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- Naftali: Hi, I'm Tim Naftali. I'm director of the Richard Nixon Presidential Library and Museum. It's October 5, 2007. We're in New York City, and I have the honor and privilege to interview Dr. John Brademas for the Richard Nixon Oral History Program. Dr. Brademas, thank you for joining us and doing this with us today.
- Brademas: Pleased to do so.
- Naftali: Let's start -- let's situate ourselves in 1972, summer of '72. You read about the break-in. You're a busy man; you're running for Congress again. At that point, what did it mean to you? What did this Watergate break-in -- what did it signal? Did it mean anything? Did you think it would be what it would become?
- Brademas: Yes, I did think it meant something. I thought it meant a deep corrosion within the Nixon White House. I had not been an admirer of President Nixon. I had -- in the first place, I'm a Democrat. In the second place, I was aware of his style of campaigning in California and the attacks that he had made, I thought improperly, on Helen Gahagan Douglas. And then I was also concerned about the Watergate business itself. But there is a further factor I should mention, that is that I worked on the staff of Adlai Stevenson in his second Presidential campaign, in charge of research on issues. And I remembered how Nixon had once described Adlai Stevenson as a graduate of Dean Acheson's College of Cowardly Communist Containment. And I thought that that rhetoric was very tasteless and inappropriate in a civilized campaign. I, therefore, you may say, was not surprised, or maybe I was surprised, I can't remember now, when -- at some point, when the list of Nixon White House enemies was revealed, I was on the list. And when I walked onto the floor of the House of Representatives the day that the list was published in "The Washington Post," a number of my fellow Democrats in the House came up to me and said, enviously, "Brademas, how did you do that?" They regarded it as a mark of respect.
- Naftali: Tell us about the climate in Congress before Watergate becomes a big issue. How deeply divided, how bitter was the climate in Congress in '71,'72?
- Brademas: Oh, you're -- you're asking me to go back over a generation and try to remember. I was always -- I should explain that I served as a member of United States House of Representatives for 22 years, and, therefore, with six Presidents: three Republicans, Eisenhower, Nixon and Ford; and three Democrats, Kennedy, Johnson and Carter. But I was always in the majority as a Democrat in the House of Representatives. So there was a natural combativeness built into the political arrangement in the Capitol at
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that time. But I think that Nixon's propensity to impute disloyalty to those who disagreed with him was a source of great unhappiness with him. And he was just not a very nice man.

Naftali: Tell us about the effect of Vietnam on the climate in Congress.

Brademas: Well, that also added to the combativeness because there were strongly held views on both sides, even as we see a repetition of the deep divisions in American society and on the part of political leaders of both parties in respect of the war in Iraq. And the war in Vietnam, of course, brought Democrats to be in opposition, many of us, to a President of our own party, Lyndon Johnson, on that issue. And it was difficult as a political issue to handle in one's own congressional district, although I think, again, it's difficult to quantify these matters, that the intensity of opposition to government policy, to the policy of the Bush administration on Iraq, seems to me to be even deeper than it was in respect to Vietnam. But it was very intense. The Watergate episode sort of brought to the surface a lot of the unhappiness on the part of Democrats and, of course, some Republicans.

Naftali: Let's talk a little bit about the Great -- the health of the Great Society programs under the Nixon administration, particularly from your perspective as the head of the Education Subcommittee. Did you sense that the Nixon administration was trying to turn back the clock on the Great Society? Or did you find a different approach to --

Brademas: I must be candid, as we are meeting in 2007, to say that I have a hard time remembering unless I had done some research on that. I was part of the Great Society as a member of the Committee on Education and Labor. I took part in writing the Elementary Secondary Education Act during the Johnson administration; the War on Poverty, led by Sargent Shriver, Head Start, Pell Grants, a lot of the legislation to serve children, the elderly, the disabled. And those were great achievements of the Johnson administration and of Democrats in Congress. And in many cases, we Democrats had the cooperation from our fellow Republicans on Capitol Hill. That's another difference from then 'til now. But I do remember, in the Nixon White House -- I hope I remember accurately, how the President, President Nixon, delivered an address to Congress on education in, I think, 1970. And I believe that that speech was prepared by Daniel Patrick Moynihan, who then worked in the Nixon White House. And I was struck particularly by the President's call for a National Institute of Education to support research into teaching and learning. And I remembered how Lyndon Johnson used to say, "My problem is not doing what is right, but knowing what is right." And as a legislator writing measures to support education, I had that same question before me many times. And so I was very enthusiastic about President Nixon's proposal.

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And I got in touch with the appropriate person in the bureaucracy and said, "Draft that legislative proposal so that it ends up in the Education Subcommittee I chair, and I'll pass it for you." And that happened, and I took my subcommittee to centers of educational research across the United States and then took them to Paris to the OECD, because OECD had a particular leadership in educational research. We went to Norway because the Norwegians were active in this respect. And I remember even calling on Margaret Thatcher when she was Minister of Education. And we wrote the bill, and it was signed into law. But -- and there still is a National Institute of Education under -- I think it's called the Institute of Education Sciences now. But one doesn't hear much about it, and it's been somewhat buried under the administration of President Bush, which I think is unfortunate because now, as Congress and my old committee is considering reauthorization of the No Child Left Behind Act, it would be good, it seems to me, to be able to draw on the knowledge of respected scholars to ask what works and what doesn't work when it comes to teaching and learning.

Naftali: As one of the pioneers of education policy in this country, what were the ideas and experiences that shaped your contributions to the legislation of the Great Society in education?

Brademas: Well, I should point out first that my late father was born in Greece. I'm the first native-born American of Greek origin elected to Congress. And my father used to say, "I'll never leave much money to my children, but I will leave you all a first-class education." And one of my brothers is a retired university professor who taught at the University of Illinois. My other brother, who died recently, was an architect and city planner. My sister is a public -- retired public school teacher. My mother, who is not of Greek origin, was a public school teacher for nearly 50 years. And her father was a professor of history and a high school superintendent. And I grew up, therefore, in a family for whom education was central. And I joined the Navy when I was 18 and was dispatched to a naval officers' training program at, of all places, the University of Mississippi, Ole Miss, and that was a valuable experience, living in the Deep South, especially as I later went to Congress. I then went from Oxford, Mississippi, to Cambridge, Massachusetts, and Harvard, and finished three years there, took my degree, did a year of graduate study and then won a Rhodes Scholarship and went on to Oxford University for three years where I did my Ph.D. with a dissertation on the anarchist movement in Spain from the mid-1920s through the first year of the Spanish Civil War.

And I like to say that although I studied anarchism, I did not practice it, because within six months of returning to my hometown of South Bend, Indiana, I was the nominee of the Democratic Party for election to Congress. I lost the first race in 1954, with 49.5 percent of the total vote to

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the sitting Republican. Obviously, I would run again. In 1955, I was invited to serve on the campaign staff of Adlai Stevenson, in charge of research on issues. And in '56, both Stevenson and I were, a second time, defeated. And I thought, here I am, I'm not yet 30 years old, and I'm twice defeated for Congress. But I still thought I could win. So, I became a professor of political science, a one-man department at St. Mary's College, which is the college across the road from the University of Notre Dame in my hometown. And in 1958, on my third try, I was first elected.

And a crucial decision for a newly elected member is what committee do you choose. I, not surprisingly, in view of what I've said, wanted to serve on the Committee of Education and Labor. And I had been much impressed by the passage during the Eisenhower administration of the National Defense Education Act by a Democratic Congress, to support teaching of science and math and modern foreign languages. So I went to Bonham, Texas, the home of Sam Rayburn, the speaker of the House, and had lunch with him. And he said, after lunch, "Suppose you want to talk about your committee." I said, "Yes, Mr. Speaker. I want to be on the Education and Labor Committee." "Hot-potato committee, hot-potato committee," said the speaker. But with the support of Governor Stevenson and of my political mentor, Paul M. Butler, then the Democratic -- the leading Democratic political figure in my state, national committeeman, later became the national chairman, I was assigned to that committee. And it was a hot-potato committee, as Speaker Rayburn said, particularly because in my first year, first term, the major issue before the committee was not education, but it was labor reform, because Jimmy Hoffa and the Teamsters were an object of a great deal of criticism. And Presidential politics came into this also because in the Senate, the key figure working for labor reform legislation was a young senator from Massachusetts named John F. Kennedy. And on our side, on the House side, several of us, particularly those of us who were newly elected members, who were very sympathetic to Kennedy and were working with him in effect, and he had served on the Committee on Education and Labor when he was a member of the House of Representatives, the committee was split. We had Republicans who wanted a very tough anti-labor law. You had three or four Democrats who basically wanted no labor reform law at all. We had two or three Dixiecrats who sided with the Republicans. And then there were several of us Democrats, moderate to liberal Democrats, who wanted a labor reform measure. And we got one, but it was very -- a tough fight. And even as I was later on the Nixon White House enemies list, I found that I was also on Jimmy Hoffa's enemies list, labeled as a bad actor in committee.

So my first year, I thought to myself -- after my first year, I thought, is it always like this, this intense? But then we were able to move into the field that most interested me, education. And so, as I say, I took part in writing

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the Great Society measures, the law that created the National Endowment for the Arts, the National Endowment for the Humanities, and later, working with Senator Claiborne Pell of Rhode Island, wrote the Library Services and Construction Act and also the Museum Services Act, each of which measures provided Federal support for those two institutions in American life. At one point, chairing the Education Subcommittee, I had a telephone call from Philippe de Montebello, president of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, who said, "We want to mount an exhibition of Chinese archeological treasures, but the private insurance is prohibitively expensive." So Senator Pell and I wrote what the British would call a private bill, which said that if anything were lost or damaged in this show, the Federal Government would pay. We indemnified the show. We did this a second time with an exhibition of Scythian gold and silver artifacts from the Hermitage Museum in Leningrad, in St. Petersburg. And there was, in like fashion, no problem. I said to Senator Pell, "Claiborne, this is not a bad idea." So John Brademas and Claiborne Pell wrote the Arts and Artifacts Indemnity Act of, I think, 1975, under which today, at least when I last looked, a museum in the United States may win -- it's not mandatory -- an indemnity of up to \$800 million per exhibition with a total of indemnities outstanding at any one time of \$8 billion. And Philippe once told me that without this law, it would not be possible for museums in the United States to mount a major exhibition with art or other artifacts from - from abroad.

I have continued that interest in education, of course, in that when I was defeated for re-election in 1980, in the Reagan landslide over President Carter, I was then invited to become president of New York University, in which position I served from 1981 until 1992, when I became president emeritus, which is my present position. One of my legislative assistants when I was in Congress was Steven J. Trachtenberg, who is just retiring after some 20 years as president of the George Washington University in Washington, D.C. And Steve Trachtenberg has invited me to join other university presidents in preparing a book of essays to be presented to the next President of the United States with recommendations for Federal policy for higher education. So one of my next assignments to myself is putting some ideas down on paper. And it will be a little like being a member of Congress again and of the House Committee on Education and Labor.

Naftali: Well, everyone's pleased that you're still active and contributing. Let me ask you to go back a little to the Nixon administration, to the extent that you can recall it. To what extent were you drawn into the busing issue?

Brademas: The busing issue?

Naftali: Yeah, the busing issue.

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- Brademas: Not -- not really. I was not sympathetic to the Dixiecrat position on that. I -- I don't recall having been particularly active on that issue.
- Naftali: Because I think there was a -- in 1974, there was an education bill. And there was an anti-busing amendment that was tacked on that became -- that your committee couldn't overturn because of a Supreme Court decision in Detroit which restricted the extent to which you could bus across school district lines. I didn't know if you recalled that particular issue.
- Brademas: I really -- I really can't speak with great specificity on that.
- Naftali: It's okay; it's been a long time.
- Brademas: I should tell you that to speak more broadly about the implications of this question, my late father, I told you, a Greek immigrant, told me when I was a child, how the Ku Klux Klan, which was then very powerful in Indiana, boycotted his restaurant in northern Indiana because he was not a WASP, a white Anglo-Saxon Protestant. He was Greek orthodox. And then I went to the University of Mississippi, as I told you, and, in my sailor suit, I went over in, I think 1946, to the town of Pontotoc, Mississippi, to hear the opening address of the last campaign of United States Senator Theodore Gilmore Bilbo, the savage voice of segregation in the South at that time. And there was no Republican Party at that time in Mississippi. Bilbo was running in a Democratic primary, and he told this group of farmers, as he was speaking in a park, and he was speaking from a sound truck, "Unless you return me to the United States Senate, Clare Boothe Luce, a Roman Catholic convert, and those other Communists up north are going to mongrelize the white race." Well, that experience in Mississippi plus what I had learned from my father, and that I grew up in the Methodist church, which was deeply dedicated to social justice, meant that when I arrived in Congress, I was standing on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial behind Martin Luther King when he made his famous "I Have a Dream" speech. And I worked very hard for civil rights legislation during my years in Congress. And indeed in my last campaign for Congress, Martin Luther King's widow, Coretta Scott King, came into Indiana to campaign on my behalf.
- Naftali: Could you -- that's remarkable. Could you tell us what you remember of the day that -- of the day that King gave the "I Have a Dream" speech? What do you remember about that?
- Brademas: Well, I remember a huge crowd. And I remember also having recalled, if my memory is right, that I think Eleanor Roosevelt once spoke from the same podium and began her talk, or was it FDR, I can't remember, with
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the words "fellow immigrants." But it was a very powerful and dramatic occasion. And it gave impetus to our efforts to win passage of civil rights legislation. It's difficult for us today, I think, to recall how intense were the feelings about race relations at that time in this country. And Martin Luther King spoke with such extraordinary eloquence that he -- he moved the nation. Indeed, I think I remember not long after having come to New York University, both Coretta Scott King and I were given honorary degrees by Hebrew Union College, which I regarded as a particular honor.

Naftali: You become a member of leadership of the Democratic Party in the Nixon era. Could you give us -- could you describe for us, because we can't obviously interview them, the speaker of the House. What was Carl Albert like?

Brademas: Carl Albert from Oklahoma was a rather low-key leader in terms of his manner, highly intelligent. He -- he and I had something in common, and that fact probably helped put me into the leadership because he was, he had been a Rhodes scholar, and I had been a Rhodes scholar. And he was, of course, aware of that. Tip O'Neill and I became very close. And as I was a Harvard graduate, that didn't hurt, because he represented Cambridge, Massachusetts. And Hale Boggs was also in the leadership from Louisiana. And he and I got along very well. I was chief deputy majority whip when, I think, John McFall of California was the whip. And I was appointed whip by Tip O'Neill. And that responsibility meant that every Wednesday morning in the office of the majority whip in the Capitol, the Speaker O'Neill, then Majority Leader Jim Wright of Texas and I would gather with a group of deputy whips representing each part of the country.

One of my deputy whips was Charlie Rangel, now the chairman of the House Committee on Ways and Means. And we would sit there with the speakers putting forth the legislative schedule upcoming. And we would have a discussion of the politics of a particular measure. And Tip, the speaker, would say, "I want a whip check on HR123," whatever the bill was. What that meant was that each of the zone whips would have a card and would go to each of the Democratic members in his or her zone and say, "Al, how do I put you down on this?" voting yes, and the correct vote was always yes. "Do I put you down yes, no, leaning yes, leaning no?" And I remember going to one member at one point when I was doing some checking, and I went through that series of questions. And he said, "John, put me down negotiable." In any event, the role of the whips, of course, was different when a President was in the White House of the other party. If the President was of your own party, you could enlist the White House if you had some Democrats who were being difficult on a particular issue that the White House cared deeply about.

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Naftali: Dr. Brademas, can I just stop you a minute --

Brademas: Yeah.

Naftali: -- because we're going to change -- [in audio] We're on. We were talking about how the role of whip changes, depending on who's in the White House.

Brademas: Yes, and, indeed, my own role as majority whip changed when we had a Democrat in the White House, namely Jimmy Carter, because one of the perquisites of the majority whip's position was that every other Tuesday I would join Speaker O'Neill, Majority Leader Jim Wright of the House, Senator Robert Byrd, the Democratic leader, the majority leader of the Senate, Senator Alan Cranston, the majority whip of the -- of California, of the Senate, and Hubert Humphrey, Senator Humphrey, who was then the President Pro Tem of the Senate, for fast at the White House with President Carter and Vice President Mondale. And we would talk politics and policy. I am a note taker, so I would take rather careful notes at those meetings. I don't think the President liked it very much, but he couldn't say, "Don't do that," because I'm a member of Congress. And not only that, I'm the whip; I'm trying to be helpful to him. Then I would roar back to Capitol Hill and dictate. So I have a stack of transcripts of those notes, which I hope, at some point, if ever I slow down, to turn into a book in the nature of a case study on how an American President deals with the leaders of his own party in Congress.

I remember the first such meeting in January of 1977. The President said, pointing to his newly appointed director of the Office of Management and Budget, Burt Lance, an Atlanta businessman, "I'll ask Burt Lance to say grace." And heads sort of snapped back because we were not accustomed to that. And by chance, we moved -- we, that day, had the first lunch meeting of the new Congress of the House Democratic Steering and Policy Committee chaired by Speaker O'Neill. And I was a member of that. And Tip said, "Well, we all -- you all know we had fast with our new President this morning. Since we began with a prayer there, that's what we're going to do here," whereupon he intoned the Roman Catholic grace. And on the "amen," his eye looked around the table. He said, "That'll last us the rest of the session." On another occasion, the President turned to me. And remember, I'm from South Bend, Indiana. He said, "I'll ask John Brademas to say grace this morning." Well, having been brought up, as I said, in the Methodist church, I know how to do that. And when I got to the end of my prayer, I said, "And, oh, Lord, if it's all the same to you, let Notre Dame beat Georgia in the Sugar Bowl." I'll try to get all of those into a book sometime. But the responsibility of the whips is one that's not widely understood by the American people, no particular reason that they



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should, but it's a carryover from the British House of Commons. And the whips come from riding to hounds and fox hunting and using the whip.

Naftali: Let's shift to the Cyprus issue.

Naftali: Let's -- if you don't mind, let's shift to the Cyprus issue. And I guess let's start with the coup in Greece.

Brademas: Yes, in 1967, a group of Army colonels in Greece overthrew young King Constantine and established a military government. I, the only Greek American in Congress at the time, House or Senate, sharply attacked the coup. I refused to go to Greece. I wouldn't go to the Greek embassy in Washington. And I testified in opposition to continued U.S. military aid to Greece, arguing that as Greece belonged to NATO, established to defend freedom, democracy and the rule of law, and this junta group did not believe in those values, the United States should not be assisting them. Seven years later, the colonels attempted to overthrow Archbishop Makarios, the leader of Cyprus, and that brought down the junta and the return to power in Athens of Constantine Karamanlis and the return of genuine democracy to Greece. But the attempt by the -- by the junta also triggered two invasions of Cyprus in the summer of 1974 by Turkish armed forces equipped with weapons supplied by the United States, which was a legal no-no, because American law mandated that arms supplied by our country to another country be used only for defensive purposes, not for aggression.

Accordingly, I led a group of four or five members of the House to call on the secretary of state in August of '74, Henry Kissinger, and said, "Mr. Secretary" -- I repeated the requirement of the law and said, "What this means is you must cut off further arms to Turkey, and I remind you" -- I told him, as that was the week Richard Nixon resigned the Presidency, that the reason Mr. Nixon was on his way in exile to California was that he had not respected the laws of the land or the Constitution of the United States. "You should do so," I said. Jerry Ford, of course, was now the President. The administration did not enforce the law. Accordingly, we in Congress acted. Remember, this is a separation-of-powers Constitutional system. And so on an amendment offered by the late Congressman Benjamin Rosenthal of New York in the House of Representatives, we voted an embargo. And our leader in the Senate on this issue was the late Senator Tom Eagleton of Missouri. And I remember that not too long after, we had, in Congress, enacted an embargo on arms to Turkey, Paul Sarbanes, then in the House of Representatives and later the first Greek American elected to the Senate, and I went to Greece. And from Athens, we flew on a U.S. embassy plane to Cyprus. The plane landed at the airport, and a big gust of wind propelled it into the wall at the end of the airport. And the pilot shouted, "Everybody off this airplane fast!" And as I walked down

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the ladder, I looked up and saw a fire engine racing toward us. And I looked over my shoulder to Paul Sarbanes. I said, "Kissinger will stop at nothing." And I later told Henry that story because he and I have a cordial relationship. He said, "That was just a warning."

In any event, on the 3rd of July of this year, 2007, I was in Nicosia, Cyprus, with Paul Sarbanes and our wives. And President Tassos Papadopoulos graciously conferred on Paul Sarbanes and me the order of Makarios, a decoration, and gave a splendid dinner in our honor in the presidential palace. There are still, I think, some 40,000 Turkish troops on the island of Cyprus and thousands more of Turkish settlers. Turkey aspires, as we meet, to entry into the European Union. Cyprus is already a member of the European Union. And the idea that a European Union member state should militarily occupy another EU member state is, it seems to me, absurd on its face. And the continued occupation by Turkey, military occupation of Cyprus, coupled with the fact that Turkey also does not grant diplomatic recognition to the Republic of Cyprus, those factors, I think, will continue to militate against a Turkish admission into the European Union. Having said that, several years ago, I spoke at the Bosphorus University in Istanbul, and I said that I would not be here if I did not want to see a democratic Turkey, Turkey part of Europe and Turkey in the European Union, provided that Turkey complied with the Copenhagen criteria, which involved respect for human rights. I also drew attention in that address, as I did in my remarks in Nicosia in July, on receiving this decoration, that Turkey also had another obstacle to entry into the EU in Turkish persecution of the ecumenical patriarchate of Constantinople, which is the sea of the Eastern Orthodox Christian tradition. And Turkish authorities have shut down the theological school on the Island of Halki and have expropriated Turkish -- expropriated properties belonging to the Greek Orthodox Church.

Then more recently, you have seen the Penal Code 301, I think is the number, which makes it a crime under Turkish law to denigrate Turkishness. I think that one of the most divisible figures involved in that is the Nobel laureate novelist, Turkish Orhan Pamuk, who is now teaching at Columbia University. I have not met him. I look forward to meeting him. But you also see, even in the newspapers today, as we speak, full-page ads by the Turkish government decrying efforts in the U.S. Congress to pass a resolution criticizing Turkey on the genocide issue, the issue of Armenian genocide. So those are some of the hot-potato issues affecting Turkish foreign policy. For me, however, the most consequential ones are the continued military occupation of Cyprus and the persecution of the ecumenical patriarchate in Istanbul.

Naftali:

Could you please tell us the story from the Carter period of when the Carter administration wanted to lift the embargo?

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Brademas: Yes, at one point, I was invited to the White House by President Carter, to the Cabinet Room. And there were also Paul Sarbanes and Tom Eagleton and Benjamin Rosenthal. We were the gang of four who had led the embargo, as it were, the fight for the embargo in Turkish arms. And present were President Carter, Vice President Mondale, Secretary of State Cyrus Vance and National Security Advisor Zbigniew Brzezinski. And the President said, "I have asked you here to ask you to eliminate the arms embargo on Turkey." Well, I had drafted the statement for the Carter campaign for President in 1976 on the Cyprus issue. And that statement said that a normal relationship, arms relationship with Turkey, will be conditioned on a just settlement of Cyprus. But there had been no action on Cyprus whatsoever at the time the President called us to the White House. And so I said, as I was the senior member there from the Hill, "Mr. President, I am deeply disappointed," which is -- which meant you're going to have a fight on your hands. And the White House went all out and won in the House of Representatives, which was the key arena, by three votes, and lifted the embargo. And not long thereafter, the President telephoned me and said, "Now, John, we must do what is right for the people of Greece." I said, "No, Mr. President, we must do what is right for the people of the United States." I wasn't about to let him make a Greek congressman out of me.

I noted, also, have noted in discussing this issue, because some said, well, that the embargo on Turkey was passed, it demonstrates the power of the Greek lobby in Congress. At the time we voted the embargo in 1974, there were, of the 535 members of the Congress, 100 senators and 435 representatives, I think six of us of Greek origin, so my response was, "We were the rule of law lobby." And as I look at the present configuration of forces in Washington and recalling that debate, I must say that we are now going through, as we meet in 2007, we're going through another rule of law debate because, as the controversy over outgoing Attorney General Gonzales indicates, there is a great criticism of the Bush administration for really not complying with the law in several respects. But that's another issue.

Naftali: Let's talk about an impeached -- a President who was nearly impeached. In 1973, as a member of the leadership, to what extent did you think impeachment was a possibility?

Brademas: Well, again, you're trying my memory here because that's a long time ago. I thought it was a possibility but not a probability. Impeachment, after all, is an extraordinary step to take in respect of any President of the United States and not something undertaken lightly. I probably shouldn't tell you this in this interview, but during part of that Watergate episode, I was still a bachelor, and I used to take to dinner once in a while, Diane Sawyer,

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who worked in the Nixon White House press office, a very intelligent and very lovely woman. And I remember she was, of course, deeply upset by the whole controversy over Watergate. I don't remember specifically our discussions about it now. And if I did, I probably wouldn't tell you anyway. But it -- I think that the prospect of impeachment, as I recall, was not high.

Naftali: Do you remember the effect of the Saturday Night Massacre on congressional, Democratic congressional opinion?

Brademas: Well, I think there was a lot of outrage about that. But I'd have to go back to my notes to try to recall just what I was thinking or what others were thinking at the time. But there was a great hostility to Richard Nixon on the Hill, no question about it. It was just felt that he was not behaving appropriately. And as I see where we are in 2007, I find some of the same attitudes toward the current President Bush, as was the case in the latter part of the Nixon Presidency.

Naftali: Attitudes from members of Congress or just the general public?

Brademas: Both, you see the latest polls have George Bush very low, but also have Congress low. I think that Congress is so low, and I'm giving you my sense of it now, as a former practicing politician, is that we do not have -- Democrats do not have, in Congress, a working majority. Why do I say that? Because of the filibuster rule in the Senate. You need really 60 votes to be able to pass a bill, otherwise you run into a filibuster. And that's why the announcement of Senator Warner of Virginia that he will not run again, the announcement, I think, of Senator Domenici that he will not run again. The -- I think Senator Hagel announced that he will not run again. And Senator Craig of Idaho is in trouble even as we speak, so that there is a good prospect now that Democrats will be able to reach that magic number of 60 votes in the Senate, which will make possible a working majority.

Naftali: Let's fast forward to the resignation. And how did you become involved in the issue of the disposition of President Nixon's papers and tapes?

Brademas: When President Nixon resigned and Jerry Ford became the President -- and by the way, I served in the House with Jerry Ford and admired him greatly -- the director of the General Services Administration entered into an exchange of letters with Mr. Nixon under which all the records of the Nixon Presidency, including the famous tape recordings, would be turned over to Mr. Nixon under conditions that could have led to their eventual destruction. I was, to be gentle about it, outraged at this decision. For one thing, I'm a Democrat. For another, I had remembered what Nixon had said about Adlai Stevenson. For another, I, of course, observed what was

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going on with the whole Watergate episode. And I thought, finally, as I was the member for the House of Representatives, appointed by Speaker Albert of the National Historical Publications and Records Commission, so I had a respect for history. And I had written some history myself. And I thought, Nazis burn books; Americans don't burn books.

And so I went to Congressman Jack Brooks of Texas, who chaired the House Government Operations Committee, which had jurisdiction over the General Services Administration. And Jack had no more enthusiasm for Richard Nixon than I did. And I said, "Jack, what are you gonna do about this?" And he said, "John, this is an election year, and I don't have time." I said, "I chair the most -- the weakest subcommittee in the House of Representatives, the Subcommittee on Printing of the Committee on House Administration. We told members how many copies of the Congressional Record they could send to their constituents, but it gave me a color of jurisdiction." And Jack said, "You've got it." So I introduced legislation. I worked to -- with, in the Senate, Sam Ervin and Gaylord Nelson, who were interested in this issue as well. I conducted hearings; I brought in archivists, historians. And the result was the Presidential Materials and Recordings Preservation Act, Records Preservation Act of 1974, which nullified the GSA arrangement and said all these papers belong -- and materials belong to the people of the United States. And that legislation established also a Commission on Presidential Papers, which was chaired by Herb Brownell, the former attorney general. And the result of their work was the Presidential Records Act of, I think, 1978, as I recall, under which records of American Presidents belonged to the people. Presidents no longer have title to them.

This leads, however, to yet another concern that I have, and that is that is there is no such protection accorded to the papers of members of Congress. I have over 500 boxes of 22 years of service in Congress now being processed by the New York University archivist, but I could destroy them tomorrow if I chose to do so, legally. And yet, in our separation-of-powers constitutional system, Congress has power independently of the executive to make policy. If a senator or congressman is skillful and knows what he or she is doing, and if the political forces are appropriate at the time, that senator or congressman can, without picking up the telephone to call the White House, write the laws of the land. And I did, and others did, indeed. My major project now, as president emeritus of New York University, is a center which bears my name in the Robert F. Wagner Graduate School of Public Service, for the study of Congress, of Congress as a policy-making institution. And I am hoping to illumine both scholarly and public understanding of the role of Congress in this respect through this center.

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- Naftali: One question about PRMPA. Did you consult at all with Birch Bayh, who had also tried to get a similar act passed earlier that year?
- Brademas: I don't recall that I did, to tell you the truth. I may be wrong about that. I told you I'm a note taker and sometimes I -- usually, I make notes on important conversations of that kind. But I don't have any recollection that I did.
- Naftali: Can you recollect how you felt the day that Nixon resigned?
- Brademas: Well, I suppose relief as much as anything else, because, for reasons I have suggested, I did not think he had well served the country. He was a highly intelligent man. I admired his intelligence. But I did not respect his manner of operation. I thought that they beclouded the integrity of the American constitutional system. And so it was a relief, and Jerry Ford came in. I had served with him; I had great respect for him. I -- as I am from Indiana, and he was from Michigan, I lived only a few miles from the Michigan border in South Bend, in northern Indiana. And when I was a child growing up, I knew down the street from where I lived was a man named Elbel, who was the author, as I recall, of the University of Michigan fight song. I had a certain -- and Jerry Ford, of course, was a football player for the University of Michigan. So I found him a very congenial, very congenial person and a very decent man. Nixon, to me, is a tragic figure because he was a person of such keen intelligence. I greatly admired his knowledge and his skill. And I'm not saying that everything he did was wrong, but he overstepped his bounds.
- Naftali: Dr. Brademas, thank you for your time today.
- Brademas: You're very welcome.