Hershey, the dreaded symbol of Selective Service. At the same time, he won broad approval of the thrust of his Vietnam policies from Hubert H. Humphrey who put in a friendly appearance at the White House.

Coming as it did in the midst of swelling criticism of the war, the Humphrey endorsement was especially welcome. Conceding there were "honest differences" over the war, Humphrey said, "I believe that we have to give the President time to carry out his proposals, to carry out his plan and his policies." Public support was essential to the search for peace, he added. "We only have one President at a time and I think the worst thing we can do is try to undermine the efforts of the President."

To no avail. Plans for huge anti-war demonstrations in October and November went ahead anyway.

General Hershey, who had headed the Selective Service System through three wars and under six Presidents, had been dead set against major draft reforms proposed by Mr. Nixon. The decision was made to relieve him of his duties and assign him to another post. And it became the lot of Presidential Assistant Peter Flanigan to so inform Hershey.

"It wasn't easy," recalls Flanigan. "This was one of America's greatest patriots who had served his country long and faithfully. Finally I took the bit in my teeth and said to him, 'General, the President wants very much for you to get a fourth star. He would like you to become his manpower adviser.'"

"Now, wait a minute, Peter," Hershey replied. "I'm a soldier. I'll do anything the President orders me to do. If you want me out of here, fire me. If you want me to do something else, I'll do something else. But, please don't ask me to resign. I have a son in Vietnam; a son-in-law in Vietnam; and a grandson in Vietnam. They can't resign. So I can't resign."

"General," Flanigan went on, "there's no intention for you to resign."

"Fine," Hershey said.

The General met with the President for nearly an hour. He agreed to become a Presidential Adviser on Manpower Mobilization, but most of the time was spent on reminiscing. Flanigan tried to get some issues discussed. But he was ignored as the two

men talked about mutual friends, ~~told jokes and had a good time.~~ When Hershey got up to leave, the President asked, "General, how do you keep in such good shape? Do you play golf?"

"Oh, no," he replied, "my eyesight is kind of bad. My wife's sick, so I do a lot of housework. If you ever want some shirts washed, just send them over."

According to Flanigan, the President "cracked up again over that one."

Outside the Oval Office, Flanigan said, "You know, General, that was a lot of fun, but we didn't quite get to the issues."

"Peter," he replied, "I know the issues. I just wanted the President to feel good."

As Flanigan put it later: "Now, here was a guy getting relieved of a job he really liked and his main concern was to make the President feel good, and by golly he did. Hershey's a real man."

On October 13, two days before the scheduled nationwide anti-war demonstrations, the President took note of the rising crescendo of dissent. In a letter to a student at Georgetown University, the President observed, "Whatever the issue, to allow government policy to be made in the streets would destroy the democratic process. It would give the decision, not to the majority, and not to those with the strongest arguments, but to those with the loudest voices. It would reduce statecraft to slogans. It would invite anarchy. It would allow every group to test its strength not at the ballot box but through confrontation in the streets."

The President said there was "nothing new we can learn from the demonstrations." He was aware "that a great many Americans are deeply concerned about the war; that some of these consider U.S. participation immoral; that many want U.S. troops withdrawn immediately and unconditionally."

But he believed "we are on the road to peace. That road is not easy. It is not simple. But I am convinced it is the right one. There is no problem to which I have given more of my time and thought. For nine months, we have worked every day for a just end to a conflict which has been building for more than eight years.

"On October 15th, I understand, many will simply be saying: 'I am for peace.' I ardently join with all Americans in working toward that goal."

The demonstrations went off as scheduled. Some fifty thousand people, for example, flowed by the White House bearing lighted candles the night of October 15. It was a dramatic sight and made good television pictures but it failed to budge the President. And it failed to "shake up" the country, as its promoters had predicted.

At this moment in history, the President felt that he had done everything he could do, short of unconditional surrender, to end the war. He noted that the anti-war critics had insisted that a bombing halt would surely be followed by a cease-fire. Now, almost a year after the halt was ordered by his predecessor, Mr. Nixon's opponents were demanding a cease-fire as the next step, even though the enemy refused even to discuss such a move until the U.S. withdrew its forces.

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In briefing a ~~Republican leadership~~ meeting on October 28, Henry Kissinger insisted that there was no reasonable concession Hanoi could not obtain if only the collective leadership would ask the U.S. to talk about it. The problem was precisely in the collective leadership which, in the wake of Ho's death, had to get its bearings before it could change directions. Hanoi also had the problem of trying to maneuver between Moscow, Peking and the National Liberation Front -- no easy task, according to Kissinger.

What Hanoi seemed to be asking for was that we overthrow the Saigon Government and impose a coalition regime including the Viet Cong which would take over as soon as we moved out, said Kissinger. Thus, they were asking us to accept a formula that had inevitably produced a Communist government whenever the coalition ploy was tried in Eastern Europe. Our problem, he went on, was to convince Hanoi that if it wanted a reasonable compromise, we would meet them half way, but that we were not going to capitulate to their exorbitant demands. The Nixon Administration had offered all it could within reason and the fact that negotiations were deadlocked was not because of any lack of ingenuity on our part.

As for the Paris talks, Kissinger observed that we had had more negotiations with Averell Harriman than with Hanoi.

Kissinger added that he had learned from studying Hanoi's negotiating processes that their intention was to create the impression of "unbridled ferocity" in refusing to negotiate. However, once they become serious about negotiations, things break and begin

to move rapidly. This was the situation during the early fifties when for eighteen months the Communists refused to negotiate with the French. Then, suddenly, their mood changed and the war was settled in a matter of several weeks.

The President again noted that he was not relying on negotiations alone to get the U.S. out of Vietnam. He hoped that Vietnamization, which was beginning to look successful, might make Hanoi come to realize that eventually they may have to deal with a tough Saigon regime rather than with a United States that is quite willing to compromise.

As for his forthcoming speech on Vietnam already announced for November 3, all the President would say was that he was going to "tell the truth."

In his speech, the President laid it on the line. He made a personal plea to "the great silent majority" to back his Vietnam policies and give him more time to carry out his chosen course. Three Presidents before him, he said, had recognized the stakes in Vietnam, and he did not intend to preside over an American defeat. What he had done, he explained, was to begin "a pursuit for peace on many fronts" -- including private proposals for a settlement that he initiated even before taking office, and a personal letter sent to Ho Chi Minh before his death. "No progress whatever has been made," he reported grimly, "except agreement on the shape of the bargaining table." The more support he got at home, he emphasized, the sooner he could redeem his pledge "to end the war in a way that we could win the peace." And "the more divided we are at home," he went on, "the less likely the enemy is to negotiate at Paris."

"Let us be united for peace. Let us also be united against defeat. Because let us understand: North Vietnam cannot defeat or humiliate the United States. Only Americans can do that."

Even the President's most ardent critics agreed that the speech was remarkably successful. Overnight polling indicated that Mr. Nixon had won a high degree of approval from the public. Syndicated columnist Carl T. Rowan, for example, noted: "The tone of Nixon's address was superb, almost without exception. He was a civilized leader carrying a terrible burden, pleading with a civilized people to help him -- or at worst not to make his burden heavier...In taking his stand President Nixon took a gamble of the highest order. Undoubtedly he is aware that the seeds of personal and political tragedy lie in what he attempts to do. That is why this observer cannot doubt the honesty of his search for an honorable peace."

Mr. Nixon, who knew instinctively he had bought time to try in his own way to untangle the U.S. from Southeast Asia, was feeling, in his own words, "pretty good." He hosted a stag dinner for Prince Philip the night after the speech, and he personally arranged for the Prince to appear on NBC's Today show, which the Prince had originally turned down.

The next morning President Nixon, himself, was interviewed on the Today show by Barbara Walters and Herb Kaplow. Asked about the New Jersey and Virginia gubernatorial victories the day before, the President said, "I am rather happy we won, because their opponents

both made me the issue." And he noted that in New Jersey the Democratic candidate, Robert Meyner, had "made the war in Vietnam a straight up and down issue," the result being that his Republican opponent obtained sixty percent of the vote which "I thought was very reassuring in this bellwether state."

Later that morning, the President presided over a Cabinet meeting. It was a special day for the Nixon Administration. It was, of course, the day after the Republican victories in New Jersey and Virginia and it was thirty-six hours after the President's crucial speech on Vietnam which by this time was reaping an overwhelmingly favorable response. But it was also the anniversary of their 1968 election victory.

The President was in good spirits when he entered the room. The Cabinet rose and applauded. After thanking his Secretaries, the President looked around and noted that two staff members who had just been promoted to Counselors to the President with Cabinet rank, Pat Moynihan and Bryce Harlow, were sitting at the table.

"I see," said the President, "that Dr. Moynihan got a haircut for the occasion."

Moynihan, whose hair was neatly combed over the tops of his ears, flushed and, for once, had no comeback.

"And where is Harlow?" the President asked, suggesting that the diminutive Harlow move closer to the table so that everyone in the room would realize that he was actually present.*

* Harlow, who is a shade over five feet tall, once addressed the

Women's National Press Club. Slipping behind the lectern, he waited until the applause died down, then said: "Don't wait for the rest of me. I'm standing up."

Bill Rogers then announced that on this, the first anniversary of his election, the Cabinet had a gift to present to the President. Since the Attorney General had ruled it was illegal for a subordinate to present anything of value to a superior in Government, Rogers said, the Cabinet had to find some gift that was "absolutely worthless."

"I would have thought, Mr. President," the Secretary of State went on, "that the Attorney General would have waived the rule in this case but he refused to do so."

John Mitchell grinned and muttered, "There is always a stool pigeon in the crowd."

The gift was a gavel and block -- the block made from the launching pad of Apollo 11. Rogers said it was an appropriate memento for the anniversary of the "Nixon launch" of 1968.

Thanking the Cabinet for the gift, the President said he was rather surprised at the Attorney General's "legalistic ruling" and that he was now somewhat concerned about the gift that he had planned to give the Cabinet.

"Oh, Mr. President," Bill Rogers broke in, "the Attorney General says there is absolutely no limit on the value of what a superior can give to a subordinate."

Well, said the President, what he was giving each member of the Cabinet was an ash tray bearing the Presidential seal and each one was worth precisely four dollars and ninety-eight cents.

Turning to the elections of the previous day, Mr. Nixon praised Republican National Chairman Morton, who was present, for the "great job he did in helping to bring about these significant victories." Then he asked the Cabinet to help the new Governors whenever they had an opportunity. ^{become he didn't} ~~"Remember, these are our guys and we want them to look good. We don't want them to be the last Republican Governors of New Jersey and Virginia."~~

Observing that the two winning candidates had heavily emphasized the Administration's revenue sharing proposal in their campaigns, the President said: "This allowed Republicans to be for something. One problem is that having been in the opposition so long, Republicans are inclined to be against and we must learn to be for."

Mr. Nixon then called on John Ehrlichman, whom he had just appointed to the new post of Assistant to the President for Domestic Affairs, to explain the reorganization of the White House staff. Ehrlichman said the reshuffling was triggered by the departure of Counselor Burns.

Looking down toward Burns at the end of the Cabinet table, the President asked: "Where is it you're going, Arthur?" Since he had just named Burns as Chairman of the Federal Reserve Board, the President quipped that Pat Moynihan would now become

"the house egghead." As Counselor to the President, Moynihan would no longer involve himself in day-to-day operations but would apply his "demonstrated innovative flair" to the full range of domestic policy development, according to a White House press release.

As the last item on the agenda, the President introduced George Romney to "tell us how you're going to avoid a housing recession." As Romney began his briefing he began to use charts. The President suggested that he move them so that they could be seen on the Vice President's side of the table. "I used to sit over there and sometimes it's very difficult to see from that spot," he explained.

In his discussion, the HUD Secretary kept referring to the Federal National Mortgage Association as "Fannie May" and the Government National Mortgage Association as "Ginnie May." Picking up the widely-used slang terms, the President asked: "You've got 'Fannie May' and 'Ginnie May,' but isn't it time to have a man around the house?"

Whereupon Mormon Romney replied, "Maybe the reason we have two females is because of my religious background."

As the meeting ended, the President disclosed that Lin Holton and Bill Cahill, the successful gubernatorial candidates, were coming to the White House for lunch that day. "Actually," the President smiled, "I invited them a month ago. That's how confident I was."

Reactions to the President's Vietnam speech were now coming in from abroad. The Communist reactions, whether it was Hanoi, Peking or Moscow, were predictable. They didn't like it. More encouraging were Ambassadorial reports from non-Communist countries.

But the President was most touched by a personal letter from Israel's Golda Meir. She had listened to and studied Mr. Nixon's speech. Whereupon, quite spontaneously and without solicitation, she sent a letter to Mr. Nixon via the diplomatic pouch, warmly congratulating him on his Vietnam policy and offering strong moral support.

Among other things, she saluted the President for "encouraging and strengthening small nations the world over, striving to maintain their independent existence, who look to that great democracy, the United States of America."*

* The Israelis had long been concerned with the implications of the anti-war movement in the United States. What worried them, and still does, was their feeling that the movement was contributing to a revival of an isolationism which could paralyze America's will to resist Soviet-inspired aggression in the Middle East. There had been background sessions with selected Washington correspondents in which these views were stated clearly, but only a few like Joe Alsop and William S. White appeared to agree with the Israeli thesis.

Also reassuring was the flip-flop taken by Chairman Fulbright on the question of public hearings on Vietnam to be conducted by his Foreign Relations Committee. Immediately after the President's speech, the Senator from Arkansas had appeared in his familiar role as the learned professor lecturing the Administration on the error of its ways and ridiculing Mr. Nixon's contention that a majority of the American public backed the President's policy of disengagement with honor. Fulbright, proclaiming there was no shred of difference between the Johnson policy of putting more U.S. troops into Vietnam and the Nixon policy of pulling them out, announced that public hearings were necessary because "Americans will recognize the truth when they are exposed to it" -- the implication being that Mr. Nixon was not telling the truth.

But something happened when the Chairman met with his Committee. After two hours, he emerged and announced there would be no public hearings. Rather, he said, the Committee would hear the Secretaries of Defense and State behind closed doors so as not to "contribute to the inflammation of the public mind....We want to be responsible and careful."

On November 13, the President ^{met again} turned his attention to the problems of rural America. He held the first meeting of the Council for Rural Affairs and named John R. Price Jr. as its Executive Secretary. One of the major objectives of the new sub-Cabinet group was to seek to stem the flow of people from the countryside to large and crowded cities by making rural America a better place to live.

At the meeting Counselor Moynihan committed an error which may have seriously compromised both his intellectual authority and his frequent claims to Western origins. He puzzled for a long while over one of the many colored maps which ornamented the room -- wondering aloud as to why it showed Denver as losing population. "It doesn't make any sense," he said.

The problem was resolved only when one of his new Cabinet colleagues gently explained to Moynihan that he was looking for Denver in the middle of Wyoming.

In his remarks, the President called for greater inter-department coordination to lick various rural problems. "I have an uneasy feeling," he said, "that all of these highly competent administrators we have brought into the Cabinet are just managing the chaos, rather than making major organizational breakthroughs."

"Don't you sometimes have a feeling of frustration about all of this?" he asked, a note of frustration creeping into his voice.

Then the press and legislative guests arrived for a ceremony officially launching the Rural Affairs Council. At first the President had difficulty signing the executive order, but he discovered it was easier after he removed the cap from his pen.

"Up there, you can see how the Government runs rural America," the President quipped, pointing to the bewildering charts still facing the group from the end of the table.

After handing out several souvenir pens to the guests, the President suggested that they send them to "rich contributors."

He then went into a short speech about the fact that rural problems go beyond farm problems and that they are worse, in many respects, than problems in urban areas. When he finished, he turned to Senator Carl Curtis of Nebraska.

"Is that what you wanted me to say, Carl?" he asked.

"Yes," the Senator replied, "and may I make a speech now?"

"Why, certainly."

"Whatever you say about rural America, Mr. President, there's one thing you should never forget. Those people out there are 'Nixon people.'"

"Thank you very much," the President said.

"I tell you that they're with you all the way! That's Nixon country out there."

As he walked out of the room, the President murmured, "Actually, I hadn't thought of that....."

CHAPTER 13

The President's November 3 speech, appealing to the "great silent majority" of Americans to support his Vietnam policy, was entirely his own work, his speechwriters seeing it only half an hour before air time. Towards the end of the text, the President had contrasted his more limited aims with Woodrow Wilson's expansive dream of a "war to end war" -- words which he said Wilson "wrote... at this very desk."

One of his speechwriters, Bill Safire, a political lexicographer of some note, happened to know from previous research that the phrase while popularized by Wilson had actually been written by H.G. Wells.*

* Safire's research was for his authoritative book, The New Language of Politics, published in 1968. According to the book, The War That Will End War was the title of a 1914 book by Wells.

Somewhat hesitantly Safire broke in on the President's final pre-speech preparation to point out the distinction. Mr. Nixon, though slightly annoyed at the interruption, did not brush it off. Informed that the press already had been provided with advance copies of the speech, the President pressed Safire: "But who will notice?"

"Probably no one but the two of us," Safire conceded.

Such was the President's regard for accuracy, however, that in delivering his emotionally charged peroration a few minutes

later he smoothly substituted "spoke" for "wrote." The question of who would notice was answered a week later when a Connecticut history professor wrote to thank the President for his care in not attributing authorship of the war slogan to Wilson.

The President, nevertheless, had made one tiny error in his speech. He had referred to the desk as having been used by Woodrow Wilson. Later research indicated that it had been used by Vice President Henry Wilson during President Grant's Administration -- a correction duly noted in the official collection of Mr. Nixon's public papers of his first year.

In retrospect, the November 3 speech was the climax of his first year as President. And it had been a very good first year. Thanks to skillful handling of foreign affairs, he did not need to face up to a Bay of Pigs, a Berlin Wall or a Cuban missile crisis as did John F. Kennedy early in the game. Nor was he forced to grapple with riots in the cities, insurrections in Latin America and an escalating war in Southeast Asia as did Lyndon Johnson.

The one serious crisis -- the downing of an American plane by the North Koreans -- was handled with aplomb and was quickly forgotten. And though daily warfare continued in Vietnam, there had been no Tet offensive; moreover, the South Vietnamese seemed willing to take on a greater share of fighting the enemy.

The summer proved to be a cool one and while racial tensions continued to exist there seemed to be an increasing concensus that the historically deep-rooted problem could not be quickly solved by

White House rhetoric. That had been tried under Kennedy and Johnson with no notable success. The President, instead, thumped for enactment of the Philadelphia Plan to guarantee Negro job rights in Government contract work. And here the President faced opposition from the organized labor movement, particularly from the construction workers who sought to keep their locals lily-white. And if Mr. Nixon did not succeed in appointing a Negro to his Cabinet, though he did try, he had at least named a black Assistant Secretary to practically every department.

The President had also proposed the first authentic reform of the archaic welfare system, even though it could mean an unpopular guaranteed annual income. And he reactivated a lottery system which made young people vulnerable to the draft in a period of one year, not seven as previously. He appointed youth advisers to the Selective Service System and was still hoping for creation of an all-volunteer army when the Vietnam war would end.

In addition, he agreed to return Okinawa to Japan; instituted cuts in defense spending to the tune of three billion dollars, urging a new, hard look at the Pentagon; called a halt in the production of chemical and biological weapons; and commenced arms-limitation talks with the Russians while, at the same time, developing an anti-missile defense system.

In all, a credible record.

What ruckus there was in 1969 had been over the nomination of Judge, Haynsworth^{ITA} to the Supreme Court; the bitter battle over ^{a Cornell} of Judge, Haynsworth^A to the Supreme Court; the bitter battle over

the Nixon tax reform package which Congress had transformed into a pork-barrel; the developing reputation of Attorney General Mitchell as a "hard-liner;" and Vice President Agnew's blast against network news reporters and commentators.

On the disappointing side was the Administration's failure to reverse the surging inflation it had inherited. Prices went right on rising as did interest rates. But the Administration stuck by its guns, resisting pressures from economic conservatives to turn the screws still tighter and from economic liberals to begin letting up.

The President also assigned Nelson A. Rockefeller to visit Latin America on a number of fact-finding expeditions. And some of the worst fears about the New York Governor's travels materialized. Because of possible civil disorders, Rockefeller was forced to cancel visits to some of our neighbors to the South. In others, the welcome was less than heartening. It was, in all, a not very impressive beginning for the Nixon Administration in Latin America. But it demonstrated very clearly that the much-heralded sloganeering of the Alliance for Progress promulgated during the Kennedy years, and carried on by Lyndon Johnson, was a total failure and that a new approach was needed in Latin America.

~~The President made another point at a bipartisan leadership~~
meeting at the White House. No longer could we rely on the Church and the Army in Latin America, once the elements upon whom one might rely for stability but who are now, as often as not, allied with the forces of so-called change and revolution. Whereas, in the past,

the Church could be counted on to resist leftist revolution, today we find some priests deeply involved in revolutionary movements. ~~And some Latin American armies have become incipient Nasserite forces.~~

The greatest mistake we could make is not to be sensitive to the changes that are now taking place, the President ~~said~~ ^{told a leadership conference}. The world is much more complicated than the old East-West, Communist-anti-Communist struggle. The President said he intended to deal with the world as it is and as it is going to be, and not as it was.

Critics quickly learned that Richard Nixon was a difficult man to stampede. Instead of becoming flustered over political attacks, the President seemed to take the attitude that common sense would prevail.

From the start he tried to see the other fellow's point of view. Thus, when Ev Dirksen reported on a Fulbright resolution which would require that the Congress pass on foreign commitments, the President noted, "I can see how it would have great appeal." The President also noted irony in the fact that the resolution was really a modified form of the Bricker Amendment which liberals like Fulbright had fought bitterly in the early Eisenhower years -- since it would tie the hands of the President in dealing with foreign powers.

~~"How times have changed,"~~ exclaimed the President.

He did get angry at a leadership meeting when he discussed the illegal drug traffic. He criticized two Allied countries for not doing enough to curtail the flow of heroin into the United States.

~~He said he didn't give a damn about diplomatic repercussions.~~ He wanted a stop put to a dirty business which was destroying so many of our young people and he said he didn't care whose noses were bent out of joint in the process. Eventually the two nations in question did react favorably to official American protests. But it took time.

And that was one of the problems of the Presidency. Everything takes time. Even the simplest things. One Sunday, flying back to the White House from Camp David, the Presidential helicopter passed low over the Mall between the Washington Monument and the Lincoln Memorial. The President spotted the long row of "temporary" Navy and Munitions buildings which had been constructed on the Mall during World War I. And there they had remained as eyesores for over half a century, patched, repaired and with plaster facades. The President had worked in one of those buildings as a young Naval officer in World War II.

"Why are those buildings still there?" the President asked John Ehrlichman.

"Probably because no President has ordered them taken down," replied Ehrlichman.

"Well, this President wants them removed as soon as possible."

The next day Ehrlichman wrote what he describes as "a short memorandum to the friendly proprietors of the Navy and Munitions buildings and told them that the Commander-in-Chief would appreciate their getting their buildings off the public's grass.

"It wasn't long before I began hearing from Assistant Secretaries and Captains. As I persevered, I began hearing from Under Secretaries and Admirals. One Admiral talked to me all the way to Philadelphia, for I had rather thoughtlessly accepted a ride to the Army-Navy game on the Navy's special train."

Every kind of bureaucratic excuse was made to keep the buildings from being razed and the land seeded for a public park. But the President would not take no for an answer and, finally, the buildings came down after a year and a half of in-fighting.

"And now," says Ehrlichman, "as he rides by the site of those old buildings and looks across at the Lincoln Memorial, you can hear the President mutter, 'Well, at least that's one thing we've gotten done around here.'"

At the end of his first year in office Richard Nixon felt he was in reasonably good shape politically. His standing was high in the polls. The most serious contender for the Democratic nomination to oppose him in 1972 had suffered a grievous blow at Chappaquiddick and now a scramble for the nomination appeared in the offing.

Richard Nixon had also succeeded in weathering an extraordinary offensive aimed at crippling his effectiveness and at undermining national confidence in his Administration. Liberal columnists and commentators, particularly, vied with one another in seeking sinister motives for almost everything the White House did. A good example was the Haynsworth case. Then, all of a sudden, the Vietnam war became "Nixon's War" and former hawks like Senator

Goodell, who rose to propose capitulation in Vietnam, became overnight heroes. Almost everything the President said was nit-picked and found wanting.

It got to a point where Dean Acheson could hardly contain himself. Denouncing this "habit of destroying Presidents," the former Secretary of State under Truman likened the attacks on President Nixon to the McCarthyism of the early 1950s.

David Broder, the perceptive political analyst of the Washington Post, dubbed the anti-Nixon campaign "The Breaking of the President." He put it this way:

"The likelihood is great that they will succeed again, for breaking a President is, like most feats, easier to accomplish the second time around. Once learned, the techniques can readily be applied as often as desired -- even when the circumstances seem less than propitious. No matter that this President is pulling troops out of Vietnam, while the last one was sending them in; no matter that in 1969 the casualties and violence are declining, while in 1968 they were on the rise. Men have learned to break a President, and, like any discovery that imparts power to its possessors, the mere availability of this knowledge guarantees that it will be used."

But, as it turned out, the onslaught of headlines, Senate speeches and mass demonstrations failed to "break" the President. As Richard Nixon himself put it, "I don't 'break' easily."

The Administration, of course, had not remained passive in the face of attack. Spiro Agnew had flailed the President's

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tormenters as "an effete corps of impudent snobs" and had also challenged the giant television networks and their highly-paid commentators to engage in a bit of self-examination.

The Vice President had hurled the challenge in a speech before the Midwest Republican Conference in Des Moines, Iowa, and it was to trigger a nationwide debate on the extraordinary power of a few men in the electronic media to influence the American people. Denying that he advocated any form of Government censorship, Agnew questioned whether a form of censorship did not already exist when the news reports some forty million Americans received each night were determined by a handful of executives and filtered through a handful of commentators admitting to their own brand of bias.

Developing his case with quotations from the writings of observers not normally sympathetic to his viewpoint, the Vice President contended that the television news analysts composed a fraternity feeding on one another's prejudices and ideological outlook, mentioning the fact they "live and work in the geographical and intellectual confines of Washington, D.C., or New York City -- the latter of which James Reston terms the 'most unrepresentative community in the entire United States.' Both communities bask in their own provincialism, their own parochialism."

Remarking on what he termed "instant analysis and querulous criticism," Agnew said the tendency was particularly noticeable following the President's November 3 speech on Vietnam. Thus, one network had Averell Harriman stationed in the wings, ready to trot out as soon as the President was finished, and Harriman, who for ten

months had been America's chief negotiator at the Paris peace talks, seemed like the Ancient Mariner to be under some heavy compulsion "to justify his failures" to anyone who would listen.

In fairness, the Vice President argued, Mr. Nixon should be entitled to have his speech judged by the people, rather than to have it prejudged by hostile critics even before listeners had a chance to digest it.

Almost predictably, the executives of the three national networks cried "intimidation" and accused the Vice President of trying to render them subservient to the political group in power. And the argument was to continue in one form or another, even though David Brinkley, the only anchor man named by Agnew, publicly scoffed at the notion that he could be "intimidated" by anyone.

The President had not read the Agnew speech in advance, but he made it abundantly clear publicly and privately that he shared the Vice President's sentiments on the electronic media. The irony, of course, was that he himself rarely, if ever, watches the television news shows. He just doesn't have the time. However, every morning, he obtains a complete fill-in on just exactly what was said on all network programs dealing with news and public affairs.

The fill-in is part of the "Daily News Summary" edited by an urbane former high school history teacher from Janesville, Wisconsin, Lyndon (Mort) Allin. And one of the minor mysteries at the Executive Office Building where they work is how Allin and a tiny staff manage to catch the major television shows and, at the same time, wade through a mountain of newspapers and magazines that daily cascades into their quarters.

The news summary provides an up-to-the-minute digest of news developments as well as editorial opinions from around the country. Once a week a special section is devoted to synthesizing articles from weekly and monthly magazines including Time, Newsweek, U.S. News & World Report, Life, Saturday Review, Harper's, Human Events, Atlantic Monthly, National Review, New Leader, Nation, New Republic and even the avant-garde New York Review of Books. Typical foreign publications that are monitored include the Economist, Der Spiegel and Paris Match.

The columnists are not neglected. Even though most of the pundits are of the liberal persuasion the President wants to know what they are saying (no matter how critical) about him.

In all, over sixty daily newspapers are carefully screened for the President. Moreover, the President himself glances through the New York and Washington newspapers every morning. That, plus the intelligence data which also reaches him on a daily basis, makes the President of the United States the best informed man in the world.

The President fancies himself a student of the press. He draws a distinction between the national news media which he believes to be generally more liberal than local and regional journalism -- with some exceptions. That is why in his first three years in office he has journeyed to the hinterlands to hold off-the-record briefings for editors and publishers on foreign and domestic matters.

Bob Haldeman, who serves Mr. Nixon as the White House chief of staff, talked quite frankly with me about the President's attitude toward the press. Haldeman, who spends more time with the President than any other staff member, put it this way:

"His attitude toward the press is, I would say, one of complete understanding -- of himself and of the press, and of his role and their role, and of the relationship between the two. He understands there is an adversary relationship. He understands that a great majority of the press corps doesn't agree with him. Philosophically and personally they are not attuned to him; and they don't believe in the things he believes in and the way he believes in them. The truth is most newsmen are Democrats, which means there's a party difference to begin with.

"Consequently, he isn't fooled by any thought that he can win the press over and he doesn't expect to. He realizes that most of the press are honorable people, but that they are biased just like other people, and that they can't help but be. And that's a reality he has to live with -- a reality that makes his job that much more difficult. If he had a press corps that wanted him to succeed, wanted him to come out on top, it would make his job much easier. Obviously the reporting of what the President does has an effect on his ability to do an effective job.

"But the thing that is hard to get across is the fact that there is nothing personal in the President's attitude toward the press and he realizes that basically there is nothing personal in the press' attitude toward him. There have been Presidents who have had strong personal relationships with the press corps -- either of adulation or hatred. But I don't think he feels that there is either adulation or hatred of him by the press on a personal basis. But he does realize there is a disagreement by the great

bulk of the working press with what he is trying to do. Ideologically, the press approaches things from a liberal-versus-conservative posture. And that's a fact of life he has learned to live with."

In other ways, too, he is different from his recent predecessors. For example, according to Haldeman, the President has forbidden any form of recording of conversations in his office, whether with his staff or with visitors. "Some Presidents felt their every word should be recorded electronically," said Haldeman. "At least they had the capability and in some cases did. But Mr. Nixon said he didn't want it done and his instructions were carried out. He's never even had a stenographer in to transcribe conversations."

Tall, lean, perpetually tanned, crew-cut Haldeman thinks a great deal like the President. But he is far from being a "yes man." He was one of the few advisers who back in 1962 tried to argue Mr. Nixon out of running for the Governorship of California. "And I was still asking him not to run all the way down the corridor in Los Angeles to the room where he made his announcement," Haldeman recalls. "I lost that one -- and, having lost, agreed to manage his campaign."

Though it was a losing campaign, it was well-run, winding up financially in the black. And Haldeman returned to his job as manager of the Los Angeles office of J. Walter Thompson, the world's largest advertising agency. In time, too, he was named chairman of the board for the California Institute of Arts and a member of the University of California Board of Regents.

Through Haldeman's hands must go virtually every piece of paper that reaches the President's desk. And his personal approval must be given (with certain exceptions) before the President receives a visitor. Haldeman is the first to see the President officially in the morning; and he is the last to see him officially at night. And it is with Haldeman that the President can and does sit down during the day -- or sometimes calls after midnight -- to get his reactions to something of major import.

As Haldeman concedes, he can't help but get involved in the making of policy. But he insists that his role is "more that of a devil's advocate, to see that all alternatives are being considered -- the pros and cons." He tries hard not to express a personal opinion. "I make sure that all the arguments are fully considered."

And that's precisely what the President wants -- the opportunity to examine all options.

The irony of Richard Nixon is that, while in many ways he is the consummate politician, he does not possess what appears to be the chief attribute of the breed -- gregariousness. More than any Chief Executive in modern times, Mr. Nixon is a most private person, one who places a high premium on the precious moments he can be left alone. He is what his good friend Bob Finch calls a "solitary."

"Time is a most precious commodity and it has to be used wisely," the President once told me. "And what a President needs most is time to think, to reflect carefully so as not to make snap judgements."

Getting him time is probably the most difficult job Haldeman has, trying to determine how to keep the President from being overwhelmed by visitors and irrelevant paper work. One result has been the frequently voiced charge that Haldeman has been overzealous in protecting the President's time and energies.

Haldeman, himself, couldn't care less about the charges levelled against him. In this respect, he is as tough-skinned as his boss. As far as he is concerned, his only commitment is to serve the President and not the press or those eminent persons who are always seeking "just ten minutes alone with the boss."

The truth is that Haldeman is doing what the boss wants. He merely reflects the instincts of the President, who has a passion for privacy and a passion for order. He also reflects the President's desire not to get overly tired and, thus, become incapable of thinking clearly on momentous issues.

"He can't push himself to the point of exhaustion the way other people can with the idea that it won't matter because he can take a week off and rest up," says Haldeman. "The President never gets a week off. He never gets a day off. And he always has to assume that at any given moment some major thing is going to come up that is going to require his full resources. And, therefore, he has to be in shape all the time."

Richard Nixon learned this the hard way. During the 1960 campaign, for example, he would concern himself with the nitty-gritty details of managing his own campaign. As an associate recalls, "He

would do everything but sharpen the pencils." Thus, he often weakened himself for the more serious political tasks including his televised debates with John F. Kennedy.

"A lot of things upset the President," says Haldeman. "But he's so well disciplined and so much a fatalist that when something happens he can't do anything about he doesn't worry about it. And what makes most people angry is something they can't do anything about. For example, when people drop a dish or a favorite vase, they'll get mad but there's really nothing they can do about it that can make a difference.

"The President gets upset only when he is unable to get something corrected or moving in the way he wants it to be moving, and when there is no reason why it shouldn't be moving the way he wants it. In other words, by getting angry and raising Cain with people he hopes to get them moving ahead on something they should already have done. He is very impatient with excuses, with people failing to get done what they easily could get done.

"But once somebody blows something, and there's nothing that can be done to rectify the situation, the President never gets mad. There would be no point to it. It's like getting angry over a broken vase. It's broken. He recognizes that as President -- and he's always been this way -- the people around him will make mistakes, but he knows those mistakes are going to trouble us a lot more than it will him. So it doesn't add anything for him to jump on us and say 'that was a stupid thing to do' and bawl us out...."

However, Haldeman himself is much more of a perfectionist. "I expect things to be done right and done on time," he says candidly. "My job is primarily an internal one." As for press criticism, Haldeman says, "It doesn't affect my ability to carry out my job. But I hate to see it rub off on the Administration, which is sometimes called 'super-efficient, heartless and cold.' I think we have gone at solving problems in a very efficient, if not a very exciting, way. Before, there was too much excitement, too much stimulation."

On the mantel of his office fireplace (one of the status symbols of the Nixon Administration) sits a small gold-plated statue of an athlete with an arm raised. The statue is inscribed to Haldeman from his colleagues "for his subtle efforts in White House efficiency." The object at the end of the golden arm is not a football or a golf club but a golden whip.

CHAPTER 14

One evening in January 1970, the President worked late on his first State of the Union Address. About midnight he put the draft aside, called the Secret Service to say he was retiring, and went to bed. At about 2:30 a.m. the fire alarm on the White House police board sounded, indicating a fire upstairs in the Lincoln Sitting Room. Smoke was seeping out of the room when the police arrived, armed with buckets of sand and other fire-fighting equipment. Inside they found a smoldering log fire on the hearth and a rather sheepish President struggling to open the fireplace flue. Struck with an idea at about 2:00 a.m., the President had gotten up and returned to his desk in the Sitting Room, lighting the fire before resuming work on the speech. But the closed-flue "emergency" arose before he could get far with his State of the Union inspiration -- an idea on air pollution.

The salvation of the environment was the central theme of his State of the Union message. "The great question of the seventies," he said, "is, shall we surrender to our surroundings, or shall we make our peace with nature and begin to make reparations for the damage we have done to our air, our land and our water?"

Congressional criticism of the President's program was immediate. Indeed, even before he spoke, some Democrats accused Mr. Nixon of being a Johnny-come-lately to the cause, and charged that his conversion was half-hearted.

Actually what really disturbed the critics was the fact that the President appeared to have stolen their thunder on a problem which they hoped to develop into the number one political issue of the 1970s. In retrospect, they had a taste of Mr. Nixon's penchant for engaging in a politics of surprise. They had not expected the President to go as far as he did in his crusade to clean up the environment.

And he went pretty far for a supposedly industry-oriented President. In a special message to Congress, the President called for stricter standards and enforcement against both water and air pollution with fines of up to ten thousand dollars a day for violators. And he requested federal authority to control pollution of air and navigable waters in both intra- and inter-state situations.

There was nothing Johnny-come-lately about Mr. Nixon's views on ecology. Long before the subject became fashionable, he was concerned about the need to purify the nation's air and water, to do away with litter and junk, and to create more parks and recreation areas. In fact, all of these concerns were expressed in his 1968 race for the Presidency. And cleaning up the environment had become one of his major concerns in the summer of 1969, after his revenue-sharing plans and welfare reforms had been sent to the Congress. To supervise the policymaking efforts for environmental cleanup and restoration he assigned a Presidential assistant, John Whitaker, who is a geologist and a former executive in the area of natural resources evaluation.

At Whitaker's request, the President met with representatives of the Natural Resources Council of America on February 23, 1970. The thrust of Mr. Nixon's remarks was the need for maintaining the momentum of public support behind environmental programs.

Except for the representative of the Sierra Club the remarks were received warmly. The Sierra man, at the invitation of the President, took the floor. He said that the Administration was on a wrong course since, he claimed, it was not attacking the root problems, particularly those of population growth. Another root problem was the undisciplined growth of the Gross National Product. A case in point of how we waste assets was the electric toothbrush. Who needs it? The country was much more concerned about material progress than with returning to our natural environment, the man from Sierra said.

The President reacted rather sharply. He said, among other things, that the gentleman from the Sierra Club obviously had not read his message on population transmitted to the Congress the previous July. He noted that no President had ever before addressed himself to problems of population growth; and he suggested that the Sierra gentleman look it up and read it carefully.

The President was particularly proud of another message, one on the State of the World, which he transmitted to the Congress on February 18, 1970. It had its origins in the complete inventory on foreign policy he had ordered Henry Kissinger to make shortly after taking office. Dr. Kissinger had enlisted the aid of hundreds

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of policy-makers in the various agencies who transmitted memoranda through the machinery set up by the National Security Council. The object of the inventory was to determine just where the United States stood in terms of commitments and treaty obligations. Another object was to spell out the Nixon Administration's desire to reduce America's share of those commitments while at the same time preserving the structure and confidence they gave the free world.

On the eve of its release, the President briefed a Republican leadership meeting on the contents of the unprecedented forty-three-thousand-word document. The President said he, ~~himself~~, had worked on the final draft the previous weekend in Key Biscayne. Thus the report contained not only the best thinking of the various agencies, the NSC, State, Defense, CIA etc., but his own thoughts based on twenty-two years at high levels in the Government and extensive travels around the world.

Conceding that the document was long, complex and perhaps too novel to be digested quickly by the Congress and the public, the President felt nevertheless that it was "interesting reading." But, more important, it constituted a "watershed" in U.S. foreign policy, since it pointed up a shift from the policies of the past to new policies dealing with the world as it is today.

The President said that the United States must continue to play a role in the world; that if the United States goes isolationist and "returns home," the rest of the world could well come under Communist domination.

The major question, he went on, was how we could meet our responsibilities without draining ourselves economically and psychologically. The purpose of U.S. foreign policy, therefore, was to find a way to stay in the world, not a way to get out of the world. Thus the Message puts great responsibility on other free world nations to do more in their own behalf, he said. For example, they must assume an increasing share of their own defense.

Consider the case of Japan, the President said. Though there was a good deal of reluctance on the part of the Japanese people to involve themselves in world affairs, having gone through a traumatic period since the bomb was dropped, the President said he wouldn't be surprised if they became deeply involved within five years. Nevertheless, the President felt that the major counter-force to China should not be the United States, but Japan. Both the Chinese and the Russians recognized this possibility. Which was why they both showed more interest in the reversion of Okinawa to Japan than any other facet of American policy in the area. (The deal had been worked out between President Nixon and Prime Minister Sato in November 1969.)

The President eschewed gushing optimism of any kind. He said that some Americans think we could obtain peace by sending a few Fulbright scholars abroad or even Senator Fulbright himself, but such moves don't bring peace. We can only avoid war if we are realistic and not soft-headed. He himself would not describe his policies as either "hard line" or "soft line." He would rather describe them as

more pragmatic and realistic -- a "peace line." In the past, however, it had been his experience that a "soft line" had led to war more than a "hard line."

Moving on to the Middle East, the President said that many politicians believed that the basis of United States policy should be the simple question of whether or not Israel is to survive. It's not that simple. U.S. policy in the Middle East, he went on, is designed to advance United States interests primarily. Those interests involve vital stakes in the Arab world, interests which also are coincidental with the survival of Israel as a state. The fact is that the Israelis are currently the strongest buffer against Soviet expansion in the entire region.

The President, asking what were the Soviet objectives in the Middle East, answered his own question. The Soviets want control of the Middle East; they want the oil it contains; and they want a land bridge to Africa. And they had already established footholds in Algeria, the United Arab Republic, Syria, Iraq, the Sudan and "you know what has happened in Libya."*

* In a coup, leftwing military forces sympathetic to Egypt's Nasser seized power on September 1, 1969, overthrowing the pro-Western regime of King Idris I and proclaiming that oil-rich Arab nation a Socialist republic.

Though we do not intend to permit the destruction of Israel, U.S. policy may not be entirely pleasing to some of our political

friends at home, the President said. But it was definitely not in Israel's interest for U.S. policy to be one-sided. Israel, in his opinion, ought to make a deal now with the Arabs when she was still strong enough to whip anyone in the Middle East. The President said he had discussed this with Golda Meir when the Israeli Prime Minister had visited him the previous fall. He had also indicated to Mrs. Meir that for the first time in recent history an American President was supporting Israel not for political reasons -- after all, he had received only a tiny percentage of the so-called Jewish vote -- but he was supporting Israel because it was in the interests of the United States to do so.

Then he turned to what he termed a "vexing" domestic problem. It had to do with the forthcoming official state visit of French President Georges Pompidou. Considerable opposition was building up to the visit because the French had stopped selling Mirage jet fighters to Israel and had begun selling the planes to the leftist Libyan regime although it had scarcely any pilots to fly them. The popular belief was that the Libyans, who had aligned themselves with the more militant Arab nations against Israel, would turn the planes over to the Egyptians.

The President, his voice dripping with sarcasm, noted that some of New York's political leaders had "very courageously" spoken out against the Pompidou visit.

"Let me give you my thoughts on this," the President said. "It is the most hypocritical, cowardly act I have ever seen in my political life. We didn't see anything like this when Kosygin came

to New York shortly after the Middle East war which had been triggered by Soviet shipments of arms. No, all of those people slobbered over him."

The President emphasized he didn't agree with the French arms deal with the Libyans which included the sale of one hundred and ten warplanes. However, he understood the French rationale behind the move. The French, he said, sought a greater influence in North Africa and the Arab world.

"I intend to talk to President Pompidou when he gets here, but I will not invite the American people to go out and insult him as Mayor Lindsay has done," the President added. At this point, the President paid a compliment to Senate Majority Leader Mike Mansfield who had publicly stated he would have no part of the current "demagoguing" over the Pompidou visit. Likewise, he said, he felt that New York Congressman Manny Celler had shown particular courage in denouncing this type of activity.

On another subject, the President took note of the increasing Senate sentiment as exemplified by the Mansfield Resolution that the United States should reduce contributions to NATO to force the Europeans to do more for their own defense. The President said this was a difficult problem, but if the United States were to withdraw now under the pressure of the resolution, NATO would most certainly unravel. On the other hand, the United States does have a new attitude. We are telling Europe and, for that matter, Asia that they must do more and that we are going to do less. That is implicit in the President's State of the World Message.

But, above everything else, the President emphasized, we must remember that we are in Europe not to defend Germany, Italy, France or England. We are in Europe to save our own hides.

The President then summarized a number of points which he thought should be emphasized in speeches:

First, there had been no major crisis with the Soviet Union.

Second, there had been normalization of relations with Japan following the reversion of Okinawa.

Third, we have reopened lines of communication with Communist China.

Fourth, we were desperately seeking to resolve the crisis in the Middle East, but with passions on both sides running so deep, it was difficult to engineer a compromise.

Fifth, the United States had taken the initiative in renouncing all use of biological and toxic warfare.

And sixth, the President had made successful visits to Asia and Europe, which could not have been done in the previous Administration. We had re-established contact with General DeGaulle and from that had come our discussions with President Pompidou.

Asked about the thorny issue of school busing, the President said these were his views: The 1954 Supreme Court decision in Brown vs. Board of Education of Topeka was right. Segregated education was inherently inferior. Where the Court went wrong, in his opinion, was in the Green decision of 1968 which completely outlawed the freedom-of-choice route to school desegregation. And the error was

compounded in the Mississippi case, the President went on, when the Court ordered instant integration. As far as he was concerned, nobody can justify taking a child out of school in the middle of the school year and shipping him over to a new school in order to achieve racial balance. ~~The Court was wrong in saying, "Integrate now." A more reasonable time could have been provided.~~

The President noted that Professor Alexander Bickel of the Yale Law School, in his Holmes lectures and in an article in the New Republic which he had read that week, had recognized that the Supreme Court should have stopped with the Brown decision and not have gone further than that.* He also pointed out that Senator

* The thrust of the Bickel article in the February 7, 1970 issue of New Republic was that the furious pursuit of desegregation by the courts and the Government had created chaos and at the same time had failed to establish integrated schools. Bickel also suggested encouraging the growth of private schools, "hardly integrated but also not segregated, and enjoying state support through tuition grants for blacks and whites alike...."

Abe Ribicoff had called upon his fellow Northern liberals to drop their "monumental hypocrisy" and concede that de facto segregation exists in the North.

The President said he would not be surprised to see some of "our liberal friends" begin to move away from the Court decisions while, at the same time, keeping the Administration's feet to the fire in carrying them out. Such is the liberal hypocrisy on the

school issue.* But the Administration has the responsibility for

* On several private occasions, the President noted that many of those in the forefront of the fight to integrate the schools do not practice what they preach. Liberal Congressmen and Senators of both parties, for example, send their children to private schools which, for the most part, are lily-white.

carrying out the law and we will do that, he said. No question about it. There would be no warfare with the Court.

However, there are some people who are still thinking of the way it was five or ten years ago, but the situation is not the same today. The President said that things would have been different had we been "present at the Creation," as in the title of Dean Acheson's memoirs, but we weren't. We came into office with the situation already moving quickly. And there just doesn't seem to be a straight, easy answer. We are going to enforce the law; on the other hand, Bob Finch and John Mitchell are doing their best to interpret it. But the most important thing to consider in all of the controversy is the quality of education. That is the key issue being forgotten in all of the shouting.*

* Some of the shouting was coming from George Corley Wallace who the week before received a rousing, foot-stamping ovation from some fifteen thousand people at a rally in Birmingham when he urged Southern Governors to defy federal court integration orders. Wallace threatened to run for President again "if Nixon doesn't do something

about the mess our schools are in." Then he added: "The South has the balance of power now and will have it in 1972 and unless he does right, we'll see to it that Mr. Nixon is a one-term President."

The President then made three points that he thought should be ~~hit by the leadership~~^{made}: (1) no compulsory busing for the sole purpose of achieving racial balance; (2) for the neighborhood school concept; and (3) for equal application of the law.

Coming up for a Senate vote the next day was an amendment sponsored by Senator John C. Stennis, Democrat of Mississippi, calling for a cutoff of Federal funds to all school districts that fail to integrate, even if the racial imbalance was a product of residential patterns. In effect, this would require uniform application of school desegregation laws to all parts of the nation and not just to the South.

And this was on the President's mind as he convened a Cabinet meeting the next day, February 18, 1970.

"Mr. Attorney General, are you here?" the President asked.

"I think so," John Mitchell replied.

"I thought you were out with Finch working on that Stennis Amendment," the President said. "Which side are you on?"

"On the right side; right in the middle."

George Shultz interjected: "Don't you know that old proverb -- he who walks in the middle of the road gets hit from both sides?"

As the first item of business, the President called on Henry Kissinger to give a "slimmed-down version" of the foreign policy report that had been sent to the Congress that very day. And then the President repeated much of what he had told the leadership meeting the day before, adding: "It has been twenty-five years since World War II and the United States' approach in foreign affairs hasn't changed much. Now there is change. We are adopting a policy that is relevant to today. And a key element of that change is the recognition that now the Communist world is split."

Commenting on behalf of Secretary Rogers, Under Secretary of State Elliot Richardson observed that "this is the first time a President has ever tried to set out such an outline of foreign policy. It is the first such conscious and deliberate reassessment. It will serve as a basis for updating our foreign policy for a long time to come and it will give a clearer sense of guidance and direction to our diplomacy than perhaps we have ever had before."

"It will be interesting to see what the press does with it," Richardson concluded.

"Oh, the press," said the President, with a smile and a wave of the hand. "The press picks up only the hot news. Despite their claim to the contrary, the press is quite unsophisticated about this. They will miss the basic thrust."

Summing up the discussion, the President said there was "a very disturbing sense of isolationism -- of withdrawal -- in the country. Those who were internationalists at the time of the Marshall

Plan now want to get out of the world and the 'hot news' merchants say the U.S. is trying to get out. This point of view is wrong and it can be disastrous not only among ourselves but among our allies...This report sets forth a rationale by which the United States can play the role it must play in the world if freedom is to survive."

Turning to domestic matters, the President introduced Don Rumsfeld of the Office of Economic Opportunity to deliver a first report on the results of a New Jersey experiment in family assistance. The experiment involved supplementing the income of the working poor. Rumsfeld said the key point he had to report was that the information gathered thus far tended to demonstrate that "the family assistance program is workable."

It had been feared by some that income supplement payments would create an abnormal reaction in the working family, particularly that work motivation and effort would decrease. Rumsfeld said the early evidence indicated the contrary. Among those receiving payments, the work effort increased. The results showed "a very strong work motivation, much stronger than previously thought," he said. Rumsfeld emphasized that this was a preliminary report, one designed to get early answers to help with policy making.

President: "What is your overall point of view, based on these early results? Are you encouraged, discouraged or is the jury still out?"

Rumsfeld: "The jury is still out, but we are definitely encouraged by the indication that these payments do not decrease work motivation and effort."

Next to report was Dr. McCracken. The Chairman of the Council of Economic Advisers wanted to emphasize three points:

One, people should be reminded that the Administration knew all along that with a certain time lag, the policies of fiscal and monetary restraint which it had established would have the effect of slowing the economy. So the fact that the economy has slowed does not mean that anything "has dropped out of the sky."

Two, when the question is asked, "Are we moving into a recession?" it is difficult to answer because of the differences of opinion as to the definition of the word. The real definition of recession is a substantial and broad decline in business activity. The hairline decline in real output we have experienced so far is not a recession.

Three, it has been clear all along that there would be a modest rise in unemployment. McCracken said he had stated publicly that he expected the average unemployment for the year 1970 to be 4.3 percent as against 3.5 percent in 1969. He had done this because he had "thought it best to get the word out early."

At this point there ensued a discussion which revealed a rather deep and fundamental difference of opinion within the Cabinet on what the Administration's policy ought to be. The President welcomed the clash of views and listened intently.

Ranged on one side were George Romney and Red Blount who, without being specific, clearly wanted a greater effort to control wages and prices. On the other side, along with McCracken, were David Kennedy and George Shultz.

Blount: "It seems to many of us that our policies are directed too much toward slowing down the economy -- reducing profits and earnings -- and not directed enough toward holding down prices and labor costs."

Kennedy: "We must face the fact that our policies are working in a slower way than we had expected. But they are working ...To give up the ship now would be a bad thing. We should stay with our policies. We are just beginning to see the change."

Romney: "The change we see is only in the economic situation. There is no change in the inflation picture; no change in the price situation. There is a lack of policy in the wage-price field. We can see some very inflationary wage settlements coming this year."

At this point, McCracken warned that it would be unwise for the Administration to start a program "that tends to ultimately force the President to make decisions on wages and prices. We have a very slippery area here. If we set guidelines, they will be broken and then the question will be asked: 'Mr. President, what are you going to do about that?' And in this way, we will have forced the President into a corner."

The discussion -- not to say argument -- continued. Kennedy observed that as profits go down, companies tend to get tougher at the bargaining table and reach sounder settlements.

"Yes," Shultz said, "the General Electric settlement shows that to be the case."

"But," responded Blount, "not many companies have the guts that G.E. has."

Shultz: "We do have a strategy. It is a difficult one. It takes patience. Evidence all around is that it is beginning to take hold."

Romney: "But we must have a wage-price policy."

President: "What wage-price policy ever worked?"

Romney: "The British plan."

President: "Oh no, George. Don't tell me about the British wage-price policy. I know about that. It didn't work and anyway the situation here is quite different."

It was obvious, said the President, that there was a basic philosophical difference among the Cabinet officers which needed further discussion. He asked McCracken to listen to full arguments on the subject from all sides.

Looking at the politics of the matter, the President continued, it was necessary to keep in mind that "inflation has never defeated an Administration -- but recession has." Referring to the forthcoming 1970 electoral contests, the President said: "If the Administration goes into the election with a recession or a fear-of-recession psychology abroad in the land, then our candidates in the marginal districts will fail. And so, while our policies must be established to fight inflation, we must keep in mind that if these policies create a fear-of-recession psychology, they will be self-defeating. If our candidates are defeated and we can't hold our own in the House and the Senate, we will not have enough responsible members to carry on the fight against inflation."

The President added: "We must have the votes in Congress for a responsible fiscal policy. If you lose the men who will help, then you have lost the cause. So what we must do is avoid fear of a recession. We must combat what will be a desperate effort by the other side to show that this Administration has plunged the country into a recession."

And then the President turned to another hot issue -- the furor over schools. We must understand what our Democratic friends are up to, he said. And he referred to Senator Ribicoff who, in calling for nationwide application of the same integration policy, was not doing it to help the South. Ribicoff, he said, was trying to force the Administration to visit the troubles of the South on the North. At the same time a flaming liberal like Birch Bayh wants to place the Administration in the position of supporting the most extreme Supreme Court stance. As he viewed the situation, the President said, those Northern liberals who don't have any civil rights problems in the coming elections will try to needle the Administration in order to inflame the situation.

Once again the President outlined his position on the Brown decision of 1954. He said it was essentially sound. "Segregated education is inferior and, therefore, wrong. And there cannot be any more dual systems." Moreover, he thought that the South had been unwise in fighting the decision. On the other hand, he said, the recent decision that caused children to be taken out of school in mid-term and bused for the sole purpose of racial balance was harmful.

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~~John F. Kennedy~~

In the long run, said the President, the solution to the problem is an economic one. When ~~the~~ blacks have better economic resources and thus more social mobility, they will move in such a way as to ultimately eliminate de facto segregation. Recalling his own youth, the President said he had gone to school with blacks and Mexican-Americans and everybody had benefited from the association.

On March 24, 1970, the President issued an eight-thousand word statement to dispel "prevailing confusion" over his desegregation policies. He instructed his Administration to enforce "at once" the Supreme Court's school desegregation decrees, beginning with the historic 1954 decision, and he earmarked one and a half billion dollars to help pay for the transition and to upgrade education in "racially impacted areas" both North and South over the next two years. The President also told the nation that widespread de facto school segregation in Northern and Western ghettos was not illegal as long as the quality of education did not suffer. Generally, the statement was regarded as reasonable in most quarters and even those who were less than happy about it at least knew where the President stood on the thorny issue.*

* Writing in the New Republic, Professor Bickel praised the Nixon statement as "realistic and sensible," adding it "ought to help greatly in keeping the process of desegregation on the rails."

In the interim the President had met with a group of nuns, priests and teachers who were leaders in Catholic education. He

listened intently to their explanation of the financial plight of the parochial schools, made some notes, but said little. That afternoon he called Chuck Colson, his Special Counsel who had sat in on the meeting, back to the Oval Room.

The President said he had been thinking a good deal about the meeting. ⁴⁻¹⁷ Some people in education look out for themselves first, ~~he said,~~ but these people are genuinely concerned about educating kids. "They are sticking in the inner cities when others are bailing out -- because they really care. We've got to help them."

Reviewing his notes, the President ordered his Special Counsel: "Take charge of those stalled proposals to help the non-public schools. If you need to, break all the china in the White House, but get them moving."

Within a week, funds for library aid -- one area where the church-state controversy was not raised -- were doubled for the parochial schools of all denominations. And shortly thereafter a commission to study the financing of non-public schools was created. According to Colson, the President pushed these and other actions through in the face of some continuing staff opposition.

The Spring of 1970 was a rough one for the President. It had begun with demonstrations against French President Pompidou who was in the United States on an official visit. The demonstrations by Israeli sympathizers had been triggered by the antagonistic French policy toward Israel and France's supplying of arms to the

Arabs. They reached their peak in Chicago where Pompidou and his wife were jostled by angry crowds. In New York, the French President angrily cancelled a month-old commitment to meet with a small group of Jewish leaders. The furor prompted a hurried trip to New York the night of March 2 by President Nixon in order to apologize to the French leader for any discourtesy.

"It was an extraordinary gesture," commented Max Lerner in the New York Post, "the first time in American history, as he put it, that the President has ever gone out of his way to mollify a visitor by substituting for the Vice President. But he did it gracefully; and his gesture was not diminished by the probability that he enjoyed putting his two old enemies -- Nelson Rockefeller and John Lindsay -- in an uncomfortable position because they had found pressing engagements."

The next morning the President met with Republican leaders at the White House and gave his reasons for his last minute decision to fly to New York. He noted that during the sixties U.S. relations with France had reached a low point. In fact, France had left NATO. One of the purposes of his trip to Europe a year before was to restore a dialogue with De Gaulle. And out of that had come his recent talks with Pompidou. For one thing Pompidou had indicated France would not force the veto of the British into the Common Market.

The President went on to say that our goal was a strong and independent Europe which would be an equal competitor with the United States, looking westward instead of eastward. Unfortunately,

he said, there were some people who would still prefer a dependent, fragmented Europe; but not he.

We had opposed the sale of French jets to Libya, the President said. But the French justification was that the Libyans are rich; they are going to buy jets somewhere; if the French don't sell them, then the Russians will sell them and then the jets most assuredly will wind up in Nasser's hands.

The President noted that some of the cries of outrage were coming from people who had not voiced any loud complaints over the past ten years when the Soviet Union had shipped enormous amounts of arms and weapons to both the UAR and Syria -- the most hostile enemies of Israel in the Middle East.

The purpose of his talks with Pompidou, according to the President, aside from establishing communication with the French leader, was to obtain French cooperation on any number of major issues where we were in agreement. And the conversations had gone very well indeed.

As for the demonstrators, the President said, they were kept away from Pompidou in San Francisco and New York, but for some reason in Chicago "where the police have some competence in keeping people away," they moved within a few inches of the French President. This occurred in the lobby of a hotel and, according to Madame Pompidou, she was spat upon. Arriving in New York, Madame Pompidou cancelled an appearance at a scheduled luncheon and was making preparations to return to France when she was prevailed upon to remain.

John F. Kennedy

The President said he flew to New York for one reason and one reason alone: to make sure that the talks which had begun so successfully were not going to be terminated by hoodlum tactics. And that is why he apologized to the French President in behalf of the American people. Then he added: "The policy of the Government of the United States is not going to be affected by such demonstrations...Our guests are going to be treated with respect."

At this same March 3 leadership meeting the President also addressed himself directly to his nomination of Circuit Judge G. Harrold Carswell of Florida to fill the vacancy on the Supreme Court left by Abe Fortas. The President, going on the Justice Department's say-so, had sent the name up to the Hill on January 19. No one thought Carswell would have any trouble breezing through, partly because the Senate, after the Haynsworth business, was believed to be too exhausted to mount another such painful struggle. Moreover, Carswell had had no trouble being confirmed by the Senate when the President had routinely nominated him to the appeals court a half year before.

But having tasted blood with Haynsworth, the opposition forces, led by Senator Bayh of Indiana who by now was thinking of his chances on the '72 Democratic ticket, decided to have a go at Carswell. First, the Bayh group did an exhaustive investigation of Carswell's financial background only to discover that instead of a fortune the judge had acquired debts.

But then a zealous reporter, digging into the files of a Georgia newspaper, dug up a 1948 speech in which Carswell promised,

*Memo
to send
copy
to
Clyde*

if elected to a local political office, to support white supremacy. What did not get as much attention was the fact that as editor of the newspaper Carswell had denounced the racism of former Governor Eugene Talmadge. In fact, Carswell was too liberal for the voters; he was beaten.

The fact that Carswell had repudiated his youthful views was ignored by his critics. And his nomination was delayed in the Senate, much to the consternation of the President who told his Republican leaders that the longer "it hangs" the more tar will be thrown on the man, making it all the more impossible for Carswell to function properly on the Court. But, the President said, he believed it was unfair and morally wrong for the Senate not to vote Carswell "up or down on his credentials; they have them."

The hypocrisy of some of the anti-Carswell Senators did not go unnoticed at the White House. It was recalled, for example, that Senator Kennedy had five years before sought to foist upon the Federal judiciary a nominee so patently unqualified that it shocked even his closest friends. In fact, The New York Times had gone so far as to term Kennedy's conduct a "tiresome display of familial arrogance and personal effrontery."

In the end, Carswell's critics sought to portray him "not as an ordinary product of his time and place, but as a cross between a prevaricating cretin and a racist ogre," wrote Stewart Alsop in Newsweek. "Carswell's evasions about his role in starting an all-white country club in 1956 helped. The issue was piously exploited

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by those [commentators as well as politicians] who regularly eat or play golf at all-white clubs -- such small hypocrisies are well within the rules of the game. But it began to be clear that this sort of thing would not be enough to defeat Judge Carswell."

What finally did do Carswell in was a burst of candor on the part of Senator Roman Hruska. "There are lots of mediocre judges and people and lawyers," said the Nebraska Republican. "They are entitled to a little representation..." Of course, as Alsop noted, Hruska, as a political veteran, "should have known that even a candidate for dog catcher must be portrayed by his supporters as touched with genius. When Hruska broke this old rule, he gave Carswell's [or Mr. Nixon's] opponents just what they needed to wrap cool political calculation in a layer of disinterested concern for the good of the Court and the nation."

Finally, the Senate voted fifty-one to forty-five against confirming Carswell. The next day the President took to the podium in the White House press room. He said he had "reluctantly concluded" that it was not possible for him to "get confirmation for a judge on the Supreme Court of any man who believes in the strict construction of the Constitution, as I do, if he happens to come from the South." Both Carswell and Haynsworth, he said, had been subjected to "vicious assaults...on their character" and falsely called racists. "But when you strip away all the hypocrisy, the real reason for their rejection was their legal philosophy...and also the accident of their birth. I have concluded, therefore, that the next nominee must come from outside the South."

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The President had about decided who the next nominee would be. In fact, the day after the Carswell verdict was in, Judge Harry Andrew Blackmun, 61, of the Eighth Circuit Court of Appeals in St. Paul, Minnesota, had flown to Washington for secret interviews. A lifelong friend of Chief Justice Burger, Blackmun was a Republican and a strict constructionist. He was nominated on April 14 and was confirmed unanimously by the Senate a month later.

On top of everything else, the President had faced a serious domestic crisis in mid-March. That crisis began with a wildcat strike of postal workers. The illegal walkout which had started in New York had spread across the country within a few days, threatening the nation's credit-based economy and causing severe hardships to innumerable businesses. The President faced up to the problem quickly by declaring a national emergency and, in an unprecedented act, sending Federal troops only into the Manhattan Post Office. At the same time the President knocked heads together at the White House until, a week after it had begun, the strike ended. The striking workers returned after they were assured action would be taken on their pay raises.

On April 13, in the newly-furbished Cabinet Room, the first item on the agenda of the Cabinet meeting was the new post office package wrapped up by the Administration and the postal workers' unions.

The most significant accomplishment, according to the President, was postal reform. To Red Blount, the President observed:

"You've been working for reform since the day you were sworn in; and you didn't really think you were going to get it, did you?"

"Well," replied the Postmaster General, "I didn't intend to use a postal strike to get it."

"It's one of those things. I don't suppose you would have gotten it without this trouble."

The President then turned to the problems of Government workers. If the Government holds to the principle that its employees have no right to strike, he said, then it has the responsibility to be certain that employee grievances are adequately and promptly considered. "What we are trying to do is get some order into the process," he said. "We must set up a system that lets people know that when they go into Government, they give up something [right to strike] but they also get something [a guarantee of good grievance procedures]."

Labor Secretary Shultz, discussing the wage-price situation in the private sector, reported that recent high settlements in labor disputes were part of "a wage explosion" going on throughout the free world. The Administration, he said, must struggle to get the consumer price index down before there is too much push from wages. One of the problems in the economy, he added, was that productivity was static.

The President asked about studies showing that productivity had been harmed by the fact that, because of various job programs, people had entered the work force before they were ready and able to work. Shultz agreed that this was true.

The President then asked George Romney whether productivity in the completely unionized automobile industry had gone down. The HUD Secretary, a former top automobile executive, said it had, largely because management had not pressed hard for productivity.

Herb Stein then reported that the Council of Economic Advisers felt the economy was following a reasonable and satisfactory pattern. He said the CEA expected a sluggish performance during the first six months of 1970, followed by an upturn in the second half at a time when the price increase curve would be turning down.

After the President voiced his concern about unemployment figures, Secretary Laird could offer little hope in his area. He said that due to cutbacks in defense spending defense-related industries would soon be laying off an estimated half million employees; and Shultz added that "the aerospace industry is falling apart...In the state of Washington, unemployment has reached 7.7." This brought a comment from Finch, "California is a disaster zone."

Deep concern about the economy was evident around the table. But the President took a broad view of the subject: Naturally, he said, he was concerned about the timing because the political fate of some good friends including George Bush and George Murphy, would be affected by the state of the economy.*

* Congressman Bush later in the year ran as the Republican candidate for Senator from Texas; and Senator Murphy of California had already announced he would run again. Both were to go down to defeat.

If he thought there was anything he could do to assure a better economic picture by November, the President said he would do it. As usual, he went on, the Federal Reserve Board had held money too tight and too long. There should have been a gradual loosening in September "and they were told that but they held on." Now that Arthur Burns was over there, maybe that kind of thing will be remedied. But now, if the Board loosens up too much, the result might well be an overheated economy and the same old problem in 1971.

The Cabinet then discussed whether the Administration could help the economy selectively by relaxing spending restrictions for certain defense contracts or providing more money for housing. The President asked Secretary Romney to look into the housing matter. And he asked Budget Director Mayo to ascertain whether it would be practicable to relax the freeze on Federal construction or take other action with regard to defense contracts, particularly in such places as Seattle and Los Angeles, where there had been large layoffs.

With a grin and a wave of the hand toward John Ehrlichman, a Seattleite, the President said, "I don't really care much about Seattle, but take care of Los Angeles."

The President had been doing a considerable amount of thinking about the economy. He read all the documents, examined all the statistics, but still he was dissatisfied. The economy was not responding as well as he had hoped. On April 27, he met

with his Council of Economic Advisers (McCracken, Stein and Houthakker) along with four outside economists, Milton Friedman, Pierre Rinfret, George Katona and James J. O'Leary, all men of considerable reputation.

Introducing the gathering in his Oval Office as "a kind of seminar about inflation," the President added, "and recession." There ensued a spirited debate, in which Friedman and Rinfret took opposing views.

Friedman came right to the point. He predicted a recession, not as severe as the one in 1958, but more severe than the mini-recession of 1961.

"Like '54?" the President asked, and Friedman agreed. The University of Chicago professor urged the Administration to continue restraints and to keep away from jawboning, involving the Presidential office directly in the business of keeping wages and prices down.

Rinfret differed sharply with Friedman and, as he talked, Friedman kept shaking his head. A colorful New York economist who had advised Mr. Nixon during the 1968 campaign, Rinfret said we were headed for a November with a five percent inflation, over five percent unemployment and record-high interest rates. The result, he warned, would be a Democratic Congress that would never halt inflation.

Rinfret's recommendations: (1) jawboning hard right now, because as a "practical man" [as against Friedman's "Ivory tower"]

he had counseled his client-companies to raise prices now, something they would not do if the President were likely to object; (2) lean hard on the Federal Reserve Bank to loosen money much more; and (3) spend more money now to get the economy turning upward and to cut unemployment.

Friedman, countering Rinfret and O'Leary, said this was all the "New York syndrome," adding that Wall Street always took a panicky, short-range view. If we didn't beat inflation now, he went on, we never would.

And so the debate ended.

There was another debate going on that day at the White House -- this one much more secret and far more dramatic. The debate was about the President's decision to send United States troops into Cambodia.

CHAPTER 15

In the closing days of April 1970 President Nixon suddenly and unexpectedly seized the initiative in a military struggle that had for years been one mainly of measured and inadequate response. He gave the go-ahead signal for American combat forces to drive into a section of Cambodia which had for years been used as privileged sanctuaries by North Vietnamese troops. It was to prove one of the most successful military moves made by the United States throughout the long dreary war in Southeast Asia.

At the same time the Cambodian incursion awakened old fears and revived the legacy of distrust from the previous Administration, the feeling that the national leadership was widening and prolonging an already over-long war.

The President had foreseen this development, but he felt he had no alternative if his plan for Vietnamization were to succeed, thus bringing American boys home at a faster pace.

What he had not and could not have foreseen was the tragedy at Kent State and its explosive repercussions on the campuses. The Cambodian decision and its aftermath were to prove his most agonizing weeks in the White House.

Cambodia is a nation that makes Alice's Wonderland appear to be the epitome of logic and order. Norodom Sihanouk was its King before becoming its Chief of State. On March 18, 1970, while the playboy politician was in Moscow, Sihanouk was ousted by a unanimous vote of his own puppets. The coup was led by Lieutenant General Lon Nol, the premier and defense minister.

The new Lon Nol regime sought to continue negotiations with Vietcong and North Vietnam representatives in Pnom Penh aimed at getting Communist troops out of Cambodia. But the Communist delegations refused to negotiate and, moreover, they shut down their embassies.

On March 31, the Cambodian Government asked Great Britain and the Soviet Union to reconvene the International Control Commission in order to protect Cambodian neutrality. The Soviet Union rejected the plea and informal Cambodian soundings at the United Nations indicated there was little likelihood of getting the Security Council to act against what amounted to a North Vietnamese invasion of a neutralist nation.

On April 3, the Vietnamese Communists began attacks against Cambodia's small and ill-equipped army units. In Peking, Sihanouk announced he had formed a government in exile. Things were going badly for the Lon Nol regime. Within weeks, the new Government issued the first of a series of appeals to foreign governments for arms assistance. One of them was addressed personally to President Nixon by Lon Nol.

The United States Government had been caught completely by surprise by the March 18 deposition of Prince Sihanouk. The first Washington reaction was to encourage the negotiations which the Cambodians were seeking with the Communists. Instead, Hanoi ordered its forces within Cambodia to take the offensive, thus threatening the neutral Government in Pnom Penh.

On April 18 the President was in Hawaii to greet the astronauts of Apollo 13 who were forced to abort their moon landing. The following morning he breakfasted with Admiral John McCain Jr., Commander in Chief of U.S. forces in the Pacific, and one of the things they discussed was the possibility of taking action against enemy sanctuaries in Eastern Cambodia.

Returning to San Clemente the President on April 20 delivered a televised report on Vietnam, disclosing plans for the removal of another hundred and fifty thousand troops over the next year. He said that the training and equipping of the South Vietnamese forces had substantially exceeded expectations.

By the time the President returned to the White House the following day the dispatches from Pnom Penh were most discouraging. Frustrated by evidence that its army was unable to turn back the Communists only fifteen miles from the capital -- they had captured the town of Saang, southeast of Pnom Penh -- and by the almost total lack of response for arms aid from other countries, Cambodia reportedly was gripped by an atmosphere of national emergency.

For the next ten days, unknown to the outside world, the White House was the scene of unusual activity as the President sought to determine just what the facts were and also what should be done. On April 22 a meeting of the National Security Council was held. Present, besides Vice President Agnew, Secretary of State Rogers and Secretary of Defense Laird, were Brigadier General George A. Lincoln of the Office of Emergency Preparedness, Attorney General Mitchell, CIA Director Helms, Admiral Thomas Moorer, Chief of Naval Operations, and Dr. Kissinger.

The Cambodian picture looked bleak indeed. It was obvious that the enemy was moving out of the sanctuaries it had occupied during the Sihanouk regime, and was toying with the idea of seizing all of Cambodia and installing a puppet government in Pnom Penh. As the President later pointed out: "We faced the prospect of one large enemy base camp six hundred miles along South Vietnam's flank; a solid supply route from the port of Sihanoukville through which most of the war materiel for the southern half of South Vietnam had come in the previous six years; and a vast staging and sanctuary area from which to attack allied forces in Vietnam with impunity. This would have meant increased enemy attacks, higher casualties among our men and allies, and a clear threat to Vietnamization, the withdrawal program and the security of South Vietnam."

But what to do about it? At first, the President thought in terms of a South Vietnamese incursion against the sanctuaries in the Parrot's Beak, thirty-five miles west of Saigon. He called for detailed planning for such a move. Two days later he began thinking of using American troops to strike into sanctuaries in the Fishhook area, just north of the Parrot's Beak, where COSVN, the Communist Central Office for South Vietnam was believed to be located.

At the President's request, Dr. Kissinger met with Senator John Stennis, Chairman of the Senate Armed Forces Committee, briefing the Mississippian for about an hour on the contemplated plans. Stennis raised no objections.

As is his custom, Kissinger wanted to hear arguments from the other side. He called together five members of his staff who he suspected would be bitterly opposed to a Cambodian incursion. And he was right. They were emotional in their denunciations of the plan, stating that it would mean an escalation of a war which the President had promised to wind down and that the domestic reaction would be explosive. One staffer noted that the Vietnam Moratorium Committee, which a few weeks ago had announced it was going out of business because of a lack of funds, would be reactivated.

That night, at Camp David, the President took an hour-long walk alone. He was deep in thought. He still had not made up his mind as to whether to use American troops.

Some time during the long weekend the President sat by himself and wrote down what he considered to be the pluses and minuses of his contemplated intervention in Cambodia. As usual, he had marshalled his thoughts on a lined yellow pad. And those writings, contained on one page, provided a fascinating insight into the thinking of a President beset by tremendous dissension at home and uncharted perils abroad.

One of the President's pluses was that intervention "may" (and the word was underlined) encourage Hanoi to negotiate. Another was that it would speed Vietnamization. And a third was it might divert the Communists from attacking Phnom Penh.

As for minuses, the President wrote that use of U.S. troops would provoke "deep divisions" in the United States, that it might

cause the Communists to break off the Paris peace talks and that it might lead to a Communist attack across the demilitarized zone in Vietnam.

The concern the President felt about domestic discord was discussed at a Sunday NSC meeting held at the White House on April 26. Were the benefits to be obtained from using U.S. troops worth the expected rise in bitter dissent? The President, however, made it clear he still had not made a decision on whether to go ahead.

Shortly before his final decision, the President called in several key advisers plus a few Cabinet members. He disclosed his thoughts. One aide warned that if he used American troops "in my opinion, the campuses will go up in flames."

"Believe me," the President responded, "I've considered that danger." Then he said that if he decided to go into Cambodia "it will be because I have decided to pay the price."

On Tuesday, April 28, Richard Nixon ~~decided to pay the price.~~ He called in Secretaries Rogers and Laird to inform them that he was taking full responsibility for launching attacks against the Parrot's Beak and the Fishhook, using American troops. Later he briefed Spiro Agnew on his decision. The Vice President endorsed the venture. Later that day he began dictating to Rose Mary Woods on what he intended to say on television two days hence. Those notes, plus material put together by Kissinger, were turned over to speechwriter Pat Buchanan, who began working on an outline.

At 10:00 p.m. the President was informed that South Vietnamese forces accompanied by American advisers had jumped off at the Parrot's Beak.

Most of the day, Wednesday, April 29, the President worked on his speech. The speech now was scheduled for delivery at 9:00 p.m. the next day. He broke for dinner with his family. During the day he had summoned his daughter and son-in-law, Julie and David Eisenhower, from their home at Northampton, Massachusetts, telling them that the campuses were likely to "blow up" and he would like them to be at the White House. After dinner he went to the Lincoln Sitting Room where he worked closely with Miss Woods on the draft of his speech, making corrections and dictating new sentences. At midnight, he decided to retire. But he couldn't sleep. He returned to the Lincoln Room where he worked until dawn.

The President was in a somber mood as he briefed the Congressional leadership of both parties and the Cabinet on his plans in the White House theater. He said he knew there were those in the room who could not support him on Cambodia. He understood their feelings. But he had to do what he considered to be the right thing. Then, turning to Senator Mansfield, whom he called "Mike", he recalled how often the Majority Leader and he had worked together. He also noted the presence of J. William Fulbright, whom he had also known from Congressional days. He said he would soon be on nationwide television.

As he left, everyone in the room, even those who would be bitterly assailing him the next day, stood up and applauded.

"Tonight," the President told the nation from the Oval Room, "American and South Vietnamese units will attack the headquarters for the entire Communist military operation in South Vietnam. This key control center has been occupied by the North Vietnamese and Vietcong for five years in blatant violation of Cambodia's neutrality.

"This is not an invasion of Cambodia. The areas in which these attacks will be launched are completely occupied and controlled by North Vietnamese forces. Our purpose is not to occupy the areas. Once enemy forces are driven out of these sanctuaries and once their military supplies are destroyed, we will withdraw."

It was one of the President's most dramatic speeches. Yet it was direct, strong and temperate. And it told a great deal about the President himself, his views and his hopes.

"My fellow Americans," he went on, "we live in an age of anarchy, both abroad and at home. We see mindless attacks on all the great institutions which have been created by free civilizations for the last five hundred years. Even here in the United States great universities are being systematically destroyed. Small nations all over the world find themselves under attack from within and without.

"If, when the chips are down, the world's most powerful nation, the United States of America, acts like a pitiful, helpless giant, the forces of totalitarianism and anarchy will threaten free nations and free institutions throughout the world."

The President emphasized he had rejected all political considerations in making his decision. "I would rather be a one-term President and do what I believe is right than to be a two-term President at the cost of seeing America become a second-rate power and to see this nation accept the first defeat in its proud one hundred and ninety-year history."

The next morning many of the nation's campuses, ~~as expected,~~ erupted. But the news out of Cambodia was good. On a visit to the Pentagon, the President was briefed on late military developments. The Allied forces were moving rapidly and casualties were less than had been expected. The President, ~~his spirits high,~~ told a small group of Pentagon officials that those students "blowing up the campuses" were "bums."*

* The President had been particularly troubled about the fire-bombings which had taken place a week before at the Center for Advanced Study in the Behavioral Sciences in Stanford, California. The life work of a visiting professor from India, Dr. M.N. Srinivas, chairman of the sociology department of the University of Delhi, had gone up in smoke. When Mr. Nixon read of the incident he had immediately written a letter of sympathy to Dr. Srinivas.

On Monday morning, after checking reports from around the country, White House aides decided that the President would have majority support with a clearly manageable amount of dissent.

What no one had counted on was Kent State. For some days this undergraduate institution of some nineteen thousand students

in rural Ohio had been seething with leftwing activist activity. This was nothing new at the university. For a long time, a highly permissive faculty and administration had permitted student excesses. The night after the President's speech, rioting students had wreaked havoc on the nearby town of Kent and had put the torch to the ROTC building on campus. Governor James Rhodes consequently declared martial law and dispatched National Guardsmen to restore order.

But shortly after noon on Monday, May 4, shots rang out from National Guard rifles at Kent State. Four students, two of them women, were killed. Eight others were wounded. Though no federal soldier or federal order was involved, the tragedy was immediately connected in the public mind with Cambodia, the Nixon Administration and its attitudes and policies.

Then hysteria literally swept the campuses as hundreds of colleges and universities closed down in the wake of a national students' strike. The presidents of thirty-six institutions signed a letter drafted by James Hester of New York University which urged Mr. Nixon "to consider the incalculable dangers of an unprecedented alienation of America's youth and to take immediate action to demonstrate unequivocally your determination to end the war quickly."

Another letter annoyed the President even more. Written by Secretary of Interior Hickel, it complained that the Administration was turning its back on the great mass of American youth and thereby contributing to anarchy and revolt. It urged that young people -- and Cabinet officers [meaning himself] -- be more widely heard within the Administration, and that the Vice President's

barbed rhetoric be less widely heard in the country at large. The message -- which was published in the newspapers even before the President saw it -- made Hickel just about persona non grata at the White House.

On May 27, three weeks after the letter was published and the furor over Cambodia considerably diminished, the President instructed John Ehrlichman to ask Hickel for his resignation. The Secretary had previously been informed of the President's dissatisfaction with his performance. For example, a preliminary audit had raised "disturbing questions" about the Secretary's control of his department. Typical was the Secretary's making of policy by first giving announcements to the press and then trying to figure how to meet commitments on such things as combatting pollution and financing parks.

Ehrlichman relayed the President's sentiments to Hickel, who pointed out that if he left the Administration now it would be too late for him to run for his old job as Governor of Alaska. Informed of this, the President relented, saying Hickel could remain in his post until the November elections.

On May 7, the President met with eight members of the Association of American Universities to discuss the turmoil that had closed down hundreds of schools. The college heads were Nathan Pusey of Harvard; Malcolm Moos of the University of Minnesota (and a former Eisenhower speechwriter); W. Allen Wallis of the University of Rochester; William C. Friday of the University of North Carolina;

Fred H. Harrington of the University of Wisconsin; Charles J. Hitch of the University of California at Berkeley; G. Alexander Heard of Vanderbilt and Edward H. Levi of the University of Chicago.

The President began by stating that, given recent developments on the campuses, there were certain questions he wanted to consider with the university representatives:

What should be the Federal role, even the Presidential role, toward student problems? Should the Federal Government get involved in university administration? And what should be the relationships of state and local governments, and of course the National Guard, to the university?

The President said he had met the previous day with six students from Kent State, all of whom were basically against the war in Vietnam. The students had told him that their purpose in coming to Washington was not just to protest the war but to try to explain what was happening on the campuses. They had noted, for example, that the disturbances at Ohio State University were largely due to dissatisfaction with the curriculum and had nothing to do with the war. Moreover, according to the students, the initial protests at Kent State were over Black Power, although Cambodia quickly was added as an issue.

The President then asked a broader question: Once we are out of Cambodia, what happens? It would be a mistake, he added to believe that once the war problem was solved the campus problem would be solved. Far from it. The causes of campus turmoil are far deeper and all of us must try to understand them.

Dr. Pusey, speaking in behalf of the academic group, voiced their gratitude in being asked to see the President, even though most of them were sleepy as a result of the week's activities on their respective campuses. He said the past week was new, different and terribly serious. He indicated that the academic community was no longer dealing with a handful of radicals but rather a broad-based group of students and faculties who were upset over developments in Southeast Asia. Even the conservatives were filled with anxiety. This new unrest, he said, springs from three things:

One was Cambodia. Though none of the men present were there to pass judgement, Pusey said, it did seem on the campuses to have been the last straw. Students and faculty felt it was an expansion of the war and there was the feeling of "here we go again!"

Then there was Kent State.

And finally, the speeches of the Vice President which students considered hostile to their interests.

One result of the meeting was the appointment two days later of Vanderbilt's Dr. Heard as liaison for two months between the Administration and the academic community, both administrators and students. As Dr. Heard told newsmen: "The President demonstrated his willingness to listen. I will do my best to help him hear."

Meanwhile, the President gave orders for full Government cooperation with the sponsors of an anti-war demonstration in Washington on Saturday, May 9.* He had also scheduled a televised

* Such cooperation included the provision of portable lavatory facilities as well as walkie-talkie equipment to the leaders of the demonstration. Where the White House drew the line was on requests for housing the demonstrators. "We thought they ought to do some things for themselves," said one top official.

press conference for the eve of the demonstration. That day, Friday, he placed a telephone call to Harry S Truman to wish the former President well on his 86th birthday. Mr. Truman, in turn, wished the President well during his hour of crisis.

As night fell on Washington, several thousand youngsters, some carrying empty coffins and others singing such Beatle hymns as "Give Peace a Chance," walked past the White House. Security was extra-tight and flood lights played across the lush green lawns of the Executive Mansion. Inside, the East Room was packed with correspondents awaiting the President's arrival.

The President had good news to report at his press conference. The action in Cambodia was going much better than had been anticipated, he said. So much so that the President said "the great majority of all American units will be out by the second week of June" with everyone else out by the end of the month.

But the newsmen were mainly interested in the student protests. And the President, on the whole, took a relatively conciliatory attitude toward them. "They're trying to say that they want peace. They're trying to say that they want to stop the killing.

They're trying to say that they want to end the draft. They're trying to say that we ought to get out of Vietnam."

"I agree," the President went on, "with everything that they're trying to accomplish. I believe, however, that the decisions I have made, and particularly this last terribly difficult decision of going into the Cambodian sanctuaries which were completely occupied by the enemy -- I believe that that decision will serve that purpose. Because you can be sure that everything that I stand for is what they want.

"I would add this. I think I understand what they want. I would hope they would understand somewhat what I want."

Asked whether the country was headed for "an era of repression," the President said that as long as those in authority tolerated "the right to dissent," thus providing "safety valves" to protesters, "you are not going to have revolution, which comes from repression." He described as "nonsense" the charge that his own policies were repressive and cited his decision of that very day to permit the weekend demonstration to take place on the Ellipse near the White House "where I could hear it -- and you can hear it pretty well, I can assure you..."

Another question had to do with the Middle East situation which, unknown to most correspondents, was causing the President almost as much concern as Cambodia. The President said the situation had become "ominous" because of the reported presence of Soviet pilots in the UAR Air Force. "If those reports prove to be true

and if that continues to escalate, this will dramatically shift the balance of power and it would make it necessary for the United States to re-evaluate its decision with regard to the sale of jets to Israel. We have...made it very clear, and this is in the interest of peace in that area, that the balance of power must not be changed, and we will keep that commitment."*

* One of the more absurd attacks on the President that week came from Herbert Block, or Herblock, as he signs his Washington Post cartoons. In a cartoon that week, Herblock not only equated the U.S. action in Cambodia with the Soviet action in sending pilots into Egypt, which was bad enough, but he then contended that the Soviet move stemmed from "U.S. faltering in the Middle East." It was typical of such liberals as Herblock that the U.S. action in Cambodia was criticized as "U.S. over-involvement" while U.S. efforts to maintain a balance of power in the Middle East was regarded as evidence of "U.S. faltering." This kind of liberal irrationality ~~was appalling to the President because it~~ conveniently overlooked the common Communist threat to the independence of small nations in Southeast Asia and in the Middle East.

Following the press conference, the President telephoned friends around the country, getting their views on how things were going. About 2:00 a.m. he retired. After sleeping fitfully for several hours, he summoned his valet, Manolo Sanchez, and suggested they drive down to the Lincoln Memorial which, he said, was beautiful in the moonlight.

The President, accompanied by Sanchez and a worried Secret Service detail, drove to the Memorial where they found eight students, completely astonished to see President Nixon materialize before them. They were so astonished, in fact, they were speechless. To get a conversation going, the President asked where they were from.

Several of the youngsters volunteered that they had not been able to hear the President's press conference because they had been driving all night. The President said he was sorry they missed it because he had tried to explain that his goals in Vietnam were the same as theirs -- to stop the killing and to end the war.

The President said he realized that most of them did not agree with his position on the war, but he hoped their disagreement on the issue would not prevent them from giving him a hearing on other issues on which we could all agree. He said he particularly hoped that their hatred of the war, which he could well understand, would not turn into a bitter hatred of our whole system, our country and everything it stands for.

The President recalled that, when he was just out of law school and not much older than the students, he was excited when Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain returned from Munich and talked about "peace in our time."

The President said he was so poor in those days that the prospect of going into the service was almost unbearable. Moreover, the President said, his Quaker background made him as close to being a pacifist as anyone could be. As a result, he felt Chamberlain to

be the "greatest man alive." And when he read Winston Churchill's all-out criticism of Chamberlain, he thought Churchill "a madman."

"I was wrong," the President said. He realized only later that Chamberlain was a good man, but Churchill was a wise man. And the world was better off because Churchill had not only the wisdom but the courage to carry out policies he thought were right, even though for a time he was decidedly unpopular because he espoused an "anti-peace" position.

As he talked to the students, the President wondered whether he was getting his point across and whether his historical allusions were not being lost on the youngsters whose numbers by now had increased considerably.

So he changed the subject. He talked about various places he had visited and he urged his listeners to travel while they were still young, recalling how shortly after they were married, he and Pat had gone to Mexico and other parts of Central America.

One young lady asked him about Moscow. "It's a gray city," the President responded. The most beautiful cities he had visited behind the Iron Curtain, he said, were Prague and Warsaw.

The President then told of his hopes of opening up Communist China to American travelers and most of the young people nodded in agreement. But one student said, "Mr. President, I hope you realize we are willing to die for what we believe in."

The President replied that he was committed to building a world in which nobody will ^{have to} die for what he believes in.

As the first rays of the sun began to climb over the Lincoln Memorial, Manolo Sanchez whispered in the President's ear that there was an important phone call for him back in the car. The President, of course, realized that the Secret Service detail was getting uneasy as the crowd surrounding the President continued to grow. So the President said he had to go.

Walking down the steps of the Lincoln Memorial, the President encountered a group of students from Syracuse University and he talked briefly with them about football. With another group from California he mentioned surfing. As he was about to enter his car, the President noticed that a bearded youth from Detroit was taking his picture. The President asked if he would like to get into the picture. The bearded boy stood next to the President as the President's doctor, who by now had joined the entourage, took a picture. "The fellow seemed delighted," the President said. "It was, in fact, the broadest smile I'd seen on my visit to the Memorial."

The President then drove to the Capitol in order to show it to Sanchez, who had never been there before. After a guided tour by the President, Sanchez suggested returning to the White House for breakfast. The President suggested going elsewhere. He and Sanchez wound up in the Rib Room of the Mayflower Hotel, where they breakfasted on corned beef hash and poached eggs. Leaving the hotel, he ran into some old Republican friends from Massachusetts, Mr. and Mrs. Joe Tauro Jr. and their children. The President again posed for pictures.

Back in the White House at 7:30 a.m. the President briefed the only reporter on the premises, Garnett Horner of the Washington Evening Star, as to the morning's events.

Back in his office the President was advised by Bob Haldeman of the presence of Federal troops on the upper floors of the Executive Office Building across the street.

They had been there all night, preparing for any emergency arising out of the day's events, and Haldeman thought the President might wish to say hello to them.

A few minutes later the President and his chief-of-staff walked over to the EOB and took an elevator to the fourth floor where the troops were sitting on the marble floor, talking and smoking. When they realized it was the President standing among them, they leaped to their feet in rigid attention. The President shook hands with each of them, asking questions about how they slept. They said they had spent the night on the floor in sleeping bags.

The President, who was obviously tired, made some small talk. When one soldier said he was from Burbank, California, the President said, "You mean beautiful downtown Burbank?" The men laughed. One soldier, a Mexican-American, said he was from Texas and the President said Texas was a fine state. On meeting a sergeant from Texarkana, the President said when he was stationed in the Solomons he had met someone from that city -- the best "scrounger" of food he had ever known and a good poker, who, when he returned to Texarkana, had apparently opened a bar and grille.

"Then he could have been a member of my family," the young sergeant said.

The President then talked to the soldiers as a group: "Please tell the others that I wish I could have seen them all and that I am very proud of the men that make up the Army."

~~As he turned away, he said in an almost emotional voice, "This is a good country."~~

~~Returning to the White House, the President entered Pat Moynihan's office but the Counselor was not there. So he dropped in on Henry Kissinger. After a short conversation, the President went to his upstairs quarters for a nap. This time he had no difficulty falling asleep but by noon he was back working in the Oval Office. He could hear the chants coming from the enormous crowd that had gathered for an anti-war demonstration in the Ellipse.~~

~~Developments in Cambodia were indeed progressing satisfactorily. And the President began to devote more of his time to other matters. On the morning of May 19 he called a Cabinet meeting. The President was delayed for half an hour and he apologized. "Sorry to keep you waiting," he said. He explained he had attended a legislative meeting "and sometimes they talk a bit more than Cabinet members."~~

~~One item on the agenda had to be postponed, the President said, because HEW Secretary Finch -- who was to discuss the campus situation -- had gone to the hospital the day before with a worrisome numbness in his left arm. The newspapers that morning had reported~~

that Finch had become ill just prior to attending a meeting of HEW civil servants at which he intended to defend the President's Cambodian operation. When Under Secretary John Veneman read Finch's statement, he was hissed and booed.

"How's he doing?" the President asked Veneman, who replied that Finch hoped to get out of the hospital that afternoon.

The President said he would not be able to stay for the entire session because he had a date to meet former Chancellor Kurt Kiesinger of Germany who was in the U.S. on a private visit. He would remain until the time came for the briefing by the Secretaries of State and Defense on Cambodia.

"I've heard that a few times," he said.

The first substantive matter was Chairman McCracken on the economic outlook. He began by saying he would deliver the bad news first. Unemployment had risen more than expected, partially due to a larger than charted rise in the labor force, and prices had continued to rise in an "extremely stubborn" way. McCracken said he found "the visibility completely murky at the present time." The reason the economy weakened more than had been expected was that inventory accumulation was cut back more sharply than anyone had thought it would be.

McCracken raised some points of caution about possible developments for the rest of the year. The floundering of the stock market, he said, might have the effect of reducing planned capital expenditures and cutting big discretionary spending for such things

as cars and boats. It may not make any sense to worry about a man who has to keep his Cadillac a second year, said McCracken, but it is necessary to be concerned about the man who might be out of work because that new Cadillac is not being produced.

McCracken said he felt that the Federal Reserve Board had held money too tight and too long and that this policy may have produced a degree of "liquidity dehydration." By mid-year, he added, the ratio of money supply to gross national product could be very thin.

"Are you saying that the growth of money supply might not be enough?" asked the President.

"Yes," replied McCracken.

"You have a lot of company on that," said the President.

"Given the condition of the stock market, this would be the time to err on the generous side in money supply," McCracken explained.

Noting the nervousness in the business community, McCracken then urged Government officials to be very careful about making statements on the economy. "Anything that indicates the Administration is at odds with itself causes people who are already biting their nails to worry even more," he said.

The President then launched into a more general discussion of the economy and money supply. He pointed out he had spent considerable time conferring with a large number of economists who were on many sides of the argument. "Nobody is really sure about

the economy," he said. For a long time he had felt that the Federal Reserve Board tends to hang on too long or let up too early. It was his belief that the Board was responsible for the recessions of 1954, 1958 and 1960, just as it is responsible for the present situation.

Referring to Wall Street investors as generally "a very jittery lot," the President strongly supported McCracken's point that everyone in the Administration should be extremely cautious about commenting on the economy. He said he had no intention of getting his Administration into a situation where "everyone is scared to say anything." But he did want members of the Cabinet to check their comments with McCracken. This would not be censorship, he said, but simply an effort to make certain that the Administration did not cause further unease by seeming to talk in contradictory terms. Then he added:

"Remember that a speech made on the outside will not affect me one bit in setting policy. I will be affected by the evidence that I hear in this room. We can all make ourselves big heroes by going out and making speeches about the economy and later saying, 'I told you so,' but that won't help the Administration or the country."

Vice President Agnew commented he had been a guest on a recent evening at the traditional Cowles Publishing Company dinner at which the President of the New York Stock Exchange had said he had confidence in the Administration's fiscal and monetary policies.

According to Agnew, the remark had brought an ovation from the crowd.

Which led the President to recall that he had frequently been a guest at the Cowles dinners. "You don't get much out of it," he said, "but you never know, you might get a good picture in Look some day. Don't count on it, though."

AA a Cabinet meeting
~~Before he left~~ the President said that he deeply appreciated how well all the members of the Cabinet had borne up under the pressures of criticism of the Cambodian operation. "You are taking a lot of heat and doing it very well," he went on. "Somebody said that I'm taking most of the heat -- but that's why I get a higher salary than you do."

CHAPTER 16

So hostile was the atmosphere at their respective campuses of Smith College and Amherst College that terrible month of June 1970 that Julie Nixon Eisenhower and her husband David decided not to permit the President's attendance at commencement exercises. And they also reluctantly concluded that their own presence at the ceremonies would invite disruptions that might ruin the occasions for other students and their families. So they received their diplomas in absentia. The only celebration was a dinner which the Nixons gave the young couple at Camp David.

During dinner, the President voiced his sympathy for the young couple's inability to attend their own graduation exercises. And in a quiet voice hinting his own sadness at the bitter hostility borne him by so many of the young, Mr. Nixon told his son-in-law: "You will find that it was worthwhile. The decisions you agonize over most, the steps that are hardest to take, often prove the most satisfying. You have the reward of knowing you did what was right."

Things were going well in Cambodia. Allied casualties were still light and enormous quantities of enemy war materials were being seized. Still the uproar at home continued. For a time it appeared as if the nation's institutions of higher learning would never return to stability.

During those weeks of turmoil, the President received a four-page letter from a college president who, like so many others of his fraternity, opposed the war in Vietnam. But it wasn't the anti-war views of Miller Upton, president of Beloit College in

Wisconsin, that caught the Presidential eye. It was what Upton had to say about the unrest on the campuses that led the President to term it "recommended reading" to his Cabinet members and ranking officials, adding that it was "perhaps the most balanced and effective discussion" of the troubling problem he had yet seen.

A conscientious objector during World War II, Upton in his letter apologized to the President "for the grotesque failure of the academic community at this hour of national trial and turmoil" to analyze causes and point to cures.

"My moral opposition to war," he wrote, "however deeply and conscientiously held, does not entitle me on any ethical or moral grounds to take violent action against those who disagree. I must bear witness to truth as I see it, but I must also respect the right of the other person to do the same...This commitment to respect for the individual, intellectual openness and freedom of inquiry is the transcendent value to which an academic community must be subservient..."

Upton was indignant on the subject of campus violence: "We in the colleges and universities have tolerated unspeakable intimidation and thought control on the part of radical students, faculty and others, and yet when Vice President Agnew speaks out forcefully against such, the only voices that are heard from the academy are those who castigate him and you for repressing dissent.

"There are few college campuses, if any, where Vice President Agnew, or any member of your Cabinet for that matter, could

speaking without disruption and even physical abuse and intimidation. But a convicted murderer, dope peddler or one committed to the forceful overthrow of the Government will receive not only a respectful hearing, but will be paid a handsome honorarium in addition."

Upton made it clear that he had been "embarrassed by some of the Vice President's intemperate language. But surely he has as much right to dissent and to be given a respectful hearing as any of the criminal element in our society."

And he also noted that much of the academic community had been telling the President how to run the Vietnam war, a "highly unbecoming" presumption when the college professors and administrators "aren't even able to settle the wars on our own campuses."

The college president also had a comment about the "general pandering to the young at the present time that is both disgusting and irresponsible. Disgusting because it prostitutes normal respect and affection. Irresponsible because it is creating an unrealistic cleavage between age groups."

On June 22, 1970 the President met with a group of educators assembled by Dr. Heard. Also present was James E. Cheek, president of Howard University, whom the President had appointed as his liaison with the black colleges. This came out of a two-hour meeting with fifteen black educators in the Oval Office five days after another campus tragedy -- the deaths of two black youths at Jackson State in Mississippi, after state police officers fired blindly at student demonstrators.

At the meeting with the Heard group, the President noted that the shootings at Jackson State had not aroused the same dramatic concern as did Kent State. The President, of course, was aware of charges by black leaders that the reason was that black students had been killed at Jackson State and whites at Kent State. In other words, black leaders felt this was typical of the "racism" that afflicted even liberal Americans.

The President said that he was most sympathetic with the problems faced by blacks on the campuses. He said that if he, himself, had to endure some of those problems in the kind of revolutionary environment that exists today, even he might be swept up by it. He said this in order to emphasize that the problems were very real and should not be discounted. But, he added that despite the passions of the moment, this was still a great country.

In the final analysis, he said, the President must make the big decisions, right or wrong, at the national level. At the same time, university and college administrators must recognize that everything can't be handled in Washington, that it was their responsibility to preserve the rule of reason, and to maintain order on the campus.

To examine campus unrest at first hand, meanwhile, the President named a nine-man commission headed by former Governor William Scranton of Pennsylvania.

And on June 23, as the American strike into Cambodia was coming to an end, the President took note of the argument that

the Lon Nol regime was corrupt and, therefore, not worth saving. In effect, the President told a Republican legislative meeting, the Lon Nol government was Prince Sihanouk's government without Sihanouk. Lon Nol himself was Sihanouk's own man. And, despite rumors to the contrary, the United States had nothing to do with Sihanouk's overthrow.

The President was asked about charges raised in the Senate that the U.S. was using Thai mercenaries in Cambodia. He replied by asking these questions: Were the French who fought with us all over Europe in World War II mercenaries? Were the Poles who flew with the Royal Air Force mercenaries? Then he pointed out that every government and army tossed out of Europe by Hitler went back and fought and the United States armed and equipped them as well as paying their expenses. These people were fighting for their countries, the President said. The same is true of the Thais.

Everyone at the session had a good laugh over Senator Fulbright's recent chagrin when Senator Robert J. Dole had introduced a resolution to repeal the Gulf of Tonkin Resolution. For, after all, Fulbright had staked out the Gulf of Tonkin Resolution as his own. Six years before, he had steered it through the Senate at the behest of President Johnson who had used it to escalate the Vietnam war.* And ever since, Fulbright had periodically threatened

* Senator Dole also slipped into the Congressional Record the August 6, 1964 debate on the Tonkin resolution which revealed the

extraordinary enthusiasm with which Fulbright had supported the measure since it would authorize the President, Fulbright said, "to take such action as may be necessary, now and in the future, to restrain or repel Communist aggression in Southeast Asia....It would be a great mistake to allow our optimism about promising developments in our relations with the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe to lead us to any illusions about the aggressive designs of North Vietnam and its Chinese Communist sponsor...."

to stage-manage a repeal of the measure whenever an Administration did something to offend him, which was quite often. Now, of all people, Republican Dole of Kansas had tacked a Tonkin repealer onto the Foreign Military Sales bill. Fulbright himself, however, had wanted to stage manage the repeal fight later in the session and in such a way as to restrict the President's war powers. As a result of Dole's maneuver, Fulbright was so piqued he accused the freshman lawmaker of trying "to get a little notice" by "stepping in and taking over" in an area where "he has no background nor experience."

One Congressman at the leadership meeting pointed out that Senator Fulbright was described in the Washington Post as being "furious" over Dole's action. The President laughed and said the only thing he reads in the Post is the sports news.

The President was in good humor in late June. The worst of the Cambodian furor was over. And he was preparing to pronounce the incursion a stunning tactical success.

This he did in a seven thousand word report on June 30. "Together with the South Vietnamese," he told the American people, "the Armed Forces of the United States have just completed successfully the destruction of enemy base areas along the Cambodia-South Vietnam frontier. All American troops have withdrawn from Cambodia on the schedule announced at the start of the operation."

Of course this did not deter the critics, even though some of them -- Senator Mike Mansfield, for example -- frankly acknowledged that the operation had been a military success. They criticized the operation for seeking a Communist "headquarters," implying that the allied forces were looking for a single "jungle Pentagon," and said it would be impossible to destroy it. Then they accused Mr. Nixon of seeking an extended commitment of American troops. After they proved wrong on both of these counts, the critics said that the operation had turned the Communists against the Lon Nol government. But as the President pointed out in his report, the Communists were moving against Phnom Penh more than a week before he gave the go-ahead signal to enter Cambodia.

Interviewed in July on "live" television by three network reporters, the President said that the operation had "changed the military balance" and it was clear from what he said that he felt the time had come for the enemy to strike a bargain that would "humiliate" no one and yield as much prestige as either side wished to claim. At the same time the President announced the appointment of David K.E. Bruce as head of the U.S. delegation at the Paris

peace talks. Bruce, a veteran diplomat, had a Democratic pedigree and mildly dovish views. Obviously the President hoped that the appointment of this prestigious figure might unloose the logjam in Paris.*

* The interview, the first of its kind involving a President, was conducted by ABC's Howard K. Smith, NBC's John Chancellor and CBS's Eric Sevareid. "It was a virtuoso performance," reported the liberal columning team of Frank Mankiewicz and Tom Braden. "Mr. Nixon had the confidence to face live cameras, which neither Lyndon Johnson nor John Kennedy risked under similar circumstances..." Mankiewicz and Braden, however, faulted the interviewers for not having asked tougher questions.

But, as the President told a Cabinet meeting on July 10 in reference to the Bruce appointment, "Don't expect anything flashy at the beginning. That's not the way to get results." The President said that Bruce was going to aim for private talks, would have great flexibility and "won't appear on television every day." On the diplomatic front, the President added, "we are going the extra mile."

The President was a bit more optimistic about the Strategic Arms Limitation Talks (SALT). He said that while there were still wide differences of opinion between the United States and the U.S.S.R. each side needed and wanted an agreement. So the problem was finding an area where mutual interests would be served. But, he added, "we are moving about as fast as we can."

Asked whether a date could be projected on which an agreement could be reached, the President tossed the question over to Henry Kissinger. Kissinger's answer, which brought some quiet chuckles, was, "less than two years and more than two months." But he went on to say that prospects for an ultimate agreement were good, as "there are no overwhelming issues of principle between us now."

The Vice President asked whether the Soviet Union had changed its attitude toward on-the-spot inspections. Mr. Nixon said there had been no change but that in one sense the inspection problem was no longer as crucial as it once had been. He noted, for example, that the United States now was able to get fantastically good pictures of what the Soviet Union has. He added, however, that inspection was still needed to determine what the Russians were doing about MIRV, but he said the Russians would not agree to that.

The President then said he wanted to knock down "dope stories" in the newspapers which indicated that there were sharp differences of opinion and in approach between the White House and the State Department with regard to U.S. peace initiatives in the Middle East. The "dope stories" had indicated that the White House was taking a harder line toward Soviet penetration of the Middle East than the State Department was.

The trouble is, the President said, that the press in its constant pursuit of controversy creates controversy.

Turning to press coverage in Vietnam, the President suggested that the best thing that could occur in that unhappy land "would be to get a whole new team of correspondents out there. The longer they stay in Vietnam, the more anti-American they become. They want to prove that we are wrong."

The discussion then turned to the new National Commission on Productivity which the President had organized with representatives of labor, business, public and government. The purpose of the Commission was to achieve a balance between costs and productivity that would lead to more stable prices.

Transportation Secretary Volpe reminded the Cabinet of the imminent threat of a national railroad strike that might have a decided impact on contract settlements in other industries. And that led to this exchange:

President: "Isn't that an anachronism! A strike over firemen when we don't need firemen anymore. John, why don't you do something about it?"

Volpe: "Is it all right for a Cabinet Member to say, 'No comment?'"

President (smiling): "It's about time."

The Cabinet met again on July 22, this time among other things to bid farewell to Robert F. Mayo, Counselor to the President. Mayo, who had been a Counselor for six weeks, had resigned to become president of the Federal Reserve Bank of Chicago.*

* The shifts at the White House had begun in June with Bob Finch's resignation as HEW Secretary to become a Counselor to the

President. Shortly afterward George Shultz resigned as Labor Secretary to become director of the new Office of Management and Budget.

There was a round of applause when Mayo entered the Cabinet Room with the President, who began the traditional ceremony of presenting Mayo with the chair he had occupied at Cabinet meetings.

"Will the economy improve now that you're leaving?" the President asked.

"Oh naturally," replied Mayo. "They've named stock market rallies after Burns, Kennedy and McCracken, but not after me."

The President recalled that when Arthur Burns had left the White House, each Cabinet member had contributed to pay for his chair. "But Bob Mayo has been so rough on all of you that I thought it would be too much to ask of you -- so I bought his chair."

This brought an appreciative burst of applause from the Cabinet members. And, in his brief remarks, Mayo said that despite the fact he had worked diligently at cutting their budgets, he considered all the Cabinet officers his good friends and "even Mel Laird smiles when he sees me."

When Mayo left, the President announced, "This is a meeting of the Domestic Council, and the Secretary of State and the Secretary of Defense may leave if they wish."

Whereupon Laird rose to go, saying with a smile, "We're going to play golf." And Rogers followed on his heels, saying, "We're due on the first tee at ten."

Beginning this first meeting of the new Domestic Council, which supplanted the Urban Affairs Council, the President introduced its executive director, John Ehrlichman. The Council, the President said, would consist of all domestic Cabinet members and would act in much the same way as the National Security Council. Policy questions would be discussed, options explored and all sides aired. Then option papers would be prepared for the President, who ultimately would make the necessary decisions.

~~The role of the Economic Development Administration was discussed. Postmaster Blount suggested there should be a more precise definition of "economic development." He said he had heard of some "economic development plans that called for the construction of country clubs and golf courses."~~

"Oh," smiled the President, "that's in the Defense budget now."

The President then talked about the problems of direction and responsibility in Government agencies. Several months earlier, he recalled, "a fellow came in to see me -- a fellow who is probably a genius but who some might think nuts -- but he's genius enough to have made himself a billion dollars." This man had told the President that the key to management is that "in any particular assignment you must have one who is particularly responsible."

According to the President, there were very few areas in the Federal Government where anyone could get an answer to the question, "Who's in charge here?"

He pointed out he had had considerable trouble trying to discover who was really responsible for the temporary buildings which since World War I had been in use along Constitution Avenue. It had taken weeks to discover who was responsible. He had finally learned that "some captain in the Navy" was in charge and so, the President said, he took the position that "the captain either get those buildings down or he'd be an ensign."

The problem of responsibility was raised again at the second meeting of the Domestic Council on August 13. Counselor Moynihan observed, "The President can say that he wants to do something but he never is able to know whether it gets done."

"One exception," the President interjected with a grin, "is the buildings on the mall."

"They're not down yet, Mr. President," Ehrlichman noted wryly.

"At least they've started," said the President, "and I've watched them every day. If I have to take a hammer to them myself, they're going to be down by January of 1971."

~~There ensued a discussion on priorities with George Shultz suggesting a good look at the lessons to be learned from the socialist experience. For example, he said, the socialist economies started with the notion of a Government plan for everything. This has broken~~

down in practice since they have turned to implementing a price system. And now they are even introducing -- with euphemisms -- such ideas as a return for investment. Thus they have gradually tried to emulate the capitalist system. And the one thing this indicates so clearly is that the best thing we have is the market place -- which does a beautiful job of allocating resources.

The President said Shultz had made a fundamental point in discussing socialist economics. But he would put it in terms of any totalitarian or dictatorial state. It works for a while. But when you get to the point that the United States is now, in terms of concern with the quality of life etc., these systems utterly fail. The Communists are able to commit their resources to armaments -- moving up even with us, ahead of us, perhaps -- but the only true economic successes in the world today happen to be in the non-totalitarian states. Japan with one hundred million people is producing more than China with seven hundred and fifty million. And this is not because the Japanese are more productive since the Chinese on Taiwan are equally successful.

These successful economies, the President went on, depend to a certain extent on the market place. They have opted to an extent for something away from central control. The economy in the Soviet Union is flat. Everything is centralized. It has failed. Therefore, they are moving not only toward a price system, but also toward some decentralization. They discovered, for example, that under the old system they would produce five million television sets which wouldn't fit in the niches prescribed by the housing authorities.

There are certain things we have to look at in terms of planning, the President said. First, where can planning best be done? There are those who might say that planning for New York City could better be done in Washington, because of all the complex political considerations in New York itself.

And now the President said he wanted to argue the other side. Look down through your agencies, he went on. You'll find that you have a lot of bright, able people. Yet they sit here in Washington, read the same papers, go to the same parties. There is an intellectual incest that affects people here. Are they really the best ones to determine what should be done in Fargo or Denver?

On the whole, the President said, he opted away from centralized government, not because he's against government, but as he looks around the world he could see that centralized all-powerful planning just hasn't worked. If you centralize power it means inevitably that throughout the country you will discourage initiative. If you say to the local people "you need this sewer, here's how to do it and here's the money -- just dig the hole" -- then the local people become hole diggers, nothing more.

"I'm not suggesting," the President concluded, "that we go back to the days of the thirteen original states. But I do suggest that by proliferating power and responsibility, we minimize mistakes and create diversity."

Meanwhile, the President was facing a bitter Senate fight (which he eventually won) over his proposal to expand the Safeguard

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anti-ballistic missile system. "Why is it so difficult to convince some of these Senators of the facts that are so obvious to us?" the President asked one Democratic Senator.

The Senator said he was shocked by the extent of the pro-Soviet sentiment among his colleagues. He said that some of them were disappointed when the Russians let them down by building more missiles. Moreover, the Senator said, Russian personnel from the Soviet Embassy were all over the Hill, probing Senators and their staffs, trying to ascertain the state of the Senate's mind.

A Republican Senator agreed with his Democratic colleague. He said that a number of Senate staffers were in daily contact with the Soviet Embassy and socializing with Soviet nationals.

Defense Secretary Laird, who was also present, said it was difficult for him to understand why Defense personnel were treated like lepers when they went to the Hill to explain Pentagon programs while, at the same time, Soviet Embassy people were lobbying without challenge.

The President emphasized that an affirmative ABM vote would not only have a salutary effect on SALT but on the "heating-up" of the Middle East situation. It was not a question of being belligerent with the Soviet Union, the President said, but the fact was that the Russians understand strength and conviction. He was, frankly, much more alarmed with the volatile situation in the Middle East, where the Russians were playing a dangerous game, than he was about Southeast Asia which he felt, for better or worse,

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was under control. In back of the President's mind, of course,
was a fear of "some crazy Fedayeen" setting off a third World War.