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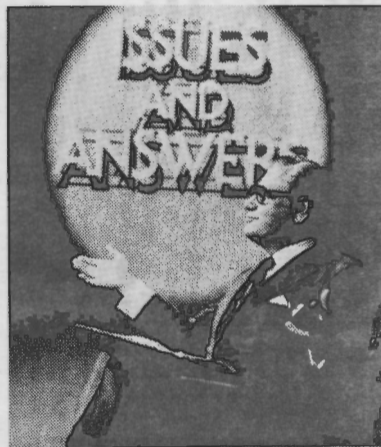
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ISSUES AND ANSWERS



SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 2, 1975

Transcript of a half-hour interview produced and televised over ABC-TV and ABC-Radio and published by Tyler Business Services, Inc., Washington, D. C.



GUEST:
NELSON A. ROCKEFELLER — The Vice President

INTERVIEWED BY:
BOB CLARK — ABC News Issues and Answers Chief Correspondent
HERBERT KAPLOW — ABC News Correspondent

NELSON A. ROCKEFELLER, The Vice President

THE ANNOUNCER: Vice President Nelson Rockefeller, here are the issues:

Is President Ford playing politics in refusing to rescue New York City from its financial crisis?

You recently said it would be a catastrophe for the country if New York City went bankrupt. Do you still feel that way?

Can you survive the conservative effort to dump you as Vice President in 1976?

MR. CLARK: Our guest is Vice President Rockefeller and with me is ABC News Correspondent Herb Kaplow.

Mr. Vice President, President Ford said this week that he will veto any congressional plan to use federal funds to save New York City. Do you see any possibility, any chance at all of preventing a default at this stage?

VICE PRESIDENT ROCKEFELLER: Yes, I do. Of course, I love the city, as you know, and I love the people in the city and I have great confidence in it. Therefore, it seems to me that with the programs that have been set up by the legislature and the Governor, with a fiscal board, that if the measures are taken, the same objectives can be accomplished in bringing expenditures and revenues into balance that can be accomplished under default.

Now it is tougher, let's face it, because political decisions have to be made by people who are elected whereas under the other system, through default, it goes to a Federal judge and the judge makes the decisions. Now last night on Bill Buckley's show, Don Rumsfeld pointed out the objective is to bring expenditures and revenues into balance, and there are various ways that can be accomplished.

MR. CLARK: Could you give us one or two examples? You say political decisions would have to be taken. What political decisions to save New York City?

VICE PRESIDENT ROCKEFELLER: Well, tough decisions about expenditures.

MR. CLARK: The expenditures or revenue?

VICE PRESIDENT ROCKEFELLER: Expenditures and revenue. You are perfectly right. Expenditures and revenue.

MR. CLARK: Could you possibly reduce New York City expenditures enough in the next two or four or five weeks to prevent default? How can that be done?

VICE PRESIDENT ROCKEFELLER: Nobody is expecting it in four to five weeks. You couldn't. It will take three years, and that has always been the plan. That they will have to take the actions now that will lead to a balanced budget in 1978, and that I think everybody feels.

MR. CLARK: The danger of default is certainly within the next month or five or six weeks at the most.

VICE PRESIDENT ROCKEFELLER: That is correct.

MR. KAPLOW: Mr. Vice President, do you agree with the President that default ought to be permitted to happen, and then these additional steps be taken?

VICE PRESIDENT ROCKEFELLER: Well, it gets down to the question as to whether you think the city and the state are going to take the measures that will bring about this balancing of expenditures and revenues. If you do think they will, then default will not be necessary. If you don't think they will, then default will be necessary. Now, this is the big question.

MR. KAPLOW: What do you think?

VICE PRESIDENT ROCKEFELLER: I think they can.

MR. KAPLOW: What does that mean in terms of the President's decision this past week? Should he have made that decision or not?

VICE PRESIDENT ROCKEFELLER: I think the President is deeply concerned, and I share with him the concern, that you cannot, the federal government cannot bail out cities, whether it is New York or any other city. Once the federal government starts on that, then there is no end to the expenditures that are going to be made by local government, if they think the federal government will pick up the check. That is a human factor.

MR. KAPLOW: Mr. Vice President, there are moves in the Congress right now for loan guarantees, which the President has indicated he would not support. What do you feel about the loan guarantees?

VICE PRESIDENT ROCKEFELLER: Well, it depends upon the form they take, and the provisions they make in the loan guarantees. If the Congress makes provisions which will accomplish the same objective which a default would, which is, namely, to do those tough things that have to be done, that can be accomplished that way, too.

MR. CLARK: Mr. Vice President, we now have two Congressional bills, one coming out of the Senate Banking Committee, the other out of a House Banking subcommittee. Are either of those tough enough to satisfy you that there could now be some federal action?

VICE PRESIDENT ROCKEFELLER: Well, I am not familiar with the details of either of those bills, so I can't tell you. But they have got to go through the Congress. A bill coming out of the committee is interesting, but it is when it goes through a Congress that it really counts. Therefore, I don't know.

MR. KAPLOW: As I understand both bills in very general terms, they would in effect put the city under federal control in many aspects of the activities. Is that good?

VICE PRESIDENT ROCKEFELLER: Well, it all goes back to this same question that Mr. Rumsfeld put out last night, which is very simple: Bring your expenditures and your revenue into balance. And, whatever method used is going to be difficult, and how that is achieved.

But I would like to say this is not just a problem that faced New York; This is a problem that faces cities throughout the country. Frankly, I started talking about this in 1968 in my message to the legislature, warning that we were coming into a situation where our expenditures were growing more rapidly than our revenues; that it was going to affect cities and states throughout the nation.

And it isn't just the cities or the states that are responsible; it is the Congress of the United States. The Congress has now over a thousand -- a thousand six to be exact -- programs which are of aid to state and local government. But they will not give the aid unless you -- and allow you to cut your own program back so that the Congress -- you have got to enrich and improve. You have got to spend more money to get the money and therefore local government has been forced to increase its expenditures way beyond its capacity.

MR. CLARK: Mr. Vice President, let me ask you, do you still believe as you once said that it will be a catastrophe for the country if New York City goes bankrupt?

VICE PRESIDENT ROCKEFELLER: I think that that is a very real possibility. Beside, there is no -- now, this was another major contribution the President made. He is the first person who has had the courage to talk openly about the fact that the federal laws do not make provision for an orderly reorganization of a municipal structure financing.

MR. CLARK: Yes, but under the President's plan New York City would go bankrupt, isn't that correct? You say that would be a --

VICE PRESIDENT ROCKEFELLER: That is right. Under the present laws. Now, the President has called for and asked Congress --

MR. CLARK: Under his plan, it would still go bankrupt?

VICE PRESIDENT ROCKEFELLER: Yes, but under the present laws there is no provision -- anybody can then sue -- the whole thing would just be chaotic.

If there is a modification of those laws which permits an orderly reorganization, then exactly the same thing would be accomplished under the plan that could be carried out by this state finance control board.

MR. CLARK: Your brother, David, Chairman of the Chase Manhattan Bank, is one of a number of bankers who warned a Senate hearing about what they called the psychological reaction the bankruptcy of New York City could cause in the country, and let me quote to you what your brother David and the other bankers said.

They said it could exert an enormous down-pull on general economic activity in the country. Do you agree with that?

VICE PRESIDENT ROCKEFELLER: I do.

MR. CLARK: Can you expand a little on that? What are the dangers you see to other communities across the country into the whole national economy?

VICE PRESIDENT ROCKEFELLER: You see, this thing is so complicated that you have got to analyze it.

Under the present bankruptcy laws -- and if you read the President's speech carefully, his whole thrust was, the Congress should amend the laws.

Now, Governor Carey is urging that privately, the Mayor is urging it privately. Nobody has been willing to come out openly because they were afraid it would give the impression they thought the city was going to go bankrupt. But the laws have to be changed or there will be chaos. Now, if the laws are changed, and there could be a voluntary reorganization, which is really what he is talking about, that would accomplish the possibility of bringing these situations back into balance. Or it could be done by --

MR. CLARK: Do we have a state of suspended chaos for weeks or months while the bankruptcy laws take effect.

VICE PRESIDENT ROCKEFELLER: It does not take effect. They haven't been changed yet. The Congress has not amended them. Without an amendment -- and this -- the President spelled out very clearly -- without an amendment, this situation is absolutely unknown. Nobody knows. It is like going off into the dark. Nobody knows what is going to happen.

Therefore, they should be changed, but I think you have got to recognize very frankly that the Congress has been doing exactly what they are criticizing New York City for doing. They are working under pressure, the response to pressure groups. They are spending more money than they have. Now, they can print money, but we have a situation where there is a federal deficit of 60 or 70 billion dollars staring us right in the face.

MR. KAPLOW: The same charges have been made against the executive branch. He could make cuts, too. He keeps talking about it and doesn't do it.

VICE PRESIDENT ROCKEFELLER: He tried to make the cuts and lost in the courts.

It goes back to President Nixon, remember he froze a lot of expenditures and "impounded" them was the word they used, and then the courts said he didn't have the right to do it.

MR. KAPLOW: I am still not clear. Do you agree or disagree with the President's action taken last week?

VICE PRESIDENT ROCKEFELLER: The President didn't take action; he made a speech.

MR. KAPLOW: Do you agree with his proposal?

VICE PRESIDENT ROCKEFELLER: I agree that the federal government cannot bail out any city. Now, I agree that every city has got to bring its expenditures and its revenues into balance. That is part of the law. And I agree there are various different ways of doing it. One of which would be to change the bankruptcy laws and allow the -- the federal laws -- and allow for voluntary reorganization. Now, that is one way of doing it. If you don't think that the city and the state are going to take the measures necessary to accomplish a balanced budget, then you come to the conclusion there should be a change in the bankruptcy laws and go that route.

MR. KAPLOW: Are there not indications that the city and the state are taking certain actions? A lot of people have been laid off.

VICE PRESIDENT ROCKEFELLER: There is a very interesting piece in the New York Times reporting on an off-the-record lunch, or lunch that Governor Carey had with the editors of the New York Times in which he said this situation allows for the accomplishment of a great many things which otherwise couldn't be accomplished, and in that listing that was in the Times he referred to merging the City university or relating it to the state university.

MR. KAPLOW: So things are being done?

VICE PRESIDENT ROCKEFELLER: Well, this is what he said might be done. What I think the tragedy is, it is six months since the governor and the mayor first visited with the President, and I don't know as we sit here, and I am not sure you gentlemen -- you live here -- I don't know whether --

MR. KAPLOW: We live in Washington.

VICE PRESIDENT ROCKEFELLER: I know you do. I mean, we are all here. You know. You are more closely in touch with this. I don't really know yet whether the actual plans to achieve a balanced budget has been adopted by the mayor and the city council and the Board of Estimates.

MR. CLARK: Mr. Vice President, Governor Carey said Friday night in New York that federal guarantee of New York City bonds wouldn't cost the federal government a dime. Do you agree with that?

VICE PRESIDENT ROCKEFELLER: Well, that depends upon whether they put their house in order or they don't. In other words, you get back to this same question, which is absolutely fundamental: Are they going to be able to live within their means? And this is true of any group.

Now, I think this is not something that just New York City can do by itself. I am very familiar with this. I worked on it for 15 years. Each year we had these meetings, two or three days, going through the night, working out a balance each year to get the city through the situation, and it is very delicate, and we advanced money under the first instance appropriation; we increased aid from the state to New York City, from \$346 million to a billion -- \$2,500,000,000.

* * *

MR. CLARK: Mr. Vice President, the Secretary of the Treasury Mr. Simon, suggested on this show a couple of weeks ago that the State of New York should impose a temporary increase in the sales tax to help bail New York City out of its financial troubles. Would you support that?

VICE PRESIDENT ROCKEFELLER: Well, I don't like the word "bail out," because you are not going to bail out. After New York City has balanced its budget, by 1978, taken the steps and it has passed, then they are going to need some help to get through this three-year period before their credit is reestablished in the market.

Now, I understand what Secretary Simon is saying, that certainly it is true that New York State can help New York City, and if they had revenues, additional revenues, they could use them to purchase some of those bonds.

MR. CLARK: Do you agree with Secretary Simon when he says the state should impose a temporary increase in the state sales tax?

VICE PRESIDENT ROCKEFELLER: I don't believe in telling anybody else how to run their show.

MR. CLARK: You have had 15 years experience in this field. You are a qualified expert.

VICE PRESIDENT ROCKEFELLER: Then let's go back to what I did. I requested and the legislature voted to increase taxes to help New York City and other cities. Sixty-two percent of every increase in taxes that I got during the 15 years I was Governor went back to local government. Therefore, that is obviously a method of helping them.

MR. KAPLOW: Mr. Vice President, one more try: If you had been President last week, would you have proposed what President Ford proposed for New York?

VICE PRESIDENT ROCKEFELLER: Well, somebody had to have the courage to say what he did, that you can't bail out the cities, and that the bankruptcy law needs to be changed. Now, those are two things that took a lot of courage, today.

MR. KAPLOW: Would you have done anything more or less?

VICE PRESIDENT ROCKEFELLER: It is impossible to put yourself into somebody else's position.

MR. KAPLOW: Would you have gone to a loan guarantee program?

VICE PRESIDENT ROCKEFELLER: I go to the same -- basic thing he does, which is balancing expenditures and revenues, and then you have your alternate choices as to how you bridge that gap for three years. Now, you can do it under bankruptcy by having the creditors surrender a portion of their assets, or you can do it some other way. There is an infinite number of ways.

I would like to read you one thing I said in 1971 before then Congressman Carey's committee -- this is the Ways and Means -- when I was testifying about revenue sharing, and I was talking about the cities, and I said this: "All over the country their increased expenditures are now growing at the rate of three or four times as fast as their increased revenues from existing sources. If this desperate situation is not resolved, this country is going to experience a domino wave of bankruptcies spreading from cities to states all over the nation during the next five years." That was 1971.

MR. CLARK: Mr. Vice President, one of the most respected liberals in your party, Senator Mathias of Maryland, said this week in Washington that President Ford is trying to appear as conservative as Ronald Reagan, and he was referring to his solution for New York's problems, as well as many other matters. This, Mathias said, and these were his words, is driving more and more moderate and centerists out of the Republican Party.

Is it?

VICE PRESIDENT ROCKEFELLER: I think what Mr. Ford is doing is trying to analyze the problems this country faces. He is spending a tremendous amount of time, very sincere about it, and then is coming up with what he believes deeply are the right answers for the long-term best interests of the country.

He has got the courage to stand for them, regardless of the short-term political disadvantages, and I have to say I respect his courage.

MR. CLARK: To return to Senator Mathias again, he also says, "The flight of moderates from the party is making a Reagan nomination more likely."

Would you disagree with that?

VICE PRESIDENT ROCKEFELLER: Well, those are speculations. I don't know how anyone tells. This is such a fast-moving situation.

MR. CLARK: You don't detect any flight of moderates or centerists away from the Republican Party?

VICE PRESIDENT ROCKEFELLER: Well, we have got 18 percent of the voters now. It is not what you would call a majority party. But I don't see how anyone can determine whether there is a flight from a party, so that I would say this is a speculation.

MR. CLARK: You are not concerned about it?

VICE PRESIDENT ROCKEFELLER: I am concerned about the problems this country faces. I am concerned that these problems be solved and that we have the courage to do the tough things that are necessary to put us back in the position of leadership, meeting peoples' needs at home, jobs, stop inflation, and our responsibilities in the world. We can do it. We have got all the resources. We have got the most brilliant free people in the world.

MR. KAPLOW: Your own political role obviously is a matter of considerable speculation in relationship to Governor Reagan and others. What is your constituency in the Republican Party?

VICE PRESIDENT ROCKEFELLER: Well, I don't know as I would -- I never really thought about that, frankly.

MR. KAPLOW: Senator Mathias and the other dozen or so senators who seem to have echoed his sentiment as concerned -- are men who have been associated to a large extent with you in the past.

VICE PRESIDENT ROCKEFELLER: That is correct. That is correct.

MR. KAPLOW: I am just wondering how strong you would be at a Republican Convention, how strong you are with the politicians now.

VICE PRESIDENT ROCKEFELLER: Well, I have to say this, that the Republican party does not elect presidents. With 18 per cent of the votes, you can't elect somebody. Therefore, it has got to be a Republican candidate who can appeal to the majority of the American people because of his ability, his wisdom, his judgment, his soundness, and on that basis you elect a president. The same is true of a governor.

MR. CLARK: Does Ronald Reagan appeal to the majority of the American people?

VICE PRESIDENT ROCKEFELLER: Well, this is one of those problematical questions.

MR. CLARK: Could you?

VICE PRESIDENT ROCKEFELLER: That is another one.

President Kennedy was good enough to say in his book that if I had been nominated in sixty he thought I would have beaten him.

MR. CLARK: Senator Mathias also said this past week that especially if Mr. Reagan comes on strong in New Hampshire or the other early primaries, he or another liberal might mount a challenge to President Ford. What would you think of a challenge on the Republican nomination from the liberal wing of the party, what used to be called the Rockefeller wing?

VICE PRESIDENT ROCKEFELLER: Well, this is a free country and who knows what is going to happen?

MR. CLARK: Would it damage the party?

VICE PRESIDENT ROCKEFELLER: Well, I remember I ran against Governor Harriman in 1958 and that was a point when everybody said it was a Democratic year and there was no point in anyone running and were a minority party in New York by a million registered voters, but I ran anyhow and there were four or five others running and it was the most lively, exciting campaign, and we won.

MR. CLARK: Would it be healthy for the party to have a liberal challenge to a possible nomination of Ronald Reagan?

VICE PRESIDENT ROCKEFELLER: Well, I think a democracy lives on frank, free, open discussion, and I think that frank, free, open discussion is healthy.

MR. KAPLOW: Would you tell us what you think is behind the resignation of David Packard as Finance Chairman for the Ford Election Committee?

VICE PRESIDENT ROCKEFELLER: I think the fact he didn't raise the money.

MR. KAPLOW: As simple as that?

VICE PRESIDENT ROCKEFELLER: I think you can come through a lot of complicated -- you know -- thoughts, but when you get right down to it, the money hasn't been raised.

MR. KAPLOW: Was he fired or did he quit?

VICE PRESIDENT ROCKEFELLER: That I don't honestly know.

MR. CLARK: Mr. Vice President, as you are very much aware, I am sure, there has been strong pressure from conservatives in the party to dump you as Vice President. Barry Goldwater suggested on this program a couple of months ago that you might make a good Secretary of State.

VICE PRESIDENT ROCKEFELLER: Forget it.

MR. CLARK: Forget the Secretary of State?

VICE PRESIDENT ROCKEFELLER: We have got the greatest Secretary of State this country has ever had.

MR. CLARK: How about the efforts to dump you? Is that something you lie awake nights worrying about?

VICE PRESIDENT ROCKEFELLER: No, I don't. I am not a candidate. I have said that very frankly ever since I was confirmed. As a matter of fact, I have gone on further and I have said I haven't even committed myself as to whether I would be available or not.

I think the President ought to be totally free to pick whomever he wants after he is nominated. I have said that right along.

MR. CLARK: But it appears, Mr. Vice President, the change in the situation, if there has been a change, if the pressure is strong enough, that you may have to fight to keep the job, that you can't just wait until the convention. Are you willing to fight to stay on the job?

VICE PRESIDENT ROCKEFELLER: No. If you are not a candidate, you are not going to fight for something. I am not a candidate.

There is nothing new about this situation. Let's be perfectly frank. All you have to do is go back to the confirmation hearings in the Congress. I was opposed by both the extreme right and the extreme left, which is the history. That is my history in this country. I have always been a centerist. I have always thought that the basic --

MR. CLARK: A "centerist" being one of those fellows who is fleeing from the party as Senator Mathias said.

VICE PRESIDENT ROCKEFELLER: That is a new thought to me.

MR. KAPLOW: Centerist going south.

VICE PRESIDENT ROCKEFELLER: A centerist is somebody who is in the middle of the road who believes in the basic American principles on which this country has grown to power and to greatness and who believes in the dignity of the individual, the respect for equality of opportunity, and for sound fiscal policies. Now, these are not inconsistent. And who believes that we have got in the free enterprise system the most productive system in the world. It has brought this country its high standard of living.

MR. KAPLOW: Mr. Vice President, Senator Goldwater is quoted as saying last night that he is going to ask Congress to halt an investigation of the CIA for "handing out secrets to our enemies".

Do you think these investigations ought to be halted?

VICE PRESIDENT ROCKEFELLER: Well, I will tell you. I went through as chairman of one, to look into the violations of domestic statutes. There was an accusation there were massive violations. They were not massive. There were violations. We recommended steps to be taken to meet them. Now headlines are coming out in the papers that were in our report. The same material. I don't think, really, that there is any useful purpose being served by the continuation of the so-called "revelations".

What they ought to do now is come up with recommendations as to what they feel is necessary. We have got to have an Intelligence Service. We don't want to destroy its usefulness. We don't want to give away so much information about how the system works that it makes it unworkable.

MR. KAPLOW: Are you saying they ought to knock it off?

VICE PRESIDENT ROCKEFELLER: I am saying they ought to conclude with whatever recommendations they have based on the information - everybody knows who has done the investigating. We have the material. It is all there. We have all studied it. Those of us who have had the privilege to get into the confidential -

MR. CLARK: Time for one very short question.

Are you concerned as some members of Congress are investigating the CIA, that Secretary Kissinger wields too much power over the country's Intelligence activities?

VICE PRESIDENT ROCKEFELLER: Not in the slightest.

MR. CLARK: We won't have enough time to ask another question that you could answer in full.

Thank you very much for being with us, Mr. Vice President, on ISSUES AND ANSWERS.

VICE PRESIDENT ROCKEFELLER: It is a pleasure.

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

File

January 10, 1974

Ron:

I propose, with Jerry Warren's concurrence (and at Hugh Morrow's suggestion) that you circulate this interview with the VP to the senior staff with the following covermemo from you:

"Vice President Rockefeller's interview with Time magazine includes his views on a wide variety of subjects, including his view of his role as Vice President. ~~I recommend it to your reading~~ Hugh Morrow and I thought it would be useful for you to read the entire interview."

Distribution would be to:

- (Ron Nessen)
- (The President)
- Don Rumsfeld
- Bob Hartmann
- Jack Marsh
- Phil Buchen
- Sec. Kissinger
- Sec. Simon
- Phil Areeda
- Secretary Lynn
- Roy Ash
- Bill Seidman
- Max Friedersdorf
- Bill Baroody
- Jack Hushen
- Jerry Warren

tom

_____ OK AS IS

_____ OK WITH CHANGES

_____ OTHER

son 1 AN INTERVIEW WITH THE VICE PRESIDENT

2 OF THE UNITED STATES

3 By Hugh Sidey and Bonnie Angelo, of the staff of Time
4 Magazine

5 In the office of the Vice President
6 Old Executive Office Building
7 Washington, D. C. January 8, 1975
8 at 3:40 p.m.

9 Q Mr. Vice President, your time is precious, we
10 know, and we feel quite honored by all this. We made up some
11 subjects and questions and we will go through them, and please
12 brush aside the ones you don't want to answer, but if there
13 are any documents or secrets you want to reveal, that is fine.

14 A I am trying to find out about them.

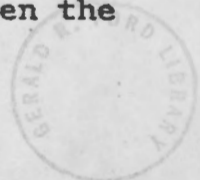
15 Q Let us start out, if that is all right. I
16 think the first thing, as I mentioned in the letter, is just
17 about the element of leadership. I think when you look at the
18 polls about the presidency, which embraces you, too, you have
19 quite a massive loss of confidence that has not been
20 recovered. Indeed it has gone down some.

21 I wonder, as you view it, what can you do as a Vice
22 President and as Nelson Rockefeller.

23 A So conduct myself that all of you are satisfied
24 that there is integrity and decency and honesty in one addi-
25 tional post in government. I think the President has already
created that sense of openness and character, the desire to
find the answers in a tremendously difficult period of
transition.

26 This is a very complex problem, this loss of confi-
27 dence. It just isn't in the Executive. It is in the Congress,
28 it is in various other institutions, in business -- I won't
29 say anything about the media -- but the church and whatnot.
30 There has been this loss. But I think that is very
31 understandable.

32 It is in a period of transition, of accelerated
33 change in the world, and therefore the institutions have had
34 difficulty adapting and the institutions have been the



1 vehicles through which people have been served. That is so in
2 our society.

3 Now, added to this worldwide accelerated change you
4 have the tragedy of Watergate, which was the moral on top of
5 the material disruption. So that is compounded.

6 Therefore you have to go backward to the Government
7 and you come back to using me as an example. That is not lit-
8 erally because the function of the Vice President is to pre-
9 side over the Senate and to be available for any assignment
10 from the President. To the degree that I do a good job as pre-
11 siding officer in the Senate, I will have fulfilled my func-
12 tions there and I will do my best.

13 To the degree I can serve the President and through
14 him the people in whatever area he wants, okay. One visible
15 assignment already is this committee on the domestic activities
16 of the CIA. All right, it is a very good example.

17 There is revelation, whether corroborated or not I
18 don't know, but at least apparently a revelation of activities
19 that were outside of the law and a further undermining of pub-
20 lic confidence. I think the openness that the President has
21 displayed is a very important part of this, that the public is
22 going to be satisfied on this one or any other if the facts
23 are obtained and if they are then made available and corrective
24 action is taken.

25 Q Mr. Vice President, even after Mr. Ford took
over, his affection or I should say credibility with the
American public went down. Why was that? Was it the pardon?

A There was tremendous reaction on that. I put
out a statement at that time that I thought this was an act of
compassion, an act of courage and of humanity, but that for the
short term at least he was going to be very bitterly criti-
cised for it. In the long term it might accelerate the heal-
ing of the wound of America. I hope my long-term analysis
will be as correct as my short-term one was.

Q Do you still feel that way?

A Yes, because the public is confused about a lot
of these things, and I don't blame them. So am I. A lot of
facts we don't know.

I think there are two major areas. One is the
morality of our institutions and the other are the economic

1 factors which are dramatized to the public in the form of
2 inflation and unemployment and which have underlining them
3 much more complex problems that are not simple United States
4 based problems alone. They are international, a totally new
5 approach -- the OPEC countries through artificial raising of a
6 price which is perhaps one of the major social revolutions, if
7 you call it social-economic revolutions, that has taken place
8 in the history of the world.

9 On top of that there is food. The rising standard
10 of living in Europe and Japan increased demand because of the
11 higher standard of living and the rising population the world
12 over, plus crop failures. You had that crystalized in the pur-
13 chase of grain by the Soviet and follwing a doubling of grain
14 prices within a month. We had then feed prices and food
15 prices, so this thing is international in its roots, and then,
16 of course, the dislocation of the formation of capital, the
17 movement from the industrial nations to the Arab nations, and
18 this you add on top of energy, the balance-of-payments problem,
19 capital-formation problems, plus food, and you have a pretty
20 complex situation with unemployment hitting on top of the
21 inflation.

22 Q Mr. Vice President, even though, as you say,
23 these are very complex and worldwide, there is a question of
24 leadership which comes down to just like two of you or a few
25 more men in the country to make it start moving forward again.
You have talked, I am sure, with the President about what your
role is to be. What do you expect it to be?

A Just exactly what I told you. I will preside
over the Senate and do anything he asks me. When he
announces what I am doing in any particular area, that is when
I will be able to talk about it.

Q He has announced the domestic council.

A He has announced his intentions.

Q That that will be a major thing.

A It is a statement of intention. The transla-
tion of intention into the way in which that can be brought
about and realized is in the process of discussion.

Q Why did you take the vice presidency at this
time?

A Because of the very reasons you are talking

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1 about, the loss of confidence in our country. I love this
2 country and I want to serve this country. I spent most of my
3 life trying to serve the people of this country and our rela-
tions with other nations. To me it was a great opportunity of
being where one might be able to be helpful.

4 Q How is your relationship with the President?
Can you define it a little better?

5 A Well, I went to a Cabinet meeting today for the
6 first Cabinet meeting this year, the first one I have
7 attended of his. I worked for five other Presidents and I
8 attended Cabinet meetings since 1940, so that I have been to a
lot of them.

9 I thought this meeting today was the best-run Cabinet
meeting I have attended in my life.

10 Now he has finally got this under Mr. Rumsfeld, he
11 has his staff organized and the policies worked out, and they
12 have their procedures worked out and then under Jack Marsh the
relations with the Congress and the total awareness.

13 I have worked with legislators all of my life, first
14 down here and off and on for 12 years with Congress, and then
15 in the State, and that was the best analysis of an executive-
16 legislative relationship and how the executive should conduct
itself to be effective in helping the Congress in the carrying
out of their responsibilities. I thought those were two of
the best statements.

17 Q You aren't a bit worried, as you mentioned
before, that you will have to submerge differences and your
own ideas?

18 A This is a democracy, I will always be Nelson
19 Rockefeller, but I think the vitality of a democracy is unity
with diversity. This is our strength.

20 Q Ford can accept that?

21 A He looks for it. This is a man who is open,
22 who wants to listen, whether it is in a Cabinet meeting or
23 economic meeting or energy meeting. He wants to listen to
24 understand the different points of view and then try to come
to what is the best decision to solve the problems. I really
25 can't stress enough the power of concentration and his total
singleness of purpose to find what is the right thing to do.

1 Q Is this a unique situation, you and Mr. Ford,
two unelected people?

2 A Absolutely.

3 Q With complex problems, but what strength is in
4 that is in you and Ford?

5 A That I understand the relationship, that he is
the President and he has the responsibility and the power and
6 it is a very lonely position. The Vice President has no
responsibility and no power.

7 Q Can it be different, though, the vice
8 presidency?

9 A Of course it can but only if the President
wants to use the Vice President and only if the Vice President
10 is experienced enough to know where the pitfalls are.

11 Q You expect to be used more than other Vice
Presidents, do you not?

12 A Well, I think that has already been indicated.
13 I don't expect anything. This, I think, is my greatest
strength, frankly. I don't expect anything and I don't need
14 anything, except I would like to serve the President and the
country.

15 Q Historically men in this position --

16 A I have known every Vice President since Henry
17 Wallace very well.

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1 Q Then you know very well that most of them or
2 all of them have been frustrated. How do you expect to avoid
the same thing?

3 A I come to this at a different point in life.
4 I have had a very active and very busy and very rewarding
opportunities in life. This opportunity I did not expect.

5 I understand the relationships in government. I
6 spent seven years studying government organization with
President Eisenhower so that I think that I am well trained
7 in this relationship.

8 Nobody can get between the President and his Cabinet
and nobody can get between the President and his Staff without
9 destroying his usefulness. But one can help the President.

10 Q Then you have a different problem of perhaps
getting out too far in front with the President?

11 A You get into these troubles that I am telling
12 you about. It would be totally impossible.

13 Q Can you prevent your Staff, Mr. Vice-President,
from conflicting with the President?

14 A He has been extraordinary on that. He has in-
15 vited members of my Staff to attend his Staff's meetings and
he said to me this morning that every morning he wanted our
16 representatives. That is unheard of.

17 Q This is unique?

18 A That is right. He said today when he looked at
the chart, this was the new organization, "I don't see the
19 governor's staff." He said the governor's staff, there is a
box there, and he said the governor's staff and the
20 President's Staff are part of one whole. I am talking about
myself.

21 Q We still think of you as Governor.

22 A This is not going to read right.

23 Q He is meaning the Vice-President.

24 A Will you translate it for me, yes.

25 But he really is a very unusual person in my opinion,

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1 coming as he does from the Congress and coming into this job.
2 In this meeting today, and I told you, being very frank, this
3 was the best-run Cabinet meeting I have ever attended, better
4 prepared, and better run, and he was strong and [redacted] in
5 adding to the discussions and presentations. It was concise
6 and useful to everyone there.

7 Q Let us take that one job of yours, Mr. Vice-
8 President, as the idea that you will either head up the
9 domestic counsel or you will have some responsibility in the
10 domestic areas.

11 A It is called a special relationship for him.

12 Q In terms of domestic policy or this Nation,
13 what broad concept do you have that the overall directions of
14 American life ought to take?

15 A Well, you see this is just where you get to
16 what you said before -- what happens if you get out in front
17 of the President. I am not going to get out in front of the
18 President. I am going to give him the best judgment I have
19 in any field that he asks me. After he has made a decision
20 I will support it.

21 But it is impossible for me or for anybody really
22 in this Cabinet, too, but I am especially in a delicate
23 situation.

24 Q What about the ideas of very broad philosoph-
25 ical questions -- I think we raised one in the magazine --
like, is capitalism dead? Do we face fundamental wrenches
in our national life of that caliber?

Is there anything you can say on that?

A I don't think it is dead. I think of course
capitalism has to be defined, but if you have a democratic
society in a capitalistic system with the kind of social
responsibility which this society has, so that the Government
creates a framework within which the free citizens operate
that provides maximum opportunities and freedom but protects
the rights of all, then you start to have a system that is a
terrific system providing you preserve that opportunity for
creativity and imagination and driven all of the qualities
that go with it.

Q Let me put it another way.

You and the President or this Administration, do

1 you expect to develop a really kind of visionary concept of
2 American life much like Mr. Kissinger has done in foreign
3 policy where he has given us a framework that we hadn't
4 had before?

5 A Well those are questions that you should ask
6 the President. My hunch is that that is what the President
7 is going to do.

8 Q Have you had a chance to talk to him philosoph-
9 ically about broad approaches?

10 A I have been five days here, and the meetings
11 we have had were the Energy Committee, the Economic Council
12 and the Cabinet and there has been this little assignment on
13 the CIA and getting that organized and so forth, so that I
14 haven't had, nor has he had, the time to sit around and put
15 our feet out and just chat or philosophize.

16 Q How did you feel about the CIA assignment being
17 your first major thing as Vice-President?

18 A Well, I came down here to help him, and this is
19 a tough problem for him and for the country, the confidence
20 in the Government for our national security and for all the
21 whole concept of freedom and human dignity -- okay. That is
22 a tough assignment and he asked me to take it and I will do
23 the best job for him and for the country that I can.

24 Q Are you satisfied with the Commission member-
25 ship which has been criticized a good deal?

A I thought that they were all very able people.

Q You don't see a conflict with yourself that has
been expressed by some?

A No, I took an oath of office which everybody
seems to forget. When you take an oath of office, especially
for President or Vice-President, you swear to serve and defend
the Constitution of the United States and the Country against
enemies both here and abroad, and that is a pretty serious
oath. I can't have a conflict.

I have one responsibility and that is to serve this
Country and serve the people of this Country. I have no other
interest. How could I have a conflict of interest? That is
my feeling, if I have any integrity.

1 Q In terms of the CIA, for one thing if confi-
2 dence is once broken in an agency, can it be put back together?

3 A Surely, otherwise this Country wouldn't be in
4 existence any more. That would be my impression. They have
5 had one thing or another throughout 200 years, where there
6 have been low periods and high periods, and individuals, and
7 that is the strength of the system.

8 Q This is a rather new addition to our framework,
9 the CIA, and it hasn't been in existence a long time.

10 Has the world changed so much during this period
11 of being in existence that maybe its function should be re-
12 thought.

13 A Well, as a basic principle I would agree with
14 you that nothing should be static. Having his dynamic and
15 particularly today as never before. Probably there is more
16 rapid change now than we have ever had and therefore
17 obviously everything should be continually reviewed and re-
18 newed and re-thought.

19 The domestic role of CIA is very limited and if
20 there are violations we will find out what those violations
21 were and the status and then make recommendations.

22 Q Is it possible that we can have less secrecy
23 in that area, or do you have a feeling there has been too
24 much secrecy?

25 There is a general concept by many of us in journal-
ism and elsewhere that one of the great problems of the last
years was just this overwhelming secrecy.

A I have to tell you something. I passed a law
in the State of New York to preserve the secrecy of the press.
One of the things that you cherish is your secrecy and where
did you get your information on the subject. That is some-
thing that you don't want anybody to know, and I passed a law
to protect it so that you could not be taken to Court to find
out where you got it.

So we have to think of this thing. I know how you
feel about secrecy when you write about it, but you cherish
your own secrecy, and if anyone impinged on it, you would
feel that was your privacy instead of secrecy, but secrecy is
something that you cherish very much, isn't that right?

1 Q Oh, sure.

2 A I came down and testified for a similar law
3 down here. I think the Federal government ought to have a law.
4 If the States want to go further they ought to have the right
5 to, in protecting the sources of information. So this is a
6 very delicate and not a simplistic thing.

7 It is much easier to make a headline with a simplis-
8 tic statement, but these things are not simplistic and nobody
9 has less secrecy left in their life than me, and I never com-
10 plained about it.

11 Q Were there moments when you wanted to?

12 A No, I believe in this system, you see, and I
13 knew this was a very unusual thing, for a second Vice President,
14 this time appointed by the first President who had been
15 selected by the 25th Amendment.

16 I will tell you an interesting thing. This is one of
17 the great traditions and I don't know whether you are a law-
18 yer or not; I am not either. But my lawyer for 40 years had
19 to testify and he is retired. But he said, "I would just
20 like to make a statement before being asked questions, and
21 that is that I was brought up and trained on the secrecy of
22 the relation between the client and his counsel, and there-
23 fore for me to come here and testify today on matters relating
24 to my client is the most difficult moment of my life."

25 That is a violation of one of the fundamental, to
him, precepts of secrecy, just as you cherish yours, you see.
But he recognized and I recognized that the public had a
right to know.

18 If they can't vote for someone, they had better
19 damn well know about him to the maximum degree possible.

20 Q As to that 25th Amendment that worked twice
21 now, do you think that it needs to be re-tooled a little?

22 A I have never been a legislator and I think it
23 worked pretty well. Now, it was tough and you take the
24 whole question, and I turned it all over to the FBI and to
25 the Committee investigators and to everybody else.

24 I gave them everything and it was systematically
25 leaked for two months while the committees were not in
session. So, when we talk about privacy and secrecy, is there
too much secrecy and is there too much privacy? It is very

1 hard to separate these two.

2 I am really not coming to any conclusions. I am
3 just trying to think out loud because you are asking me ques-
4 tions.

5 Q Can you avoid, in this CIA inquiry, Mr. Vice
6 President, being accused of a whitewash given the members of
7 the Commission?

8 A Let me tell you something. I have lived a long
9 time and I have been in and out of government for a long time
10 and I have been accused of a lot of things. There is one
11 thing that I worry about, and that is when I go to bed, am I
12 satisfied inside that I did the best job I could do during the
13 course of the day.

14 And if I am satisfied, then I am not worried about
15 what someone can accuse me of as long as I am satisfied
16 inside that I am doing what I should. This Commission is
17 going to do the very best possible job and they are going to
18 find out all of it. And when you get the final report, then
19 you can make your judgment on what the Committee was worth.

20 I am not going to worry when someone says it is a
21 whitewash Committee or something else. Anybody is entitled
22 to their opinions and it is a free country and they can draw
23 their judgments. But the real judgment can only be made by
24 somebody who is responsible, when they see the report.

25 Maybe I am speaking too frankly here.

Q Not a bit, that is fine. I have one other
question about your stewardship here, Mr. Vice President, and
that is about your relationship with Dr. Kissinger. It has
come up time and time again.

Does that access between you and Dr. Kissinger,
having been so close in the past, form a threat to Mr. Ford?

A If it had I don't think he would have appointed
me.

Q I realize that. Is there any kind of new
dimension of that relationship that you are going to have?

A I would have to assume that the President, more
than anyone, is aware of the total interdependence of the
national and international problems. Therefore, if he wants

1 me to be helpful in any way in the domestic area, with some
2 understanding of the international field, then the relation-
3 ship with, and confidence of the man who is his chief advisor
4 in the international field, would be an asset. That is the way
5 I would read it.

6 Q You have also had experience in the inter-
7 national field. Do you think that you might have some ways
8 to serve the President in the international field?

9 A I don't know. He is well served in the field.
10 But the interrelationship of the two is very intimate and
11 therefore, you have mutual confidence. If you put the reverse
12 of what your question was, if you had two people in the govern-
13 ment -- one working in the domestic field, let us say and
14 one in the international -- who were at war or at loggerheads
15 with each other, it would not simplify his life any.

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1 Q Mr. Vice President, there has been a lot of
2 speculation recently about this time in our national history
3 represented by these years that is indeed a transitional time
4 and there is quite an upheaval type of turmoil. Looking his-
5 torically at it, where do you think that we stand in our
6 national life?

7 A Just exactly where you say, a turning point,
8 and I think that we are going to come into one of the greatest
9 and most exciting periods in the history of the world.

10 Q Would you expand on that? What do you see to
11 make it great and exciting?

12 A The opportunities and the needs that exist
13 creates the opportunity. There are the hundreds of millions,
14 the billions of hungry people in the world, the challenge of
15 that, the problem of energy, the problem of raw materials, and
16 the problem of quality of life.

17 With imagination and leadership this country is in a
18 position to come out, I think, and I think this is what the
19 President is working for. It is why I am excited to work with
20 him. He is a man of great faith in the future but who recog-
21 nizes an extremely tough situation faced by virtually every
22 family in this country today. He has a deep compassion for
23 the suffering of so many and the hardships of so many and the
24 uncertainties that exist for those who haven't lost their
25 jobs and fear that they might lose their jobs, which is a very
real problem.

16 Q You have described quite an immense role for
17 America in the world. Is that a correct interpretation?

18 A Of course, it has been.

19 Q But not a diminishing role?

20 A That is correct.

21 Q We still are going to have a lot to do and to
22 say?

23 A If you have faith in free people and their
24 capacities, which I do, as the President does, this is the
25 greatest free nation with the resources and the technology
but this is a tough period.

Q You mentioned a moment ago the right to have

1 leadership. Americans seem to be drifting at this point or
2 maybe searching. How are you going to really get out there
and turn this around?

3 A I am not going to. I am going to support the
President.

4 Q I mean you.

5 A Now, you are very generous to put it that way,
6 but let us never get confused on this. The President of the
7 United States is the man who has all of the power and
8 responsibility. As I said, it is a very lonely job. I know
9 about this and I worked with Roosevelt for five years in the
period that he went through in the war. I know the job and
the decisions that have to be made and the long nights, and
therefore if I can help him even in a small way, believe me, I
will do it.

10 Q Do you think Americans are ready to make some
11 sacrifices?

12 A Yes, I think that they are and particularly if
they feel everybody is doing it together.

13 Q Mr. Vice President, can you talk at all about
14 an issue like: Do you believe there is a possibility that we
will have to use force in the Middle East or a situation
15 could develop where we will need to?

16 A I think that is in foreign policy, and that is
17 not my field, and I think that that is a speculation. I
think if you took the Secretary's full text of his full tran-
script of what he said in that discussion, I think that he
18 was explicit.

19 Q So you are referring back to that?

20 A It is not my business, this whole field. I
21 would be totally out of character for me to comment in the
international field.

22 Q The same on détente, the matter of our rela-
tionships with the Soviet Union?

23 A Yes; I don't think talking about international
24 policy or talking about domestic policy really except as the
President has declared it, or détente, is a national policy.
25 I think détente is effective when both parties are strong and

1 independent.

2 Q You mentioned a little earlier, Mr. Vice Presi-
3 dent, about the dual problem of material disruption in the
4 world and then on top of that Watergate. Going back in your
on-record, correct me if I am wrong but I don't recall at any
point along the line you condemned Richard Nixon.

5 A Oh, yes, I did, but nobody printed it because
6 it wasn't dramatic enough.

7 Q Was it a straightforward "critical"?

8 A Yes, sir.

9 Q What did you say? How do you feel now -- let
us put it that way -- looking back?

10 A It is a tragedy.

11 Q Personal or national?

12 A Both -- or, well, national; I don't know what
13 you mean by "personal."

14 Q Well, do you feel this was more of an assault
15 on our system by criminal elements or men who did not appreci-
16 ate the law or was it simply a personal one?

17 A Wait a minute. There are two slightly differ-
18 ent thoughts there -- "a criminal element" or "someone who
19 doesn't appreciate the law."

20 Q Let me put it in other terms, in terms you
21 want. Many are saying that Mr. Nixon was the greatest politi-
22 cal criminal in our 200 years of history.

23 A Well, I think the historians may have a better
24 perspective and will be able to judge and put this as a proper
25 thing. This thing isn't over yet.

26 Q Do you think that he violated his trust, his
oath of office?

27 A I don't think that there is any question. When
28 you say "trust," I would leave it as trust -- the oath of
29 office, I suppose the oath of office, too. I have said I
30 thought it was a tragedy. But let us profit from this as a
31 nation, and let us, each one of us -- this is what I feel:

1 Let every American look inside himself or herself and
2 re-examine their own lives.


3 I said this on various occasions in public speeches.
4 It wasn't just Watergate and in the White House. It is vio-
5 lating the traffic laws, it is cheating on exams, and it is
6 cutting corners and it is smart to get like the kid who came
7 home to his father and he said, "I just got on welfare." He
8 was a graduate student and his father was the head of a bank
9 and he was upset because his father didn't think it was great.
10 "Well," he said, "everybody is doing it."

11 There is too much of this, beating the system. We
12 as a nation as a whole have got to profit by this.

13 Q How about the people who beat the system
14 through legalities and tax loopholes?

15 A Tax loopholes are written --

16 Q Or tax reform.
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1 A I am all for tax reform but I have to say that
2 tax loopholes -- so easily called today, which has a sinister
3 or a sound of wrongdoing -- they were possibly written into
4 the law for an objective by the lawmakers to stimulate cer-
5 tain activities or industries, or some particular purpose.

6 Tax-exempt bonds the State and municipal governments
7 live off of, people call them a tax loophole because
8 someone else buys them. Okay, you have to decide in our
9 society. So I am with you on tax reform, but let us make it
10 in a way that reflects the best interests of the future of
11 America and the world.

12 It stimulates or protects or whatever it is, and
13 gives equity and fairness but keeps the system which you talk
14 about or talked about when you asked, "Is it dead?"

15 We can kill it if we want to but I don't think it is
16 dead. I don't think that we are going to kill it.

17 Who was it, I guess it was Mary Wells Lawrence in
18 her testimony before the Summit Economic Conference, who
19 pointed out that 87 percent of the taxes collected by the
20 government come either directly or indirectly from American
21 industry.

22 That is employment, the earnings, corporate taxes
23 and individual taxes, and so on, and Social Security and with-
24 holding and so on. We have to realistic.

25 It is a complicated period we are living in and a
difficult one. But I think the future can be very exciting.

1 Q I would like to hear you if you can in a broad
2 way -- realizing that you can't be all that specific in
3 domestic problems -- will you sketch that a little more, if
4 you can, in terms of what American life would be, down 10
5 years from now as you see it?

6 A I do not want to do what you have wisely said,
7 to take positions or get ahead of any issue, of a position
8 taken by the President. I am going to support the President
9 and help the President.

10 Q Well, I realize that.

11 A I have tried to paint my reactions on subjects
12 in broad terms, and my feelings. I would not say them if I
13 did not think that he shared or I shared with him, the same
14 kind of thoughts.

1 Q Excuse me -- once in a while people, with
2 growing pessimism, are afraid that these problems are bigger
3 than we can solve. You sound optimistic.

3 A I am.

4 Q Looking beyond your immediate dealings with Mr.
5 Ford about the big problems of food around the globe and those
6 things that almost have overwhelmed us, you think there are
7 specific solutions?

8 A Yes, I do. I think that we have this whole
9 business of problems and opportunities. I understand the
10 Chinese character, that they are both in the same character
11 and they go together. There is a problem but it also creates
12 opportunity, and it is a question of how fast we can under-
13 stand them. This is what he is trying to do. They are new
14 and we don't understand the dimensions.

15 The economists talk about discontinuities that are
16 so great they can't make predictions. They can predict slow
17 price adjustments but when you have a quadrupling of prices
18 in one year, that is a discontinuity, and that is the word
19 they use. They can't tell.

20 Will the present world monetary situation be able
21 to cope with this, or is there a need for change? These are
22 the big questions of our times. All right, this is what the
23 President is wrestling with now.

24 Now, I have confidence that he will, for this
25 country, and through him and his people -- with Henry Kissin-
26 ger working with other countries -- that we are going to find
27 the right answers. Out of this are going to come opportuni-
28 ties that in a way were undreamed of before, and relation-
29 ships among nations.

30 Q Are you satisfied with the quality of leader-
31 ship in industry, education and journalism, in the private
32 sector?

33 A I would say that every one of us is challenged
34 by the new conditions, each in our own industry or our
35 business, or our own professions. We are all struggling to
36 adjust.

37 I think it was Ravelle who wrote that book, "Neither
38 Jesus or Marx," or whatever it was. He wrote on this subject
39 and he said, "I don't think the answers are going to come

1 from the Communist world or from the old, European countries.
2 The one place where there is flexibility and creativity enough
3 is America." This is from a left-wing intellectual in France.

4 When I set up this Commission on Critical Choices, he
5 wrote me about it and he came over to see me about it. He was
6 so excited -- but this is America.

7 You go back through history -- and this is what I
8 mentioned and this is what he said -- "You won't believe it
9 but when someone is worried about a problem in America they go
10 across the street and talk to a neighbor and find he is
11 worried, too. They organize a committee to deal with it, and
12 this is totally without any reference to the bureaucracy." He
13 said, "You won't believe this but this is that kind of quality."

14 So when you say, are these people qualified, sure
15 they are in trouble. They are all in trouble because they
16 are dealing with new circumstances, but we have a better
17 chance of mastering those problems faster because of the free-
18 doms which exist here than, I think, in any other countries.

19 Q Government traditionally has to deal with this
20 and they are so busy putting out fires that they hardly have
21 time to look at the big problems, and the long view.

22 The Critical Choices Committee was set up to do
23 this. Is there a way that you see within government that
24 these massive problems can be looked at with a long view,
25 or might you borrow from your Critical Choices Commission?

26 A That is the great part about the diversity of
27 this society. We all learn from each other. We have a con-
28 versation -- and you made a very wise comment about if I got
29 too far out ahead on an issue. That is right. You are
30 absolutely right and that is a good warning.

31 In any open society you learn faster because you
32 get it from different points of view and you are not closed
33 off, you are not segmented.

34 Q What about in personal terms, Mr. Vice Presi-
35 dent, are you going to be here longer than two years, if
36 asked?

37 A That bridge I cross when I get there. I think
38 doing a good job now is the most important thing. Everybody
39 is looking to the President and everybody wants to help the
40 President.

1 Q Of course, nobody can ignore your past history
2 and your interest in being President.

3 A It is just serving the country. I have been
4 and I remain an optimist. I see opportunities for improving
5 the quality of people's life not only here, but in other parts
6 of the world. I think this is a very tough time but an
7 exciting period, if you don't just compress it into the
8 moment but stretch it out a little.
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1 Q When you look at it that way, then do you think
2 a bit about the auto worker in Detroit beset by every problem
3 known to modern civilization? Has he any reason for optimism?

4 A I don't know why not. He is living in America.
5 He is a lucky guy. He has a tough thing at the moment but he
6 is still getting 90 percent of his salary, and he will for
7 six or eight months, with the supplemental his union has
8 worked out. This is new, and this isn't like the depression
9 in the thirties. There wasn't any system like this before, so
10 that we have a society that has built in a cushion to take
11 care of some of these situations. It is a very interesting
12 thing and this is a totally different situation than the thir-
13 ties. That is because of the various unemployment insurance
14 plans, social security and so forth. Then there are the pen-
15 sions and the union funds and all others.

16 The man really has to think. Is our government
17 going to understand these economic and social problems and be
18 able to create a framework within which the free-enterprise
19 system and the private-enterprise system can solve them? We
20 have a lot of things that are in short supply. There is agri-
21 cultural equipment and maybe he finds he is making something
22 else for a while, and he could be in that same factory -- who
23 knows? There are lots of things that are in short supply in
24 this country, but this takes a new relationship between
25 Government and private enterprise. I think the President is
aware of this and I think that he is studying and he is listen-
ing and he has to make some fundamental decisions, which he is
in the process of finishing now, and then get on with the
ramifications of those.

17 Q Is it going to be harder to get on with the
18 ramifications with a Congress that is so overwhelmingly
19 arrayed against him?

20 A Well, did you read that -- or not read it but
21 see the Chairman of the Democrat National Committee on tele-
22 vision, on "Face the Nation" or one of those problems, when
23 they asked him this question: "What is the plan of this tre-
24 mendous Democratic majority going to be?"

25 And he said, "Well, Congress can't be effective
without strong leadership from the Executive," which was an
interesting comment. And I think there is a lot to that.

I happen to believe -- and that is why I said that
about this Cabinet meeting this morning -- this talk was one
of the most sensitive and constructive talks -- or lectures,

1 if you want to call it that -- on the subject of the Executive-
2 Legislative relationship and how it should function that I have
3 ever heard.

3 Q Did the President give that?

4 A No; this was Jack Marsh, and he is a great guy.
5 But these are the men around the President. They are really
6 starting to roll, and he came into this in a mighty difficult
7 period.

6 Q How much of a Republican could you be,
7 Mr. Vice President, in this period?

8 A I understand what you are saying, talking
9 politically. I think this is a moment when all of the Execu-
10 tive and the Legislative and the Republicans and Democrats and
11 the Federal Government and State government and local govern-
12 ment and private groups and business -- we have all to pull
13 together in a common interest and in the best interests.

11 Q But for effective government, don't you need
12 really political partisanship to make it run? I mean a strong
13 Republican Party -- isn't that essential?

14 A If you are talking about a two-party system, I
15 believe in a two-party system and I believe in a strong two-
16 party system.

16 Q I mean within the presidency and the vice
17 presidency, the emphasis.

17 A If you want to know what I honestly think, I
18 have always said the best politics is good government, or good
19 government is the best politics. So the President is going to
20 be judged by the job he does and how this country comes out of
21 this present situation. That is not political. At least that
22 is what I think. No one is kidding himself as a Republican.

20 Q One of the areas where you don't have to get a
21 mandate from the President is your own party. Do you expect to
22 do a lot around the country to try to breathe some new life in
23 this party?

23 A I think the party is just like what you are
24 talking about -- they want to see the problems solved, and I
25 think that they want to see those who are working on the prob-
lems to the maximum degree possible get them solved and not try
and -- I am going to stay here as much as I can and work.

1 Q You put really, then, all of your hopes in this
one basket -- the rekindling of trust and rebuilding credi-
2 bility out in the Nation, the idea that performance here will
do that automatically?

3 A Not just trust. I said there were two things --
4 trust and the economics -- but they go together in a way. But
there are two factors. There is the breakdown of a lot of our
5 economic patterns, and the result is unemployment and spiraling
prices, plus the loss of confidence.

6 Q Do you see a lot of travel for yourself?

7 A No; that is just what I was saying. I want to
8 stay here as much as I can.

9 Q Can we exert leadership out of this office?

10 A I am not in a leadership position; I am support-
ing the President. He can exert the leadership and I can
11 support him.

12 Q Well, can you assist in his leadership out of
this office? Is there not a need for direct communication?

13 A Sure, but you don't have to lead. If you will
14 forgive me, there is that electronic medium.

15 Q Well, actually I think that we have been advo-
cates of reduction in frantically going around and campaigning
16 that enervates people and frequently does not.

17 A He was in a very difficult position, and he was
caught, and I can't imagine a more difficult circumstance for
18 a man to assume office than what he did. I think people are
going to look back in history and say he was bitterly criti-
19 cized in a lot of things but that this man really has handled
himself extremely well and he is grounded in the fundamental
20 beliefs on which this country was built.

21 Q In terms of your life --

22 A And he is open, which is something that I think
is very important, too.

23 Q In terms of your life, Mr. Vice President, does
24 this represent your highest aspirations -- the vice presidency?

25 A I don't have aspirations except to be of

1 service. I really don't.

2 Q You have been around government, the presidency,
3 and Washington so many years, and can this provide much of a
thrill really?

4 A But you are taking it as a symbol, the symbol
5 of the vice presidency, and I am interested in what I can do
6 to be useful and to be helpful. This gives me an opportunity
7 to be here and I have the pleasure of talking to you, but I am
down here and to the degree that I can do things for a Presi-
dent that are useful to him and the country, I am thrilled.

8 Q What is there in terms of the Rockefeller
family itself? Is there a trauma?

9 A I think on balance the result was to solidify
10 the family.

11 Q Is this a new dimension in looking for men for
12 office? Is that going to keep good men from wanting to come
13 into government?
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1 A What is that?

2 Q The depths to which they went into your private
3 life?

4 A I don't think that everybody is going to have
5 to go through that. More and more people -- I think the
6 pendulum is swinging -- first we had the other side, the
7 Watergate and so forth, and now the pendulum has swung over
8 where everybody wants something disclosed and so forth. I
9 think it will swing back to a central position some place.

10 Q Shouldn't men of wealth as great as yourself
11 who are in public life be subjected to extraordinary scrutiny?

12 A No more than any other person.

13 Q But, with wealth of that nature you can in-
14 fluence politicians or at least under the old rules you
15 could.

16 A Without wealth you can use politicians to get
17 wealth.

18 Q That is the reverse of the coin.

19 A Yes, and I happened to be elected four times
20 in a state where the party I represent is a minority party by
21 1 million registered votes, so let us say that some people did
22 not think that wealth was a liability. They gave me a
23 plurality of 500,000.

24 This thought about wealth is not a very popular
25 one, you see, but I don't think that the public feels about it
the way the media feel about it -- or excuse me, the press,
or radio or television, or the politicians like to talk about
it. I will never forget when I was running the first time and
Sherman Adams, with President Eisenhower, got involved in
that vicuna coat.

26 Q I was here.

27 A And there were some very sophisticated people
28 said "this is going to be very tough for you", and I said "I
29 don't think so."

30 "Well," I say, "I think the people of New York are
31 smart enough to know that somebody is not going to get side-
32 tracked by giving me a vicuna coat."

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And now you have this whole side of "who are you beholden to?" And at least they know I have the money. The big criticism was they forgave other people. I think it was mentioned at the hearings. A lot of people will say the Lord's Prayer said, you know, about "Forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors," and I quoted that to the Congress some of those things, and I am not sure that they appreciated it, but that is in the Lord's Prayer. That used to be considered to be a decent thing, you see, but then things got so distorted about money that people cannot conceive of somebody doing this for Christian or Judaic-Christian or whatever you call it, motives. It is very interesting, and tragic in a way.

1 Q There is one other dimension about wealth that
2 I would like to hear a comment on. I believe no less an
3 authority than Mr. George McGovern at one point in his last
4 campaign -- at one time before he repudiated it -- suggested a
5 total inheritance tax with the idea behind it that concentra-
6 tions of wealth like the Rockefellers and DuPonts and
7 Kennedys or any family, should no longer be allowed to go on.
8 What is your feeling on that?

9 A Well, let me make a comment first. Mr. McGovern
10 spent close to \$1.80 per person in his State, in his campaign.
11 My highest expenditure was \$.37 per person.

12 Q In New York?

13 A Yes. So that while his expenditures didn't look
14 very good per person in the State which he represented, that
15 is what they were.

16 Just to give you an example now, I don't think that
17 Mr. McGovern really, when he gets in Congress, is going to
18 propose a bill to carry that out.

19 Q You think he will abandon it in time?

20 A Excuse me?

21 Q I wanted to know what this has done to your own
22 life, this shift of locale?

23 A Well, I move back and forth. The kids are at
24 school and they should be down here next week. I have lived
25 here 12 years off and on. This is the sixth time I have had
an office in this building.

(Whereupon, at 4:40 p.m., the interview was con-
cluded.)

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON
June 16, 1975

Excerpts from MEET THE PRESS transcript of
Sunday, June 15, 1975.

1 been put together -- and, let's face it, many of the people have
2 died who were allegedly involved and others were assassinated
3 in this country, tragically, and therefore we were not able
4 to get information we felt would justify conclusions and
5 recommendations, and so we decided to do what we did, which was
6 to simply say we would turn over all investigative material
7 to the President.

8 MR. QUINN: Well, sir, if it was all that important, why
9 didn't you ask the President for more time? You had already
10 asked him for one extension. Why didn't you feel like asking
11 him for more?

12 VICE PRESIDENT ROCKEFELLER: We asked for a two months
13 extension. We had a great deal of difficulty getting the staff
14 to agree to stay for the two months and we could not hold the
15 staff, and the Senate was going into not only the domestic
16 aspects of this alleged, these alleged attempts, but they were
17 going to investigate the entire area, so we turned over the
18 material to the President with the assumption he would turn it
19 over to the Senate.



1 MR. QUINN: Well, I understand, sir, that just the
 2 Executive Director of the Commission was going into it,
 3 just one man. That is what the White House said, and
 4 therefore it would seem that he could have -- Mr. Bellan
 5 -- he could have been held'or replaced if it was that
 6 important. Was there some other reason why you didn't want
 7 the Administration to get involved in it?

8 VICE PRESIDENT ROCKEFELLER: No. That is exactly it.
 9 There is one other man who did part of the work with him
 10 but they were so deeply involved--we had a staff
 11 of 14 -- they were so deeply involved in doing the job
 12 to which we had been originally assigned that there
 13 was just not time and it turned out to be far more
 14 difficult, as I said, to get the information, and there is
 15 a real problem of amnesia of many who were still around
 16 who might have had more detailed information.

17 MR. QUINN: Sir, as far as you did go, did you find
 18 what Senator Church has called "hard evidence" of CIA
 19 involvement in foreign assassination plots, as far as
 20 your Commission went?

21 VICE PRESIDENT ROCKEFELLER: Well, as you remember,
 22 the Commission turned over its information with the simple
 23 statement that we did not have sufficient information to
 24 come to any conclusion.

(Announcements)

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1 assassinated?

2 VICE PRESIDENT ROCKEFELLER: I did.

3 MR. DANIEL: Would you be willing to name those particular
4 leaders?

5 VICE PRESIDENT ROCKEFELLER: As I said, we have no conclusive
6 information but the President of the United States and the
7 Attorney General of the United States were both assassinated
8 tragically in this country.

9 MR. DANIEL: On February 18, 1969 -- this goes to your
10 point about those activities on the part of the CAI being
11 terminated -- Mr. Richard Helms, who was then the Director of
12 Central Intelligence, sent a memorandum on student unrest to
13 Dr. Henry Kissinger, who was then the Vice President's Foreign
14 Affairs Adviser. Mr. Helms noted that the subject of student
15 unrest was not within the Charter of the CIA and would cause
16 embarrassment if its existence was known.

17 Shouldn't Dr. Kissinger or somebody have ordered an
18 immediate stop to that kind of thing at the time instead of
19 waiting for, as we have heard, a newspaper expose?

20 VICE PRESIDENT ROCKEFELLER: No, because the CIA involvement
21 was due to international aspects and by that time -- this having
22 started in '67 -- they were the ones who had all the information
23 and the files.

24 MR. DANIEL: Speak/ing of Mr. Helms, your Commission's report
25 said that unlawful acts were committed by the CIA, but it doesn't

1 name names. It uses titles. Is this a genteel way of saying
 2 that Mr. Helms, who was mainly responsible for these acts during
 3 that time, is subject to possible prosecution?

4 VICE PRESIDENT ROCKEFELLER: It was a conscious policy of the
 5 Commission, in consultation with counsel, not to use any names
 6 in our report because if we did we might have involved agents
 7 whose identity is not known and it might destroy their capability
 8 to be effective in the defense of the United States' best
 9 interests for national security.

10 Therefore, all of the names of those individuals are in
 11 our material but we did not use them in the report. The
 12 material was all turned over to the White House.

13 MR. WILL: Mr. Vice President, let me follow up Mr.
 14 Daniel's following up Mr. Quinn on the subject of involvement.
 15 You seem to be saying that President Kennedy and Attorney
 16 General Robert Kennedy may have, according to evidence you have
 17 seen, been involved in assassination plots. What constitutes
 18 involvement by your definition?

19 VICE PRESIDENT ROCKEFELLER: Well, I say we have no
 20 evidence on the basis of which to draw conclusions. I said
 21 it was very difficult to get information because, to go back
 22 15 years, and many of the people who were involved in the CIA
 23 and in the White House are no longer living.

24 I think it is fair to say that no major undertakings by
 25 CIA were done without either knowledge and/or approval of the

1 and the Soviets in the development of their strategies, both
2 military and intelligence.

3 This has been going on. You say we had nothing before
4 World War II, although --

5 MR. SPIVAK: I said we had no CIA before 1947.

6 VICE PRESIDENT ROCKEFELLER: But we had activities both in
7 the military, as you may remember, the FBI was doing what CIA
8 does now abroad. It was in Latin America and doing the intelli-
9 gence work for this government in Latin America, and I worked
10 very closely with them from '40 to '45, so that this is not
11 a new situation. As we come into a world where the United
12 States is more intimately involved with conflicting society, I
13 think it is essential. Not only with economic factors --
14 not only military intelligence, but economic intelligence and
15 intelligence about subversion is essential.

16 MR. QUINN: Mr. Vice President, on this matter of possible
17 involvement of former President Kennedy and Attorney General
18 Robert Kennedy, there has been speculation that one reason why
19 your commission dropped the business of assassination plots was
20 that politically it might be a bad thing.

21 If the finger were going to be pointed, or have to be
22 pointed to either one of those Kennedies, better it should be
23 pointed by a liberal Democrat on the Hill, like Senator Church,
24 than by a Republican President who might have to run
25 against a Kennedy next year. What is your reaction to that kind

A CONVERSATION WITH VICE PRESIDENT ROCKEFELLER

October 22, 1975

10:00 P.M.

NPACT, National Public Affairs Center for Television

ANNOUNCER: From the new Vice Presidential Residence on the grounds of the Naval Observatory overlooking Embassy Row in Northwest Washington, NPACT brings you "A Conversation with Vice President Rockefeller," recorded earlier today, with Paul Duke and Martin Agronsky.

Now here's Paul Duke.

PAUL DUKE: We're delighted to join you, Mr. Vice President, in the beautiful and relaxing splendor of your new home, and we hope it provides some solace from the problems of the day.

And speaking of those problems, is President Ford now ready to accept your advice that federal aid must be provided New York City to avoid catastrophe?

VICE PRESIDENT NELSON A. ROCKEFELLER: Well, first, I'd like to welcome you to the house and I'm thrilled you like it. And I know Happy will be too.

Secondly, your description of my position and the President's position is, honestly, slightly misleading. The President has widely taken the position that the federal government could not bail out New York City and that the American people in other areas of the country are not going to step forward to do it. My position has been, very simply, that after New York City under the leadership of the state, which set up a board to take over, really, the fiscal management of the city, after the action had been taken to restore fiscal integrity, that there was then going to be a period of approximately three years while that budget was being brought into balance and the steps carried forward year after year before the investor confidence would be restored and the city would be able to sell its bonds, when it was going to need some federal help to make that bridge.

And that's a totally different picture and a totally different concept.

I agree with the President totally that the federal government can't step in and bail out cities who are spending more money consistently than they have income, because there's just no end to it, and the federal government's got a deficit now of sixty, seventy billion dollars, and we'd bankrupt the country, not just face the danger of bankrupting a city or even possibly a state. So that the situation is not that simple, in other words, as you put it.

DUKE: Nonetheless, there is a fundamental disagreement between you and Mr. Ford on this. Have you told the President that he is playing with political dynamite by refusing to help New York City?

VICE PRESIDENT ROCKEFELLER: Again I have to disagree. There isn't a fundamental difference. The President has been very courageous and absolutely correct in saying the federal government cannot bail out New York City. New York City has to take its own steps and its own moves with the state. Now let's face it. Cities are creatures of the state, and the state has a responsibility. And until that action's taken, this would set a precedent that would be a total revolution in the relationship of our federal system.

DUKE: But we come down to this, though, Mr. Vice President: is the President going to sign legislation to help New York?

VICE PRESIDENT ROCKEFELLER: Well, listen, that is not the question, if you'll forgive me. The question is, is Congress going to study this question, as they are now doing, carefully and come up with a program to meet the situation after the city and the state have acted? That's the question.

Everybody's got the focus on the President. The President has no power to act.

DUKE: But the President can show leadership. And where is presidential leadership...?

VICE PRESIDENT ROCKEFELLER: Well, now, let's face that one too. The Congress -- and I was on a commission that was set up by the Congress to organize the handling of foreign policy by the government of the United States. And one of the major concerns was that the Congress was not planning its due, proper constitutional role; it wasn't being consulted, and so forth. Congress has been making a major point. They want to restore their role of leadership. They want to restore their

role of authority and responsibility.

Now here comes a major problem facing us domestically, and you're talking about how can the Congress do anything without presidential leadership. Congress has got the power to provide the leadership, step up. This is a very serious situation, and I think they're now doing it. I think they are responsible, patriotic citizens. This is an extremely delicate, difficult situation. It cannot be oversimplified by a simple statement -- "Is Congress going to bail out or is the President going to bail out the city?" That's not really the question. The question is, can the city and the state take the actions? They've gone through a very difficult process and they've done it well, moving toward this. When they get to that point -- yesterday I understand the board approved a plan. Now the city has to go back and adopt the plan, and the city council has to adopt the plan, and then we've got to see whether this is going to lead to restoration of fiscal integrity. Because these bonds have got to be sold, and sooner or later the public confidence has got to be restored. And federal stepping in is not going to restore public confidence. It's only -- and, of course, this really goes to a more fundamental question, which is: can a democracy, can free people discipline themselves to meet the tremendous shocks that we're receiving as free societies in the world today and survive? This, I think, is the question.

MARTIN AGRONSKY: I compliment you on your loyalty to the President. But whether you....

VICE PRESIDENT ROCKEFELLER: It's not loyalty; it's factual what I'm saying.

AGRONSKY: Okay. Whether, you know, you say that it is simple or complicated, I would bring you back to another fundamental fact, and that's one of timing that Governor Carey, for example, raised yesterday. The point is that if there is not aid or if the federal government in effect does not go on the notes for New York City, by November, according to Governor Carey, New York is kaput; it's going to have financial bankruptcy. Now if you believe that -- this, in effect, is also what Mayor Beame says -- then we have a question of timing here.

VICE PRESIDENT ROCKEFELLER: You're right, absolutely right. Now we agree. A question of timing. And the first....

AGRONSKY: We agree on what?

VICE PRESIDENT ROCKEFELLER: On the question of timing....

AGRONSKY: Yes.

VICE PRESIDENT ROCKEFELLER: ...which is what you said -- we have a question of timing.

AGRONSKY: Yes. Right.

VICE PRESIDENT ROCKEFELLER: That's right. The first visit from the Mayor and the Governor to see the President was six months ago. And the President told them then, "You have got to put your house in order, because this is not something that can be done by the federal government, the rest of the country." And he even used -- he used a perfectly simple illustration. He said "I understand, Mr. Mayor" -- and I've said this before -- "that you have free tuition in New York University and that you pay your professors more than Harvard University. They're the highest paid professors, and you have open enrollment. Well, this is wonderful. If you can afford this, this is a great thing. But this doesn't happen in any other city. Now, are you saying that you want the rest of the country to provide services to the people of New York which the rest of the country can't afford and isn't enjoying?" And that was six months ago.

Now you say it's a question of timing. We're now finally down -- yesterday -- Monday -- no, it was the -- the 20th was Monday; that's two days ago. Finally a plan was approved. That took six months for the state and the city to do the things that they should have done and could have done at least four months ago. So the timing has been one which has been wasted at the local level.

AGRONSKY: I must confess that the President certainly gives the impression by his public statements and by the statements of his White House Press Secretary, Mr. Nessen, that he is infinitely more against federal involvement at any point to aid New York City than you are giving. You say that all that New York City has to do in effect is to be good and the President will go along. They must agree to cut down their budget....

VICE PRESIDENT ROCKEFELLER: I didn't say that. I never mentioned the President. I never mentioned the President. I said what I thought, which was that the state had to move in, as it did, with the city; that it had the powers and the capacity. This is under the constitution, under the state constitution. And it's done it.

Now the city has to adopt the measures which they recommended, to comply with the board created by the state. Now they've got to adopt those. All right. There is no power in Washington that the President has. Therefore, Congress has got to come up with a plan.

DUKE: But Mr. Vice President....

VICE PRESIDENT ROCKEFELLER: Yes, sir.

DUKE: Aren't we dealing in unreality here, because you know, having been in politics for a long time....

VICE PRESIDENT ROCKEFELLER: Yeah, and I was even Governor of New York for quite a while.

DUKE: For fifteen years. And some people suggest that New York's problems come or were partly started by some of the actions you took as Governor. But I want to get back to the point of you putting the burden on Congress. Yesterday a Senate committee cleared a bill without a single Republican voting for that legislation. Now isn't it -- isn't it looking beyond reality to expect that any kind of bill is going to get through Congress unless President Ford indicates that he will sign such legislation and wants Republicans to support it?

VICE PRESIDENT ROCKEFELLER: But that's got to be the first time that a bill had to have presidential support to go through Congress. Otherwise, if that were true, he never would have vetoed any bills because they wouldn't have gone through.

DUKE: But the fact of the matter is....

VICE PRESIDENT ROCKEFELLER: That argument really, if you'll forgive me, makes no sense, because the Congress of the United States is constantly passing bills and the President, by tradition, has never said what he was going to sign or veto until he saw the bill. You're talking about an abstract situation. Even as Governor, I wouldn't say whether I was going to sign a bill on a subject which was expressed in broad terms without even seeing a bill.

What the fundamental issue is here [is] the President has taken the right position, in my opinion, which is, "Look, Mr. New York City and Mr. New York State, this is your problem to straighten out." And he has said we're not going to bail you out. And I think that expresses the sentiment of the American people.

What I've been talking about was -- I assumed that New York City and the state were going to take the steps, because they had no alternative. Therefore, I was looking beyond that. The President's position I think has been very wise, that unless you took a hard position on this subject, it's very easy. And those of us who've worked with New York City know that if there's any hope that they can get something without having to take a hard

-- you know, do the tough thing, that they would do them because they'd get it from somebody else. Now they're coming to the end of the rope.

DUKE: Well, then, do we come down to what Governor Carey says: it's a matter of federal aid or federal troops?

VICE PRESIDENT ROCKEFELLER: Well, that's another very nice slogan -- I mean the statement -- to oversimplify it again. I don't think this is a situation which can be oversimplified. I think it's a very fundamental question which goes to the whole fabric of American society today. I think it gets back to, if you want to go to simple truths, we cannot as a family, as a city, as a state or as a nation spend for very long more money than we have in income, because otherwise -- only the federal government can print it. And if the federal government keeps on printing money, then the money's going to become less valuable, and we're going to have inflation again, and we're going to have the same kind of eroding of the savings and the earnings of the American citizenry. The President's focused on that subject and tried to get New York, as a prime, leading city in the country, to get its budget in balance, which is exactly what Governor Carey's trying to do and doing a very good job in helping.

AGRONSKY: Mr. Vice President, looking at what's happened in New York and taking Paul's observation that some people blame you because of your long stewardship as the Governor of New York State, for the philosophy, for one thing, and for policies, fiscal policies, for another thing....

VICE PRESIDENT ROCKEFELLER: Now, I have to interrupt you right there, because you're going to go on to something else and leave that hanging. I would like to recall to you....

AGRONSKY: Well, I didn't finish the point that I would have made....

VICE PRESIDENT ROCKEFELLER: Well, I think that was the backdrop....

AGRONSKY: I want to give you some numbers.

VICE PRESIDENT ROCKEFELLER: ...to another something you were coming to, but go ahead, and I'll save my....

AGRONSKY: Let me give you some numbers, and let's take a look at them.

VICE PRESIDENT ROCKEFELLER: Yeah.

AGRONSKY: Taxes -- and these statistics come from an analysis done by Fortune magazine -- during your administration rose five hundred percent. State spending went from 3.2 billion to 15.7 billion a year.

VICE PRESIDENT ROCKEFELLER: Not during my administration.

AGRONSKY: The state's debt -- in the period of your administration, according to the Fortune figures....

VICE PRESIDENT ROCKEFELLER: No, sir. The last budget was under ten billion dollars. So the fifteen has happened in the two subsequent years.

AGRONSKY: The state's debt climbed from nine hundred and twelve million to 10.1 billion. Did that happen in your administration?

VICE PRESIDENT ROCKEFELLER: Those figures -- I'd have to know whether that was full faith and credit or -- but go ahead.

AGRONSKY: What I address myself to there is the point that you raise yourself. You say as a family, we can't live beyond our means. And yet the fiscal policies that you followed as governor encouraged the city and the state, in effect, to live beyond its means. For example, the moral obligation bonds....

VICE PRESIDENT ROCKEFELLER: Yes.

AGRONSKY: ...the Urban Development Corporation, which went under; the....

VICE PRESIDENT ROCKEFELLER: It didn't go under. You see, these are the -- these are where I say you cannot make generalities: It didn't go under. It has just finished selling its bonds. And it is a successful operation.

Now I'd like to take each one of these....

AGRONSKY: Do.

VICE PRESIDENT ROCKEFELLER: ...and go right down the line. New York State, when I took office as Governor, was considered to be a state that was a mature economy, that was over-the-hill; the action was elsewhere. And I set out to try and revitalize that state and make it the best state, best place to live and work. And so we took the State University, which was the last state university to be created, from thirty-four thousand full-time students to two hundred and thirty-six thousand full-

time students. We put in a tuition, a uniform tuition for all students. And then we gave a scholar incentive for those who needed help so that they could get an education. To try and give our people opportunity, we built the highways; we took over the defunct railroads, commuter railroads, subways and buses of New York City to keep the city going. We took aid to New York City. And sixty-two percent of all the tax revenue I collected went back to local government to help local government meet its needs. And all of the bonds we sold were for these projects you're talking about, like UDC, were self-liquidating bonds. They were bonds to build things people wanted and were going to pay for, and they would pay off. I think it's extremely sound. It's a self-liquidating operation. It's a sound approach.

AGRONSKY: Well, a self-liquidating operation that hasn't liquidated really....

VICE PRESIDENT ROCKFELLER: Yeah. But now let's go back to where....

AGRONSKY: ...you know. And....

VICE PRESIDENT ROCKFELLER: But I understand. Listen, I was there, and I understand this like a book. And so let's not -- I don't want to let -- excuse me, but this is an important program and I don't want to let a generality slide by. Let me tell you exactly what happened on UDC, Urban Development Corporation. It's building thirty thousand units of housing, which were essential. It was an extremely ingenious approach which was going to get the job done fast. What happened was after I -- a year after I left office, it had a cash bind, a short-term cash bind. They had notes outstanding; they had to pay to meet those notes when they came due. Inflation set in. Recession set in. Costs had gone up. A plan was worked out by my successor and the Budget Director. That plan involved the purchase of two hundred million of mortgages of the Urban Development Corporation. The legal activities took time, just as they always do. On December -- whatever it was -- 19th, it was cleared, and those bonds were not purchased. They were not purchased in January. It was part of an agreement with the banks, and then the banks were going to sell long-term bonds to take place of these notes.

Now this whole thing was because it fell between chairs in a change of governments after an election and before the new governor took office. It was totally unnecessary. There was no reason for it to happen. It did happen....

AGRONSKY: It did happen.

VICE PRESIDENT ROCKFELLER: Yes, but it wasn't the UDC's

fault; it wasn't the problem of the structure itself: it was because the agreed upon plan was not carried out politically.

DUKE: There is a cynical view here in Washington, Mr. Vice President, about the administration's handling of the economy, about its handling of the New York situation, a feeling that the President has decided that New York is a good campaign issue, a feeling that the President has tied a tax cut to a reduction in federal spending again as good politics.

Have you had any voice at all -- have you had any voice at all in the formulation of economic policy?

VICE PRESIDENT ROCKEFELLER: Well, now you've given some specifics, and then you go into a general, so I've got to take the specifics.

On the tax cut and the cut the budget....

AGRONSKY: Twenty-eight billion versus twenty-eight billion.

VICE PRESIDENT ROCKEFELLER: Yes, twenty-eight. I know what it was. That -- I was not in on that discussion. That was done by the Economic Policy Division and the Economic Advisers and the Budget Division. But I support the President's action in that. He's got a very fundamental concept, and I think it's a very sound concept, that federal spending and federal taxation is having an extremely adverse effect on the country in terms of individuals, corporations, the basic ability of the economy to grow and to employ people through the private enterprise system and on inflation. And therefore, his purpose was to try to cut down on expenditures, cut down on taxes, get the money back to the people and let the people spend the money and get the economy going, get the economy rolling. It's a very viable economic philosophy, and I think it's sound.

AGRONSKY: Do you accept the thrust of his philosophy in terms of its impact on social and welfare programs, education, health and all the others....

VICE PRESIDENT ROCKEFELLER: Well, now....

AGRONSKY: ...in which there are very massive cutbacks?

VICE PRESIDENT ROCKEFELLER: ...we come to an extremely -- and I started yesterday and had the first of a series of six public hearings around the country on the subject of domestic policy, both programs and policy, with the idea of trying to see how under these circumstances can the federal government, just like New York City, bring its expenditures within its capacity

to pay for them. Now it can print the money. But that money is going to become less valuable all the time and it's going to feed inflation.

Now every program that's being carried out is one that you can make the most tremendously important emotional case in support of that program. But you've got to look at the realities of the fact that the economy is not producing the money to support this level of expenditure. And it's growing at the rate of fifty billion dollars a year, with no new programs. And you can't go on on that course.

AGRONSKY: Mr. Vice President, you puzzle me a bit. You are the head of the Domestic Council....

VICE PRESIDENT ROCKEFELLER: No, I'm the Vice Chairman. He's the Chairman.

AGRONSKY: Well, in any case, you are running it....

VICE PRESIDENT ROCKEFELLER: I'm active in it.

AGRONSKY: ...You are the acting operator of the Domestic Council and you regard this yourself, I think, as one of your most important functions.

VICE PRESIDENT ROCKEFELLER: Right.

AGRONSKY: Now, take the food stamp program....

VICE PRESIDENT ROCKEFELLER: Right.

AGRONSKY: And I cite it merely as a contradiction to the attitude you've just expressed. Your proposal, the Domestic Council's proposal, in effect, for food stamps was very like the Dole-McGovern proposal on food stamps. When you submitted that....

VICE PRESIDENT ROCKEFELLER: That was not the Domestic Council proposal.

AGRONSKY: What was not the Domestic Council proposal?

VICE PRESIDENT ROCKEFELLER: The proposal you're talking to -- about.

AGRONSKY: You did not propose that a food stamp proposal....

VICE PRESIDENT ROCKEFELLER: The one you're talking about, which you said is very much like the other one....

AGRONSKY: Yes.

VICE PRESIDENT ROCKEFELLER: That was not the Domestic Council proposal.

AGRONSKY: Where did it come from?

VICE PRESIDENT ROCKEFELLER: It came from -- partly from the Congress and partly from the development of the plan by various....

AGRONSKY: You had no role in that at all?

VICE PRESIDENT ROCKEFELLER: No, that's not -- well, the Domestic Council had a role in it.

AGRONSKY: Well, you just said it didn't. I'm a little confused.

VICE PRESIDENT ROCKEFELLER: No, I didn't. I said you said -- you've got to be -- we've got to be specific, see.

AGRONSKY: Yeah.

VICE PRESIDENT ROCKEFELLER: You said my proposal....

AGRONSKY: Yes.

VICE PRESIDENT ROCKEFELLER: And I said the proposal you're referring to was not the Domestic Council proposal. That doesn't mean the Domestic Council wasn't in on the discussions and the action.

AGRONSKY: I understand the Domestic Council proposed that a food stamp program be adopted that is very like the one that was submitted by McGovern and Dole. Is that inaccurate?

VICE PRESIDENT ROCKEFELLER: Yes, it is.

DUKE: But let's do get down to specifics.

AGRONSKY: Really, I'd really like to get this....

DUKE: Sure.

VICE PRESIDENT ROCKEFELLER: There are lots -- there're lots of people and lots of groups in state -- pardon me, in federal government. And they all have an input. And the Domestic Council is one of them. There's an Economic Council. There are the economic advisers. There's the Office of Budget and Management. There are all the departments individually. All of these have an input. And the only reason I say this is because you put it as my proposal. Therefore, I want to be accurate

accurate and say it was not the Domestic Council proposal as such. The Domestic Council worked on this thing....

AGRONSKY: And you did not support the thrust of it.

VICE PRESIDENT ROCKEFELLER: That's a totally different question.

AGRONSKY: Well did you, then?

VICE PRESIDENT ROCKEFELLER: What I do support is this. I support a food stamp program, or a program of help that goes to those in need. But let me give you an illustration of what I don't support. This is back in New York....

AGRONSKY: Well, do you support the President's proposal, which would take nearly five million people -- eliminate them from the program and would decrease enormously the benefits that come to another six and a half million people -- the last proposal made by the President? Do you take that position?

VICE PRESIDENT ROCKEFELLER: I support the President's proposal based on the fact that many, many hundreds of thousands of people are food stamps in this country who do not need them. And I can give you a perfect illustration. At a meeting of the Board of Regents of the State University three or four years ago, a banker from upstate New York said -- I sat next to him at the dinner -- he said "You won't believe it. My son came home -- he's a graduate student at NYU -- and said 'gee, dad, I just got on welfare. Isn't that great?'" And the father was horrified and they got into a discussion. And the boy was crestfallen because he said "Dad, everybody's doing it at college." And the father asked him "How did he do it?" And he said "Well, we're all getting on food stamps." Now if you think a banker's son, and the president of a bank -- and I have nothing against bankers -- deserves to get on food stamps and you, as a taxpayer, want to pay taxes to pay for somebody on food stamps who doesn't need it, then I think our society's not going to survive on that basis.

AGRONSKY: Mr. Vice President, I don't think that.

VICE PRESIDENT ROCKEFELLER: Okay.

AGRONSKY: Obviously I wouldn't support a position like that. But I do think that the meat axe cuts that the President proposes go too far....

VICE PRESIDENT ROCKEFELLER: All right. So what you're saying is there ought to be a different plan. There are very many

people who have different plans. And there are different ways of getting about it. And the President has asked the Domestic Council to review all of these programs and the policies and come up with an overall approach. Now this particular area of food stamps -- the Congress has been pushing for action.

DUKE: Nonetheless, what does come through with the administration's tax cut and spending cut plan, Mr. Vice President....

VICE PRESIDENT ROCKEFELLER: I think it's absolutely sound.

DUKE: All right, then, let's get down to specifics. And do you agree with Budget Chief Lynn who testified yesterday before the Congressional Budget Committee and advocated cuts for Social Security, for welfare, for Medicare, all programs that deal with the needs of human beings?

VICE PRESIDENT ROCKEFELLER: Well, I didn't see his testimony and I don't know what he said.

DUKE: That, in effect, was it.

VICE PRESIDENT ROCKEFELLER: But what I would say is that the system we have developed is a patchwork system that's developed over a period now, cumulatively, of forty-five years. I sat with three Democratic governors at lunch yesterday, all of them deeply disturbed about what's going on in Washington -- the red tape, the complexities, the bureaucracy, the over a thousand categorical grant programs which are supposed to aid state and local government, each one of which requires the state and the local government to enrich and improve their program. They tie them up in regulations, both congressional, legislative regulations, administrative regulations. Our society is losing its flexibility. It is losing its tremendous vitality which we had. And this is true for local government; it's true for business. And I think it's a very dangerous period. We've got the capacity to do these things. We've got to have faith in people and not have everything run from Washington by bureaucrats under complicated legislation which only lawyers understand and which overlap, duplicate, and the costs are beyond our means.

DUKE: Well, on that very point, Mr. Vice President, you have now recommended a vast new government program to provide subsidies for energy, a one hundred billion dollar program. Wouldn't that fly in the face of what President Ford has been saying about cutting back government services and what you just said?

VICE PRESIDENT ROCKEFELLER: No, sir. This is, again



where you've got to get back to the details and not generalize. This is a self-liquidating program to get accomplished for this economy the things that are essential. The President said in his address to Congress in January, the State of the Union, that this nation must become self-sufficient in energy. It's our national policy. We're totally vulnerable to another boycott. We're importing now forty percent of our oil. It's at a cost, with the recent ten percent increase, that is almost thirty billion dollars a year. That thirty billion dollars -- we've got the sources of energy in this country. That thirty billion could be spent in this country and employ a million workers just on producing energy at home.

Now, the regulations are such, the uncertainties are such that industry, that private enterprise has not been willing to take the new steps because they couldn't be sure that if they made an investment, that they could make a profit and that they could make a go of the industry. My suggestion is, or my support of this suggestion simply is -- let's take, for instance, shale oil. I was in Colorado, and that's the area where the shale oil is. It's in shale. We have four times as much shale oil or oil in shale as all of the Arab reserves that are known in the Middle East, of all the Middle East oil. Now this is absolutely fantastic. The problem is how do you get it out. If you'd mine the shale and cook it and take the oil out, you end up with talcum powder.

DUKE: Mr. Vice President?

VICE PRESIDENT ROCKEFELLER: Yes, sir.

DUKE: Do you have so little faith in the free enterprise system that you believe American industry can't do this without government help? Look what your grandfather did years ago in developing the oil industry.

VICE PRESIDENT ROCKEFELLER: I have total faith in private enterprise and free enterprise. But it's a profit and a loss system. And you invest a hundred dollars only if you think that you can produce goods and services and sell them and make a hundred and two dollars or three dollars so that you get a return on your money. Nobody knows what the price of getting oil out of shale is. If you take -- mine the shale, you're going to end up with talcum powder, or what I call talcum powder. And we have no water out there. Therefore, you've got an ecological problem. However, there is another process which is called the in situ process. You drill down in, set off an explosion, set it on fire, draw the gas which is created by the heat of the fire off and condense it on the surface.

There are those in the laboratories -- this is a proven

process in the laboratory -- say that you can do this for seven or eight dollars a barrel. Other people think it'll cost twenty dollars a barrel. To do this would cost two hundred million dollars. Who's going to take the gamble on that if they get a twenty million dollar product [sic]? The government, just the way we did the Rubber Reserve Corporation, can get this thing started. And it's essential for our industry, essential for our people and essential for our national security.

AGRONSKY: Mr. Vice President....

VICE PRESIDENT ROCKEFELLER: Yes, sir.

AGRONSKY: ...I compliment you on your engineering knowledge, and I think that's very interesting. But are you seriously suggesting that the oil companies are, in effect, objects of charity, that they haven't got the reserves or the money to undertake these processes of research and development on their own, that they don't make sufficient profits so that they could plow some of that back into research and development?

VICE PRESIDENT ROCKEFELLER: They do.. But they're going to....

AGRONSKY: Doesn't that go really contrary to the whole philosophy of getting government off the back of business, which is one of the President's favorite phrases and one of the -- the whole thrust of his fiscal policy?

VICE PRESIDENT ROCKEFELLER: But Martin, you've got to take this basic question here. We believe in a free market system. You mentioned that along with the free enterprise system.

AGRONSKY: That's what we're talking about. Yeah.

VICE PRESIDENT ROCKEFELLER: Okay. But the free market system is an international system today. Now there's plenty of oil being produced in the world, but it is under control of the OPEC countries, and they're cutting back production. There are many people who feel if you just wait, prices will drop. But the President, for our national security, has said we want self-sufficiency in energy. Now this goes against, this cuts across the free market concept in the world of energy. Therefore, we now have a governmental limitation which is for national security purposes: to become self-sufficient so we can't be blackmailed. And that means we've got to take a new approach, which is not a free market approach, but which is a domestic [approach]. This is a new, very interesting situation which is happening in our country, where our security interests supersede our free enterprise, our free market system and puts



limitations on it.

AGRONSKY: Well, you find yourself in a kind of interesting situation....

VICE PRESIDENT ROCKEFELLER: Very.

AGRONSKY: ...on this too, in that the Secretary of the Treasury, Mr. Simon, the Chairman of the Council of Economic Advisers, Dr. Greenspan, contend that this system is wrong, that it won't work and that it should be dropped. You were so annoyed at that, apparently at their inability to dream the dream....

VICE PRESIDENT ROCKEFELLER: I wasn't annoyed.

AGRONSKY: Well, you suggested they resign. Now is that a mark of annoyance or not?

VICE PRESIDENT ROCKEFELLER: No, I simply said when asked -- when shown a clipping in the newspaper by a reporter in his paper, I simply said I was brought up in the school that said if after you have presented your case to your boss and he makes a decision, you then either support it or you quit. It's that simple.

DUKE: Mr. Vice -- Mr. Vice President, all of this, I think....

VICE PRESIDENT ROCKEFELLER: The way the headline read sounded far different than what I said.

DUKE: All of this does lead, though, to the issue of leadership in this country. And some time ago you compared Gerald Ford to Winston Churchill. But the polls all show that Mr. Ford really has not had a strong impact on the country. What do you feel the President must do to capture the hearts and minds of Americans?

VICE PRESIDENT ROCKEFELLER: I think the President has got to do what he's doing, which is to try and analyze these problems and then, on the basis of his best judgment -- and he's the most careful, patient man I've ever seen -- make the decisions which he is making and then take the stands. And I think, in the long run, this is going to be the thing the American people want. They are tired of the gimmickry, the fast talk. They want somebody who really believes in America, believes in the basic concepts on which this country grew and has the courage to take the unpopular positions because they're the sound positions.

And this is what he's doing. And it's a tough transition

period because we've been going through quite a long spree here. And to get back to some fundamentals is not easy. And that's true in New York. And it's true in energy.

AGRONSKY: You're an old pro in politics, Mr. Vice President....

VICE PRESIDENT ROCKEFELLER: You're very generous.

AGRONSKY: Some people argue that some of the positions the President takes are more perhaps politically motivated than anything else and in the sense of taking positions which would outflank the one man who apparently seems prepared to contest the President for the presidency in your party; that is, former Governor Reagan of California. Now would that be an unfair criticism of the way the President is moving....?

VICE PRESIDENT ROCKEFELLER: Absolutely.

AGRONSKY: ...Moving so far to the right, in the opinion of many observers?

VICE PRESIDENT ROCKEFELLER: Absolutely unfair. Absolutely unfair. I have never known -- and I've known and worked with the last five Presidents before this one; so this is the sixth President I've worked with. He's the least political President I've ever known. It's extraordinary. He does things because he really believes they're in the best interest of the country.

Now, as far as Reagan's concerned, I know Governor Reagan very well. He's a very good friend of mine. This temptation to get into the race is very real, and I'm sure the pressures are very great on him. The tradition of this country, the long-standing history of this country is that an incumbent President is, I think almost without exception, renominated by his party.

AGRONSKY: You think history will revalidate this time around?

VICE PRESIDENT ROCKEFELLER: I do. Yeah.

DUKE: But we do have a different situation this time, Mr. Vice President, because neither the President nor you was nominated or elected.

VICE PRESIDENT ROCKEFELLER: That's right. No question.

DUKE: And isn't it possible that Mr. Reagan, running in the primaries, with the Republican Party being increasingly conservative: isn't it possible that Mr. Reagan could do very

well and wind up with the nomination?

VICE PRESIDENT ROCKEFELLER: Well, I wouldn't say the Republican Party is increasingly conservative. I would say that the whole country is becoming more realistic about the fundamentals relating to expenditure of funds and revenue and so forth. I think we're going through a very difficult revolutionary period, in which everybody is coming to a better understanding of fundamental questions. And it's difficult.

Now as far as Mr. Reagan's concerned in the primaries, well, let's take New Hampshire. Everybody says, well -- a lot of people say he may, you know, well win New Hampshire. Well I've been in New Hampshire primaries myself. And as a matter of fact, I spent quite a lot of time up there once with Senator Goldwater, who's a good friend of mine too. And he and I both tried very hard to get the nomination, and what happened? It went to Cabot Lodge, who was the Ambassador in Vietnam and never even appeared. And that wasn't exactly a very significant event -- that primary -- and Barry went on to get the nomination of the party.

So I don't think one swallow makes the summer nor one primary makes an election.

AGRONSKY: Let me ask you this. You say Governor Reagan is a very good friend of yours....

VICE PRESIDENT ROCKEFELLER: That's right.

AGRONSKY: ...and you probably have great admiration for the President. Now putting your party half aside and speaking as a citizen, who would be better for the country as President, for your party as President? Would it be Ford or Reagan?

VICE PRESIDENT ROCKEFELLER: No question in my mind -- Ford. I think this man is unique. I think that this country has to be living under a star of some kind, because in a crisis a person, almost historically, has traditionally emerged who was right for the time -- when we had a real crisis. And I think President Ford is the right man for this time. He has the basic belief in our country, its heritage, its strengths. He has the courage to do what's right and the patience to study and hear all sides of the issues. And I think that we're very fortunate as a nation....

DUKE: Despite what you -- despite what you say, though, Mr. Vice President, you still find people like Governor Connally of Texas saying the other day that the President is not exercising leadership. And if you talk to Republican leaders privately, whether it's in Congress, whether it's around the country, this is a rather

common comment which you get.

VICE PRESIDENT ROCKEFELLER: Well, there's two parts to that question. Let's take Governor Connally first. Governor Connally -- and I know him very well; he was a governor too -- Governor Connally, as many worthy politicians, has had as his ultimate ambition, to be President of the United States. Governor Connally's chance of being President, and I would say only chance, as he sees it, would be a stalemate at the convention between Mr. Reagan and Mr. Ford and his finding himself in a position where the call of duty would be so powerful he couldn't resist it.

AGRONSKY: That's a pretty wild dream, isn't it?

VICE PRESIDENT ROCKEFELLER: Well, if you listened to what he said on that program about Reagan's strength and what was going to happen at the convention, it's almost a blueprint of what I just said.

AGRONSKY: Yeah. But I mean, do you think it makes any sense is what I....

VICE PRESIDENT ROCKEFELLER: But that's a different question. But I'm trying to use Mr. Connally -- he used Mr. Connally as an example; therefore, I have to answer that one. So I think Connally, Governor Connally has a special interest in this situation and sees things under the most rosy circumstances from his point of view.

As far as leadership's concerned, in a period of turmoil and trial and tribulation and rapid change, which is what we're going through, everybody who is in public life or even not in public life is under pressure from his friends or his constituents, or hers, and they're bound to look for somebody to blame. Well, the President of the United States is the best person. So if something's not going well and we're going through a period of difficulty, the easy thing is to say, well, the President hasn't solved the problem. Well, true, he hasn't solved it. But it hasn't been solved in any country. I'm sure they're saying the same thing about Mr. Brezhnev with the food problem in the Soviet Union. And yet I don't think he had anything to do with the weather. So that this happens all over.

DUKE: Let's look more closely at the subject of leadership and Nelson Rockefeller as a leader, as the number two man in our country.

Some members of the party's progressive wing are disappointed in you because they don't think that you have exercised enough of a voice in the administration. And also recently, you took a trip down through the South where some people felt, at least,

that your speeches had the ring of a junior Strom Thurmond talking about States' rights and talking about welfare cheats, and that sort of thing.

What does Nelson Rockefeller stand for today?

VICE PRESIDENT ROCKEFELLER: Exactly what he stood for always. I love this country; I believe in this country; I have faith in our system. I've devoted myself to try and serve the people of this country. And I'm glad to do it in any capacity.

I have always been for States' rights, with states' responsibility. If they assume their responsibilities, I believe in the federal system. I took that position at the governors' conferences consistently. There's nothing new in that.

As far as cheats on welfare, I have been against cheats on welfare. We had the toughest laws in New York State to get them off. We -- for instance, we said -- and it passed the Legislature -- that anybody who was able-bodied and who was on welfare should pick up their check at the employment office instead of have it mailed to them. Twenty-two percent -- no, twenty-three percent didn't show. Well, it's got to say somebody, that if a person was legitimately on welfare that they'd have come and picked up their check. The fact they didn't come -- there must have been something wrong. Then we insisted there'd be a review every six months. Nine percent were dropped as a result of the interviews, personal interviews.

So I said exactly what I've been saying. I said we've been overpromising and underdelivering as a nation. We have raised expectations higher than we have a capacity as a society to fulfill them. I just simply said the things that I'd been saying, that I said in my messages to the Legislature, that I put into practice in the laws which were passed, but which the South thought -- because they didn't read my messages, they didn't follow what I was doing. And there have been professional sort of Rockefeller haters in the South. It was very useful to them politically, and it even goes back maybe to the Civil War; I mean, you know, the history. So that I think they just found that I really was not as far away on a lot of these key issues as they thought I was, or as far out or, as I said, that I didn't have horns.

AGRONSKY: Mr. Vice President, why did you think it important, just in terms of geography, to go down South to re-state your lifelong philosophy, to convince people they were wrong?

VICE PRESIDENT ROCKEFELLER: Well, number one, I've been

going all over the country and making speeches for fund raisers, which is part of the responsibility. I waited for a year in order to get established in Washington and do the things the President had asked me to do. And then I started travelling.

Now as far as saying things, you can't go to a place without making a speech. If you're going to make a speech, you've got to talk about current events.

AGRONSKY: Well, let me put it more directly.

VICE PRESIDENT ROCKEFELLER: Good.

AGRONSKY: Weren't you reacting, in a sense, to Callaway's point, Mr. Ford's campaign chairman, that you were a liability to the ticket, that you had no strength in the South?

VICE PRESIDENT ROCKEFELLER: Not in the slightest. I have -- I had -- the speeches -- I mean the places I went to were mostly -- let's say seventy-five percent -- places that I had agreed to go in the fall of '74 after I had been confirmed. But the House decided to delay the confirmation until after the election.

Now you can speculate as to the reasons for the delay. There were a lot of congressmen running, and there was a lot of feeling that they didn't want me campaigning for Republican congressmen. And there were even some candidates for governor that didn't want me campaigning and who had influence in Congress, and it was postponed. But I went to the same places that I was going to go.

I know that -- I understand what you're saying, and I know this is a popular thought in certain quarters. But it just really isn't true.

AGRONSKY: I'm not saying it's popular; it's prevalent.

VICE PRESIDENT ROCKEFELLER: Prevalent is a better word than popular.

DUKE: But to follow up Martin's....

VICE PRESIDENT ROCKEFELLER: That's why I'm trying to answer it.

DUKE: To follow up on Martin's question, Mr. Vice President, aren't you terribly disillusioned with the Republican Party? After all, you've never achieved your great goal of being President and you lost out to Richard Nixon when you sought the nomination. And now many Republicans are trying to drive you

off the ticket next year.

VICE PRESIDENT ROCKEFELLER: Listen, if I was disillusioned by the Republican Party now, it would only be for one reason, and that would be that I was an extremely naive person. I may be a lot of things, but I'm not naive. I have been in the Republican Party, have been active in the Republican Party for forty years.

DUKE: Wouldn't you have been happier as a Democrat?

VICE PRESIDENT ROCKEFELLER: Well, I had that opportunity on many occasions and requested by at least one President, Democratic President. Two. Well, one and one Vice President to shift....

AGRONSKY: They were?

VICE PRESIDENT ROCKEFELLER: ...parties.

AGRONSKY: Who were they?

VICE PRESIDENT ROCKEFELLER: Harry Truman was the first. And as you know, Hubert Humphrey asked me to come as his Vice President in '68, which I appreciated. And they were good friends of mine.

AGRONSKY: And you're aware -- you're aware too that Lyndon Johnson said that he preferred to have you as his successor?

VICE PRESIDENT ROCKEFELLER: Sure. And I spent the last weekend, Happy and I did, with Lyndon Johnson up at Camp David, just with him and his family. They were very good friends of mine.

AGRONSKY: Might you have made it to the White House as a Democrat?

VICE PRESIDENT ROCKEFELLER: Probably would have. At least a lot of people think. But that's not my point. I believe in the Republican Party principles. I would rather be in a position of pulling people forward because of my make-up than holding them back.

AGRONSKY: No on -- no one doubts your belief, Mr. Vice President. The statistics demonstrate that not more than eighteen or twenty percent of the American people are willing to describe themselves as Republicans today....

VICE PRESIDENT ROCKEFELLER: That's correct.

AGRONSKY: ...despite your belief. Why? What's wrong?

What's the matter with the party?

VICE PRESIDENT ROCKEFELLER: Well, only forty-five percent describe themselves as Democrats. What's wrong with that?

AGRONSKY: Well, that's better than twice as many.

VICE PRESIDENT ROCKEFELLER: But it's still wrong. The numbers don't make things right or wrong. A big percent or small percent has nothing to do with values.

DUKE: But you have long advocated a broadening of the base of the Republican Party....

VICE PRESIDENT ROCKEFELLER: Well, of course I do.

DUKE: And now the Republican Party seems to be growing more to the right....

VICE PRESIDENT ROCKEFELLER: I don't think it is. I don't really think it is.

DUKE: Well, then, how do you explain the growing support for Ronald Reagan?

VICE PRESIDENT ROCKEFELLER: I don't think there is growing support for Ronald Reagan. That's one of the -- that's one of the artificial situations. If you look at the polls, he's going down in the polls and the President's coming up. Now how can you say there's growing support? So his people say, well, that support of President Ford's very thin. Well, that's a good argument, if you want to make an argument. But I want to tell you that I think that the President, President Ford, represents the fundamental middle-of-the-road Americans in his beliefs, in his actions and in his sincerity and his openness. And I think we're very lucky to have him.

AGRONSKY: You have no concern at, again, the prevalent attitude that he is moving to the right to opt [sic] Mr. Reagan's positions? You think that is not true? You think that that's not where philosophically he's moving or politically he's going? I mean, you really don't think he is?

VICE PRESIDENT ROCKEFELLER: No, I don't think he's moving. I think he is a man who is in the middle of the road, who believes in fiscal integrity, who believes in work, productivity as being the basic strength of this country, who deeply believes in human beings and doing everything he can to help those who cannot help themselves, but not doing it in a way that's going to destroy the whole country. He is totally opposed to inflation,

thinks it's the most insidious force, has had the courage to veto measures for education, for other social programs, which most Presidents wouldn't have had the courage, because, short-term, it's politically devastating. But he feels it's in the best interests of the nation. And thank God there's a man who's willing to put the nation ahead of his own personal political advantage.

AGRONSKY: And you're with him on all these vetoes?

VICE PRESIDENT ROCKEFELLER: Sure.

AGRONSKY: None of these -- none of these positions he's taken are in any sense in conflict with your own philosophy and political feeling?

VICE PRESIDENT ROCKEFELLER: No, my philosophy is very simple. I want to help people too, just as much as we can. But I don't want to do it in a way that destroys our system. Then we're not going to be able to help anybody. And therefore, it seems to me that's perfectly stupid.

Now we've been rushing headlong. Now if you take a very interesting thing on this. If you read Governor Brown or the Governor of Massachusetts or the Governor of New York, all Democrats -- or I was in Denver, the Governor of Colorado -- all of them talking exactly as President Ford is: "we've got to stop this spending; we've got to stop these programs." Governor Brown just vetoed a day care center program, said we can't go on this basis. But the Democrats in Congress haven't gotten the message yet from the people, and they're still on -- or at least many of them on this spending spree. But it can't last. The country can't afford it. Now the President is a tower of strength in this situation. It isn't because he doesn't believe in people or want to help people. He does. But he wants to do it on a basis that's not going to destroy not only them, but the rest.

This is tough. This is a very tough time. And we're talking right at the heart of the issues. And the real question is: have we the self-discipline, as a free people, to meet this kind of a tough situation, or are we going to go under? And I don't think we will.

DUKE: Well, what you're saying, it seems to me, Mr. Vice President, is that you have really basically changed your philosophy, because you used to be....

VICE PRESIDENT ROCKEFELLER: No, I haven't changed it.

DUKE: ...known as an activist. You were an activist....

VICE PRESIDENT ROCKEFELLER: And I still am an activist.

DUKE: You started many new programs in New York....

VICE PRESIDENT ROCKEFELLER: That's right.

DUKE: You were down here testifying almost every week before congressional committees for some new federal aid plan....

VICE PRESIDENT ROCKEFELLER: No, sir. I was down here for revenue sharing -- that's the big one I was here for -- which I think is the right concept. I've always believed, and the governors have believed, and they still do, that the federal government should return a portion of the money which they collect from the states unencumbered by all these detailed restrictions and that they ought to have more confidence in governors and mayors and county executives. And I believe in that myself.

And therefore, I put a great deal of effort into revenue sharing and block grants as against categorical grants. Now I really -- if you'll forgive me, I really think I do understand a little bit about government at all levels. I've worked in it most all of my life, and I've also worked in private enterprise. And I'm chairman right now of the President's committee -- or it's a congressionally appointed committee on productivity. One of the problems that's cutting down productivity in this country is government regulations which change and are constantly being readjusted, which leave individuals in private enterprise in a position where they don't know what the rules of the game are going to be. Therefore, they're not going to invest. And if they don't invest, we won't have jobs and production.

AGRONSKY: Mr. Vice President, I want to put this directly -- and I'm afraid it comes out crudely....

VICE PRESIDENT ROCKEFELLER: That's all right. Maybe I'll give you a crude answer.

AGRONSKY: Yeah. Every indication is -- and there've been many indications, which you've denied -- that the President wants to dump you, in effect. Now, you say you want the President....

VICE PRESIDENT ROCKEFELLER: That's not true....

AGRONSKY: ...to be re-elected.

VICE PRESIDENT ROCKEFELLER: ...when you say "every in-

dication...."

AGRONSKY: Many indications.

VICE PRESIDENT ROCKEFELLER: All right. There are indications, but not every indication.

AGRONSKY: All right.

VICE PRESIDENT ROCKEFELLER: All right, go ahead.

AGRONSKY: Well, I always wonder. Here's the Vice President and the President of the United States. Do you ever walk into the Oval Office, sit down and say to the President of the United States, "Look, Mr. President, I serve at your pleasure. Do you want to get rid of me? Do you think you should get rid of me to get re-elected?" Do you ever -- is that -- could such a conversation take place? Did it?

VICE PRESIDENT ROCKEFELLER: No. Let me give you -- you say I'm a sophisticated, politically. Okay. The first thing I said after I was cleared by the -- what do you call it? -- confirmed by the Congress -- two things. One, that I was confident that the President would be a candidate for re-election or election, as you pointed out. This I'd not cleared with him, and apparently there was a little conflict there with some things he'd said before. But I just as a politician figured you don't start two and a half years as a lameduck in Congress -- I mean in any office. That's number one. Number two, I said I'm not a candidate for re-election or election as Vice President. In fact, I will not say whether I'll be available or not. Therefore, I'm not a candidate for re-election as Vice President. I'm not campaigning for the job, and I'm not even willing to say whether I would be available next year for that job. That is the correct position. That is the sound political position. And I added to that "The President, when he's nominated, should then be totally free to pick, before the convention or at the convention, whomever he feels it will be in the best national interest to have as his Vice President and also for the party."

That's my position. I have no worries and no concerns. I can serve this country in a whole host of different ways, and I always will try to.

AGRONSKY: That's very noble of you. I compliment you on it. But wouldn't it be nice if the President said, "Nelson, I'd like you to stay?"

VICE PRESIDENT ROCKEFELLER: What the President says to me is between the President and myself. The President's posture politically, realistically, has got to be, I think -- and

this is what Bo Callaway's job is -- is to create the impression and the hope on the part of large numbers of people that they might be Vice President. And this always encourages people to be active in the support of the President. The important thing is his nomination.

AGRONSKY: Put on your philosopher's hat for a moment. You know, Shakespeare wrote once that there's a tide in the affairs of men which taken at the flood, leads on to fortune, omitted, all the voyage of their lives is bound in shallows and in miseries (?).

VICE PRESIDENT ROCKEFELLER: That's not a bad quote.

AGRONSKY: Was there a tide in your affairs which, taken at the flood, could have led on to fortune, and that you failed to take the tide at the flood. Looking back now, was there such a point in your life? How do you feel about it?

VICE PRESIDENT ROCKEFELLER: Well, when you say "led on to fortune," we have to define that. I feel that I've been....

AGRONSKY: Fortune is the presidency for you. You've said so.

VICE PRESIDENT ROCKEFELLER: No, no, I didn't say so. Excuse me. I....

AGRONSKY: I thought you said the aim of a politician....

VICE PRESIDENT ROCKEFELLER: I said that about politician's in general. My purpose has been to serve this country which I love. And I'll do it in any way. I have had the most interesting, exciting life in public life down here in Washington, Governor for fifteen years, study groups, back in Washington as Vice President at a crucial moment in history. I'm deeply grateful and I'm totally relaxed. Whatever happens is going to be in the best interest of the country, I'm confident, and that's all I care. So I have no worries.

DUKE: No worries whatsoever, huh?

VICE PRESIDENT ROCKEFELLER: No, sir.

DUKE: And yet the polls show that only thirty-four percent of the people would like you to continue as Vice President.

VICE PRESIDENT ROCKEFELLER: Yeah, and what do the polls show about Congress, what they think of Congress? Is it twelve percent or seventeen percent that think Congress is doing



a good job. So I'm twice as good as Congress, and that's got to be very good.

DUKE: Well, we have about ten seconds, Mr. Vice President, for further historical reflection. And I'd like to ask you, is it true that you like presiding over the Senate because Barry Goldwater can call you Mr. President?

VICE PRESIDENT ROCKEFELLER: No, that's a nice term, and I'm very fond of Barry. I like to preside over the Senate because it's the greatest institution of its kind in the world and because my grandfather Aldrich was, for seventeen years, the leader, Majority Leader of the Senate. He was there thirty-two years, and so to me it has tremendous human nostalgic connections.

DUKE: Thank you, Mr. Vice President.

VICE PRESIDENT ROCKEFELLER: It's a pleasure.

A CONVERSATION WITH VICE PRESIDENT ROCKEFELLER

October 22, 1975

10:00 P.M.

NPACT, National Public Affairs Center for Television

ANNOUNCER: From the new Vice Presidential Residence on the grounds of the Naval Observatory overlooking Embassy Row in Northwest Washington, NPACT brings you "A Conversation with Vice President Rockefeller," recorded earlier today, with Paul Duke and Martin Agronsky.

Now here's Paul Duke.

PAUL DUKE: We're delighted to join you, Mr. Vice President, in the beautiful and relaxing splendor of your new home, and we hope it provides some solace from the problems of the day.

And speaking of those problems, is President Ford now ready to accept your advice that federal aid must be provided New York City to avoid catastrophe?

VICE PRESIDENT NELSON A. ROCKEFELLER: Well, first, I'd like to welcome you to the house and I'm thrilled you like it. And I know Happy will be too.

Secondly, your description of my position and the President's position is, honestly, slightly misleading. The President has widely taken the position that the federal government could not bail out New York City and that the American people in other areas of the country are not going to step forward to do it. My position has been, very simply, that after New York City under the leadership of the state, which set up a board to take over, really, the fiscal management of the city, after the action had been taken to restore fiscal integrity, that there was then going to be a period of approximately three years while that budget was being brought into balance and the steps carried forward year after year before the investor confidence would be restored and the city would be able to sell its bonds, when it was going to need some federal help to make that bridge.

And that's a totally different picture and a totally different concept.

I agree with the President totally that the federal government can't step in and bail out cities who are spending more money consistently than they have income, because there's just no end to it, and the federal government's got a deficit now of sixty, seventy billion dollars, and we'd bankrupt the country, not just face the danger of bankrupting a city or even possibly a state. So that the situation is not that simple, in other words, as you put it.

DUKE: Nonetheless, there is a fundamental disagreement between you and Mr. Ford on this. Have you told the President that he is playing with political dynamite by refusing to help New York City?

VICE PRESIDENT ROCKEFELLER: Again I have to disagree. There isn't a fundamental difference. The President has been very courageous and absolutely correct in saying the federal government cannot bail out New York City. New York City has to take its own steps and its own moves with the state. Now let's face it. Cities are creatures of the state, and the state has a responsibility. And until that action's taken, this would set a precedent that would be a total revolution in the relationship of our federal system.

DUKE: But we come down to this, though, Mr. Vice President: is the President going to sign legislation to help New York?

VICE PRESIDENT ROCKEFELLER: Well, listen, that is not the question, if you'll forgive me. The question is, is Congress going to study this question, as they are now doing, carefully and come up with a program to meet the situation after the city and the state have acted? That's the question.

Everybody's got the focus on the President. The President has no power to act.

DUKE: But the President can show leadership. And where is presidential leadership....?

VICE PRESIDENT ROCKEFELLER: Well, now, let's face that one too. The Congress -- and I was on a commission that was set up by the Congress to organize the handling of foreign policy by the government of the United States. And one of the major concerns was that the Congress was not planning its due, proper constitutional role; it wasn't being consulted, and so forth. Congress has been making a major point. They want to restore their role of leadership. They want to restore their

role of authority and responsibility.

Now here comes a major problem facing us domestically, and you're talking about how can the Congress do anything without presidential leadership. Congress has got the power to provide the leadership, step up. This is a very serious situation, and I think they're now doing it. I think they are responsible, patriotic citizens. This is an extremely delicate, difficult situation. It cannot be oversimplified by a simple statement -- "Is Congress going to bail out or is the President going to bail out the city?" That's not really the question. The question is, can the city and the state take the actions? They've gone through a very difficult process and they've done it well, moving toward this. When they get to that point -- yesterday I understand the board approved a plan. Now the city has to go back and adopt the plan, and the city council has to adopt the plan, and then we've got to see whether this is going to lead to restoration of fiscal integrity. Because these bonds have got to be sold, and sooner or later the public confidence has got to be restored. And federal stepping in is not going to restore public confidence. It's only -- and, of course, this really goes to a more fundamental question, which is: can a democracy, can free people discipline themselves to meet the tremendous shocks that we're receiving as free societies in the world today and survive? This, I think, is the question.

MARTIN AGRONSKY: I compliment you on your loyalty to the President. But whether you....

VICE PRESIDENT ROCKEFELLER: It's not loyalty; it's factual what I'm saying.

AGRONSKY: Okay. Whether, you know, you say that it is simple or complicated, I would bring you back to another fundamental fact, and that's one of timing that Governor Carey, for example, raised yesterday. The point is that if there is not aid or if the federal government in effect does not go on the notes for New York City, by November, according to Governor Carey, New York is kaput; it's going to have financial bankruptcy. Now if you believe that -- this, in effect, is also what Mayor Beame says -- then we have a question of timing here.

VICE PRESIDENT ROCKEFELLER: You're right, absolutely right. Now we agree. A question of timing. And the first....

AGRONSKY: We agree on what?

VICE PRESIDENT ROCKEFELLER: On the question of timing....

AGRONSKY: Yes.

VICE PRESIDENT ROCKEFELLER: ...which is what you said -- we have a question of timing.

AGRONSKY: Yes. Right.

VICE PRESIDENT ROCKEFELLER: That's right. The first visit from the Mayor and the Governor to see the President was six months ago. And the President told them then, "You have got to put your house in order, because this is not something that can be done by the federal government, the rest of the country." And he even used -- he used a perfectly simple illustration. He said "I understand, Mr. Mayor" -- and I've said this before -- "that you have free tuition in New York University and that you pay your professors more than Harvard University. They're the highest paid professors, and you have open enrollment. Well, this is wonderful. If you can afford this, this is a great thing. But this doesn't happen in any other city. Now, are you saying that you want the rest of the country to provide services to the people of New York which the rest of the country can't afford and isn't enjoying?" And that was six months ago.

Now you say it's a question of timing. We're now finally down -- yesterday -- Monday -- no, it was the -- the 20th was Monday; that's two days ago. Finally a plan was approved. That took six months for the state and the city to do the things that they should have done and could have done at least four months ago. So the timing has been one which has been wasted at the local level.

AGRONSKY: I must confess that the President certainly gives the impression by his public statements and by the statements of his White House Press Secretary, Mr. Nessen, that he is infinitely more against federal involvement at any point to aid New York City than you are giving. You say that all that New York City has to do in effect is to be good and the President will go along. They must agree to cut down their budget....

VICE PRESIDENT ROCKEFELLER: I didn't say that. I never mentioned the President. I never mentioned the President. I said what I thought, which was that the state had to move in, as it did, with the city; that it had the powers and the capacity. This is under the constitution, under the state constitution. And it's done it.

Now the city has to adopt the measures which they recommended, to comply with the board created by the state. Now they've got to adopt those. All right. There is no power in Washington that the President has. Therefore, Congress has got to come up with a plan.



DUKE: But Mr. Vice President....

VICE PRESIDENT ROCKEFELLER: Yes, sir.

DUKE: Aren't we dealing in unreality here, because you know, having been in politics for a long time....

VICE PRESIDENT ROCKEFELLER: Yeah, and I was even Governor of New York for quite a while.

DUKE: For fifteen years. And some people suggest that New York's problems come or were partly started by some of the actions you took as Governor. But I want to get back to the point of you putting the burden on Congress. Yesterday a Senate committee cleared a bill without a single Republican voting for that legislation. Now isn't it -- isn't it looking beyond reality to expect that any kind of bill is going to get through Congress unless President Ford indicates that he will sign such legislation and wants Republicans to support it?

VICE PRESIDENT ROCKEFELLER: But that's got to be the first time that a bill had to have presidential support to go through Congress. Otherwise, if that were true, he never would have vetoed any bills because they wouldn't have gone through.

DUKE: But the fact of the matter is....

VICE PRESIDENT ROCKEFELLER: That argument really, if you'll forgive me, makes no sense, because the Congress of the United States is constantly passing bills and the President, by tradition, has never said what he was going to sign or veto until he saw the bill. You're talking about an abstract situation. Even as Governor, I wouldn't say whether I was going to sign a bill on a subject which was expressed in broad terms without even seeing a bill.

What the fundamental issue is here [is] the President has taken the right position, in my opinion, which is, "Look, Mr. New York City and Mr. New York State, this is your problem to straighten out." And he has said we're not going to bail you out. And I think that expresses the sentiment of the American people.

What I've been talking about was -- I assumed that New York City and the state were going to take the steps, because they had no alternative. Therefore, I was looking beyond that. The President's position I think has been very wise, that unless you took a hard position on this subject, it's very easy. And those of us who've worked with New York City know that if there's any hope that they can get something without having to take a hard

-- you know, do the tough thing, that they would do them because they'd get it from somebody else. Now they're coming to the end of the rope.

DUKE: Well, then, do we come down to what Governor Carey says: it's a matter of federal aid or federal troops?

VICE PRESIDENT ROCKEFELLER: Well, that's another very nice slogan -- I mean the statement -- to oversimplify it again. I don't think this is a situation which can be oversimplified. I think it's a very fundamental question which goes to the whole fabric of American society today. I think it gets back to, if you want to go to simple truths, we cannot as a family, as a city, as a state or as a nation spend for very long more money than we have in income, because otherwise -- only the federal government can print it. And if the federal government keeps on printing money, then the money's going to become less valuable, and we're going to have inflation again, and we're going to have the same kind of eroding of the savings and the earnings of the American citizenry. The President's focused on that subject and tried to get New York, as a prime, leading city in the country, to get its budget in balance, which is exactly what Governor Carey's trying to do and doing a very good job in helping.

AGRONSKY: Mr. Vice President, looking at what's happened in New York and taking Paul's observation that some people blame you because of your long stewardship as the Governor of New York State, for the philosophy, for one thing, and for policies, fiscal policies, for another thing....

VICE PRESIDENT ROCKEFELLER: Now, I have to interrupt you right there, because you're going to go on to something else and leave that hanging. I would like to recall to you....

AGRONSKY: Well, I didn't finish the point that I would have made....

VICE PRESIDENT ROCKEFELLER: Well, I think that was the backdrop....

AGRONSKY: I want to give you some numbers.

VICE PRESIDENT ROCKEFELLER: ...to another something you were coming to, but go ahead, and I'll save my....

AGRONSKY: Let me give you some numbers, and let's take a look at them.

VICE PRESIDENT ROCKEFELLER: Yeah.



AGRONSKY: Taxes -- and these statistics come from an analysis done by Fortune magazine -- during your administration rose five hundred percent. State spending went from 3.2 billion to 15.7 billion a year.

VICE PRESIDENT ROCKEFELLER: Not during my administration.

AGRONSKY: The state's debt -- in the period of your administration, according to the Fortune figures....

VICE PRESIDENT ROCKEFELLER: No, sir. The last budget was under ten billion dollars. So the fifteen has happened in the two subsequent years.

AGRONSKY: The state's debt climbed from nine hundred and twelve million to 10.1 billion. Did that happen in your administration?

VICE PRESIDENT ROCKEFELLER: Those figures -- I'd have to know whether that was full faith and credit or -- but go ahead.

AGRONSKY: What I address myself to there is the point that you raise yourself. You say as a family, we can't live beyond our means. And yet the fiscal policies that you followed as governor encouraged the city and the state, in effect, to live beyond its means. For example, the moral obligation bonds....

VICE PRESIDENT ROCKEFELLER: Yes.

AGRONSKY: ...the Urban Development Corporation, which went under; the....

VICE PRESIDENT ROCKEFELLER: It didn't go under. You see, these are the -- these are where I say you cannot make generalities. It didn't go under. It has just finished selling its bonds. And it is a successful operation.

Now I'd like to take each one of these....

AGRONSKY: Do.

VICE PRESIDENT ROCKEFELLER: ...and go right down the line. New York State, when I took office as Governor, was considered to be a state that was a mature economy, that was over-the-hill; the action was elsewhere. And I set out to try and revitalize that state and make it the best state, best place to live and work. And so we took the State University, which was the last state university to be created, from thirty-four thousand full-time students to two hundred and thirty-six thousand full-

time students. We put in a tuition, a uniform tuition for all students. And then we gave a scholar incentive for those who needed help so that they could get an education. To try and give our people opportunity, we built the highways; we took over the defunct railroads, commuter railroads, subways and buses of New York City to keep the city going. We took aid to New York City. And sixty-two percent of all the tax revenue I collected went back to local government to help local government meet its needs. And all of the bonds we sold were for these projects you're talking about, like UDC, were self-liquidating bonds. They were bonds to build things people wanted and were going to pay for, and they would pay off. I think it's extremely sound. It's a self-liquidating operation. It's a sound approach.

AGRONSKY: Well, a self-liquidating operation that hasn't liquidated really....

VICE PRESIDENT ROCKFELLER: Yeah. But now let's go back to where....

AGRONSKY: ...you know. And....

VICE PRESIDENT ROCKEFELLER: But I understand. Listen, I was there, and I understand this like a book. And so let's not -- I don't want to let -- excuse me, but this is an important program and I don't want to let a generality slide by. Let me tell you exactly what happened on UDC, Urban Development Corporation. It's building thirty thousand units of housing, which were essential. It was an extremely ingenious approach which was going to get the job done fast. What happened was after I -- a year after I left office, it had a cash bind, a short-term cash bind. They had notes outstanding; they had to pay to meet those notes when they came due. Inflation set in. Recession set in. Costs had gone up. A plan was worked out by my successor and the Budget Director. That plan involved the purchase of two hundred million of mortgages of the Urban Development Corporation. The legal activities took time, just as they always do. On December -- whatever it was -- 19th, it was cleared, and those bonds were not purchased. They were not purchased in January. It was part of an agreement with the banks, and then the banks were going to sell long-term bonds to take place of these notes.

Now this whole thing was because it fell between chairs in a change of governments after an election and before the new governor took office. It was totally unnecessary. There was no reason for it to happen. It did happen....

AGRONSKY: It did happen.

VICE PRESIDENT ROCKEFELLER: Yes, but it wasn't the UDC's

fault; it wasn't the problem of the structure itself: it was because the agreed upon plan was not carried out politically.

DUKE: There is a cynical view here in Washington, Mr. Vice President, about the administration's handling of the economy, about its handling of the New York situation, a feeling that the President has decided that New York is a good campaign issue, a feeling that the President has tied a tax cut to a reduction in federal spending again as good politics.

Have you had any voice at all -- have you had any voice at all in the formulation of economic policy?

VICE PRESIDENT ROCKEFELLER: Well, now you've given some specifics, and then you go into a general, so I've got to take the specifics.

On the tax cut and the cut the budget....

AGRONSKY: Twenty-eight billion versus twenty-eight billion.

VICE PRESIDENT ROCKEFELLER: Yes, twenty-eight. I know what it was. That -- I was not in on that discussion. That was done by the Economic Policy Division and the Economic Advisers and the Budget Division. But I support the President's action in that. He's got a very fundamental concept, and I think it's a very sound concept, that federal spending and federal taxation is having an extremely adverse effect on the country in terms of individuals, corporations, the basic ability of the economy to grow and to employ people through the private enterprise system and on inflation. And therefore, his purpose was to try to cut down on expenditures, cut down on taxes, get the money back to the people and let the people spend the money and get the economy going, get the economy rolling. It's a very viable economic philosophy, and I think it's sound.

AGRONSKY: Do you accept the thrust of his philosophy in terms of its impact on social and welfare programs, education, health and all the others....

VICE PRESIDENT ROCKEFELLER: Well, now....

AGRONSKY: ...in which there are very massive cutbacks?

VICE PRESIDENT ROCKEFELLER: ...we come to an extremely -- and I started yesterday and had the first of a series of six public hearings around the country on the subject of domestic policy, both programs and policy, with the idea of trying to see how under these circumstances can the federal government, just like New York City, bring its expenditures within its capacity

to pay for them. Now it can print the money. But that money is going to become less valuable all the time and it's going to feed inflation.

Now every program that's being carried out is one that you can make the most tremendously important emotional case in support of that program. But you've got to look at the realities of the fact that the economy is not producing the money to support this level of expenditure. And it's growing at the rate of fifty billion dollars a year, with no new programs. And you can't go on on that course.

AGRONSKY: Mr. Vice President, you puzzle me a bit. You are the head of the Domestic Council....

VICE PRESIDENT ROCKEFELLER: No, I'm the Vice Chairman. He's the Chairman.

AGRONSKY: Well, in any case, you are running it....

VICE PRESIDENT ROCKEFELLER: I'm active in it.

AGRONSKY: ...You are the acting operator of the Domestic Council and you regard this yourself, I think, as one of your most important functions.

VICE PRESIDENT ROCKEFELLER: Right.

AGRONSKY: Now, take the food stamp program....

VICE PRESIDENT ROCKEFELLER: Right.

AGRONSKY: And I cite it merely as a contradiction to the attitude you've just expressed. Your proposal, the Domestic Council's proposal, in effect, for food stamps was very like the Dole-McGovern proposal on food stamps. When you submitted that....

VICE PRESIDENT ROCKEFELLER: That was not the Domestic Council proposal.

AGRONSKY: What was not the Domestic Council proposal?

VICE PRESIDENT ROCKEFELLER: The proposal you're talking to -- about.

AGRONSKY: You did not propose that a food stamp proposal....

VICE PRESIDENT ROCKEFELLER: The one you're talking about, which you said is very much like the other one....

AGRONSKY: Yes.

VICE PRESIDENT ROCKEFELLER: That was not the Domestic Council proposal.

AGRONSKY: Where did it come from?

VICE PRESIDENT ROCKEFELLER: It came from -- partly from the Congress and partly from the development of the plan by various....

AGRONSKY: You had no role in that at all?

VICE PRESIDENT ROCKEFELLER: No, that's not -- well, the Domestic Council had a role in it.

AGRONSKY: Well, you just said it didn't. I'm a little confused.

VICE PRESIDENT ROCKEFELLER: No, I didn't. I said you said -- you've got to be -- we've got to be specific, see.

AGRONSKY: Yeah.

VICE PRESIDENT ROCKEFELLER: You said my proposal....

AGRONSKY: Yes.

VICE PRESIDENT ROCKEFELLER: And I said the proposal you're referring to was not the Domestic Council proposal. That doesn't mean the Domestic Council wasn't in on the discussions and the action.

AGRONSKY: I understand the Domestic Council proposed that a food stamp program be adopted that is very like the one that was submitted by McGovern and Dole. Is that inaccurate?

VICE PRESIDENT ROCKEFELLER: Yes, it is.

DUKE: But let's do get down to specifics.

AGRONSKY: Really, I'd really like to get this....

DUKE: Sure.

VICE PRESIDENT ROCKEFELLER: There are lots -- there're lots of people and lots of groups in state -- pardon me, in federal government. And they all have an input. And the Domestic Council is one of them. There's an Economic Council. There are the economic advisers. There's the Office of Budget and Management. There are all the departments individually. All of these have an input. And the only reason I say this is because you put it as my proposal. Therefore, I want to be accurate

accurate and say it was not the Domestic Council proposal as such. The Domestic Council worked on this thing....

AGRONSKY: And you did not support the thrust of it.

VICE PRESIDENT ROCKEFELLER: That's a totally different question.

AGRONSKY: Well did you, then?

VICE PRESIDENT ROCKEFELLER: What I do support is this. I support a food stamp program, or a program of help that goes to those in need. But let me give you an illustration of what I don't support. This is back in New York....

AGRONSKY: Well, do you support the President's proposal, which would take nearly five million people -- eliminate them from the program and would decrease enormously the benefits that come to another six and a half million people -- the last proposal made by the President? Do you take that position?

VICE PRESIDENT ROCKEFELLER: I support the President's proposal based on the fact that many, many hundreds of thousands of people are food stamps in this country who do not need them. And I can give you a perfect illustration. At a meeting of the Board of Regents of the State University three or four years ago, a banker from upstate New York said -- I sat next to him at the dinner -- he said "You won't believe it. My son came home -- he's a graduate student at NYU -- and said 'gee, dad, I just got on welfare. Isn't that great?'" And the father was horrified and they got into a discussion. And the boy was crestfallen because he said "Dad, everybody's doing it at college." And the father asked him "How did he do it?" And he said "Well, we're all getting on food stamps." Now if you think a banker's son, and the president of a bank -- and I have nothing against bankers -- deserves to get on food stamps and you, as a taxpayer, want to pay taxes to pay for somebody on food stamps who doesn't need it, then I think our society's not going to survive on that basis.

AGRONSKY: Mr. Vice President, I don't think that.

VICE PRESIDENT ROCKEFELLER: Okay.

AGRONSKY: Obviously I wouldn't support a position like that. But I do think that the meat axe cuts that the President proposes go too far....

VICE PRESIDENT ROCKEFELLER: All right. So what you're saying is there ought to be a different plan. There are very many

people who have different plans. And there are different ways of getting about it. And the President has asked the Domestic Council to review all of these programs and the policies and come up with an overall approach. Now this particular area of food stamps -- the Congress has been pushing for action.

DUKE: Nonetheless, what does come through with the administration's tax cut and spending cut plan, Mr. Vice President....

VICE PRESIDENT ROCKEFELLER: I think it's absolutely sound.

DUKE: All right, then, let's get down to specifics. And do you agree with Budget Chief Lynn who testified yesterday before the Congressional Budget Committee and advocated cuts for Social Security, for welfare, for Medicare, all programs that deal with the needs of human beings?

VICE PRESIDENT ROCKEFELLER: Well, I didn't see his testimony and I don't know what he said.

DUKE: That, in effect, was it.

VICE PRESIDENT ROCKEFELLER: But what I would say is that the system we have developed is a patchwork system that's developed over a period now, cumulatively, of forty-five years. I sat with three Democratic governors at lunch yesterday, all of them deeply disturbed about what's going on in Washington -- the red tape, the complexities, the bureaucracy, the over a thousand categorical grant programs which are supposed to aid state and local government, each one of which requires the state and the local government to enrich and improve their program. They tie them up in regulations, both congressional, legislative regulations, administrative regulations. Our society is losing its flexibility. It is losing its tremendous vitality which we had. And this is true for local government; it's true for business. And I think it's a very dangerous period. We've got the capacity to do these things. We've got to have faith in people and not have everything run from Washington by bureaucrats under complicated legislation which only lawyers understand and which overlap, duplicate, and the costs are beyond our means.

DUKE: Well, on that very point, Mr. Vice President, you have now recommended a vast new government program to provide subsidies for energy, a one hundred billion dollar program. Wouldn't that fly in the face of what President Ford has been saying about cutting back government services and what you just said?

VICE PRESIDENT ROCKEFELLER: No, sir. This is, again,



where you've got to get back to the details and not generalize. This is a self-liquidating program to get accomplished for this economy the things that are essential. The President said in his address to Congress in January, the State of the Union, that this nation must become self-sufficient in energy. It's our national policy. We're totally vulnerable to another boycott. We're importing now forty percent of our oil. It's at a cost, with the recent ten percent increase, that is almost thirty billion dollars a year. That thirty billion dollars -- we've got the sources of energy in this country. That thirty billion could be spent in this country and employ a million workers just on producing energy at home.

Now, the regulations are such, the uncertainties are such that industry, that private enterprise has not been willing to take the new steps because they couldn't be sure that if they made an investment, that they could make a profit and that they could make a go of the industry. My suggestion is, or my support of this suggestion simply is -- let's take, for instance, shale oil. I was in Colorado, and that's the area where the shale oil is. It's in shale. We have four times as much shale oil or oil in shale as all of the Arab reserves that are known in the Middle East, of all the Middle East oil. Now this is absolutely fantastic. The problem is how do you get it out. If you'd mine the shale and cook it and take the oil out, you end up with talcum powder.

DUKE: Mr. Vice President?

VICE PRESIDENT ROCKEFELLER: Yes, sir.

DUKE: Do you have so little faith in the free enterprise system that you believe American industry can't do this without government help? Look what your grandfather did years ago in developing the oil industry.

VICE PRESIDENT ROCKEFELLER: I have total faith in private enterprise and free enterprise. But it's a profit and a loss system. And you invest a hundred dollars only if you think that you can produce goods and services and sell them and make a hundred and two dollars or three dollars so that you get a return on your money. Nobody knows what the price of getting oil out of shale is. If you take -- mine the shale, you're going to end up with talcum powder, or what I call talcum powder. And we have no water out there. Therefore, you've got an ecological problem. However, there is another process which is called the in situ process. You drill down in, set off an explosion, set it on fire, draw the gas which is created by the heat of the fire off and condense it on the surface.

There are those in the laboratories -- this is a proven

process in the laboratory -- say that you can do this for seven or eight dollars a barrel. Other people think it'll cost twenty dollars a barrel. To do this would cost two hundred million dollars. Who's going to take the gamble on that if they get a twenty million dollar product [sic]? The government, just the way we did the Rubber Reserve Corporation, can get this thing started. And it's essential for our industry, essential for our people and essential for our national security.

AGRONSKY: Mr. Vice President....

VICE PRESIDENT ROCKEFELLER: Yes, sir.

AGRONSKY: ...I compliment you on your engineering knowledge, and I think that's very interesting. But are you seriously suggesting that the oil companies are, in effect, objects of charity, that they haven't got the reserves or the money to undertake these processes of research and development on their own, that they don't make sufficient profits so that they could plow some of that back into research and development?

VICE PRESIDENT ROCKEFELLER: They do. But they're going to....

AGRONSKY: Doesn't that go really contrary to the whole philosophy of getting government off the back of business, which is one of the President's favorite phrases and one of the -- the whole thrust of his fiscal policy?

VICE PRESIDENT ROCKEFELLER: But Martin, you've got to take this basic question here. We believe in a free market system. You mentioned that along with the free enterprise system.

AGRONSKY: That's what we're talking about. Yeah.

VICE PRESIDENT ROCKEFELLER: Okay. But the free market system is an international system today. Now there's plenty of oil being produced in the world, but it is under control of the OPEC countries, and they're cutting back production. There are many people who feel if you just wait, prices will drop. But the President, for our national security, has said we want self-sufficiency in energy. Now this goes against, this cuts across the free market concept in the world of energy. Therefore, we now have a governmental limitation which is for national security purposes: to become self-sufficient so we can't be blackmailed. And that means we've got to take a new approach, which is not a free market approach, but which is a domestic [approach]. This is a new, very interesting situation which is happening in our country, where our security interests supersede our free enterprise, our free market system and puts

limitations on it.

AGRONSKY: Well, you find yourself in a kind of interesting situation....

VICE PRESIDENT ROCKEFELLER: Very.

AGRONSKY: ...on this too, in that the Secretary of the Treasury, Mr. Simon, the Chairman of the Council of Economic Advisers, Dr. Greenspan, contend that this system is wrong, that it won't work and that it should be dropped. You were so annoyed at that, apparently at their inability to dream the dream....

VICE PRESIDENT ROCKEFELLER: I wasn't annoyed.

AGRONSKY: Well, you suggested they resign. Now is that a mark of annoyance or not?

VICE PRESIDENT ROCKEFELLER: No, I simply said when asked -- when shown a clipping in the newspaper by a reporter in his paper, I simply said I was brought up in the school that said if after you have presented your case to your boss and he makes a decision, you then either support it or you quit. It's that simple.

DUKE: Mr. Vice -- Mr. Vice President, all of this, I think....

VICE PRESIDENT ROCKEFELLER: The way the headline read sounded far different than what I said.

DUKE: All of this does lead, though, to the issue of leadership in this country. And some time ago you compared Gerald Ford to Winston Churchill. But the polls all show that Mr. Ford really has not had a strong impact on the country. What do you feel the President must do to capture the hearts and minds of Americans?

VICE PRESIDENT ROCKEFELLER: I think the President has got to do what he's doing, which is to try and analyze these problems and then, on the basis of his best judgment -- and he's the most careful, patient man I've ever seen -- make the decisions which he is making and then take the stands. And I think, in the long run, this is going to be the thing the American people want. They are tired of the gimmickry, the fast talk. They want somebody who really believes in America, believes in the basic concepts on which this country grew and has the courage to take the unpopular positions because they're the sound positions.

And this is what he's doing. And it's a tough transition

period because we've been going through quite a long spree here. And to get back to some fundamentals is not easy. And that's true in New York. And it's true in energy.

AGRONSKY: You're an old pro in politics, Mr. Vice President....

VICE PRESIDENT ROCKEFELLER: You're very generous.

AGRONSKY: Some people argue that some of the positions the President takes are more perhaps politically motivated than anything else and in the sense of taking positions which would outflank the one man who apparently seems prepared to contest the President for the presidency in your party; that is, former Governor Reagan of California. Now would that be an unfair criticism of the way the President is moving....?

VICE PRESIDENT ROCKEFELLER: Absolutely.

AGRONSKY: ...Moving so far to the right, in the opinion of many observers?

VICE PRESIDENT ROCKEFELLER: Absolutely unfair. Absolutely unfair. I have never known -- and I've known and worked with the last five Presidents before this one; so this is the sixth President I've worked with. He's the least political President I've ever known. It's extraordinary. He does things because he really believes they're in the best interest of the country.

Now, as far as Reagan's concerned, I know Governor Reagan very well. He's a very good friend of mine. This temptation to get into the race is very real, and I'm sure the pressures are very great on him. The tradition of this country, the long-standing history of this country is that an incumbent President is, I think almost without exception, renominated by his party.

AGRONSKY: You think history will revalidate this time around?

VICE PRESIDENT ROCKEFELLER: I do. Yeah.

DUKE: But we do have a different situation this time, Mr. Vice President, because neither the President nor you was nominated or elected.

VICE PRESIDENT ROCKEFELLER: That's right. No question.

DUKE: And isn't it possible that Mr. Reagan, running in the primaries, with the Republican Party being increasingly conservative: isn't it possible that Mr. Reagan could do very

well and wind up with the nomination?

VICE PRESIDENT ROCKEFELLER: Well, I wouldn't say the Republican Party is increasingly conservative. I would say that the whole country is becoming more realistic about the fundamentals relating to expenditure of funds and revenue and so forth. I think we're going through a very difficult revolutionary period, in which everybody is coming to a better understanding of fundamental questions. And it's difficult.

Now as far as Mr. Reagan's concerned in the primaries, well, let's take New Hampshire. Everybody says, well -- a lot of people say he may, you know, well win New Hampshire. Well I've been in New Hampshire primaries myself. And as a matter of fact, I spent quite a lot of time up there once with Senator Goldwater, who's a good friend of mine too. And he and I both tried very hard to get the nomination, and what happened? It went to Cabot Lodge, who was the Ambassador in Vietnam and never even appeared. And that wasn't exactly a very significant event -- that primary -- and Barry went on to get the nomination of the party.

So I don't think one swallow makes the summer nor one primary makes an election.

AGRONSKY: Let me ask you this. You say Governor Reagan is a very good friend of yours....

VICE PRESIDENT ROCKEFELLER: That's right.

AGRONSKY: ...and you probably have great admiration for the President. Now putting your party half aside and speaking as a citizen, who would be better for the country as President, for your party as President? Would it be Ford or Reagan?

VICE PRESIDENT ROCKEFELLER: No question in my mind -- Ford. I think this man is unique. I think that this country has to be living under a star of some kind, because in a crisis a person, almost historically, has traditionally emerged who was right for the time -- when we had a real crisis. And I think President Ford is the right man for this time. He has the basic belief in our country, its heritage, its strengths. He has the courage to do what's right and the patience to study and hear all sides of the issues. And I think that we're very fortunate as a nation....

DUKE: Despite what you -- despite what you say, though, Mr. Vice President, you still find people like Governor Connally of Texas saying the other day that the President is not exercising leadership. And if you talk to Republican leaders privately, whether it's in Congress, whether it's around the country, this is a rather

common comment which you get.

VICE PRESIDENT ROCKEFELLER: Well, there's two parts to that question. Let's take Governor Connally first. Governor Connally -- and I know him very well; he was a governor too -- Governor Connally, as many worthy politicians, has had as his ultimate ambition, to be President of the United States. Governor Connally's chance of being President, and I would say only chance, as he sees it, would be a stalemate at the convention between Mr. Reagan and Mr. Ford and his finding himself in a position where the call of duty would be so powerful he couldn't resist it.

AGRONSKY: That's a pretty wild dream, isn't it?

VICE PRESIDENT ROCKEFELLER: Well, if you listened to what he said on that program about Reagan's strength and what was going to happen at the convention, it's almost a blueprint of what I just said.

AGRONSKY: Yeah. But I mean, do you think it makes any sense is what I....

VICE PRESIDENT ROCKEFELLER: But that's a different question. But I'm trying to use Mr. Connally -- he used Mr. Connally as an example; therefore, I have to answer that one. So I think Connally, Governor Connally has a special interest in this situation and sees things under the most rosy circumstances from his point of view.

As far as leadership's concerned, in a period of turmoil and trial and tribulation and rapid change, which is what we're going through, everybody who is in public life or even not in public life is under pressure from his friends or his constituents, or hers, and they're bound to look for somebody to blame. Well, the President of the United States is the best person. So if something's not going well and we're going through a period of difficulty, the easy thing is to say, well, the President hasn't solved the problem. Well, true, he hasn't solved it. But it hasn't been solved in any country. I'm sure they're saying the same thing about Mr. Brezhnev with the food problem in the Soviet Union. And yet I don't think he had anything to do with the weather. So that this happens all over.

DUKE: Let's look more closely at the subject of leadership and Nelson Rockefeller as a leader, as the number two man in our country.

Some members of the party's progressive wing are disappointed in you because they don't think that you have exercised enough of a voice in the administration. And also recently, you took a trip down through the South where some people felt, at least,

that your speeches had the ring of a junior Strom Thurmond talking about States' rights and talking about welfare cheats, and that sort of thing.

What does Nelson Rockefeller stand for today?

VICE PRESIDENT ROCKEFELLER: Exactly what he stood for always. I love this country; I believe in this country; I have faith in our system. I've devoted myself to try and serve the people of this country. And I'm glad to do it in any capacity.

I have always been for States' rights, with states' responsibility. If they assume their responsibilities, I believe in the federal system. I took that position at the governors' conferences consistently. There's nothing new in that.

As far as cheats on welfare, I have been against cheats on welfare. We had the toughest laws in New York State to get them off. We -- for instance, we said -- and it passed the Legislature -- that anybody who was able-bodied and who was on welfare should pick up their check at the employment office instead of have it mailed to them. Twenty-two percent -- no, twenty-three percent didn't show. Well, it's got to say somebody, that if a person was legitimately on welfare that they'd have come and picked up their check. The fact they didn't come -- there must have been something wrong. Then we insisted there'd be a review every six months. Nine percent were dropped as a result of the interviews, personal interviews.

So I said exactly what I've been saying. I said we've been overpromising and underdelivering as a nation. We have raised expectations higher than we have a capacity as a society to fulfill them. I just simply said the things that I'd been saying, that I said in my messages to the Legislature, that I put into practice in the laws which were passed, but which the South thought -- because they didn't read my messages, they didn't follow what I was doing. And there have been professional sort of Rockefeller haters in the South. It was very useful to them politically, and it even goes back maybe to the Civil War; I mean, you know, the history. So that I think they just found that I really was not as far away on a lot of these key issues as they thought I was, or as far out or, as I said, that I didn't have horns.

AGRONSKY: Mr. Vice President, why did you think it important, just in terms of geography, to go down South to re-state your lifelong philosophy, to convince people they were wrong?

VICE PRESIDENT ROCKEFELLER: Well, number one, I've been

going all over the country and making speeches for fund raisers, which is part of the responsibility. I waited for a year in order to get established in Washington and do the things the President had asked me to do. And then I started travelling.

Now as far as saying things, you can't go to a place without making a speech. If you're going to make a speech, you've got to talk about current events.

AGRONSKY: Well, let me put it more directly.

VICE PRESIDENT ROCKEFELLER: Good.

AGRONSKY: Weren't you reacting, in a sense, to Callaway's point, Mr. Ford's campaign chairman, that you were a liability to the ticket, that you had no strength in the South?

VICE PRESIDENT ROCKEFELLER: Not in the slightest. I have -- I had -- the speeches -- I mean the places I went to were mostly -- let's say seventy-five percent -- places that I had agreed to go in the fall of '74 after I had been confirmed. But the House decided to delay the confirmation until after the election.

Now you can speculate as to the reasons for the delay. There were a lot of congressmen running, and there was a lot of feeling that they didn't want me campaigning for Republican congressmen. And there were even some candidates for governor that didn't want me campaigning and who had influence in Congress, and it was postponed. But I went to the same places that I was going to go.

I know that -- I understand what you're saying, and I know this is a popular thought in certain quarters. But it just really isn't true.

AGRONSKY: I'm not saying it's popular; it's prevalent.

VICE PRESIDENT ROCKEFELLER: Prevalent is a better word than popular.

DUKE: But to follow up Martin's....

VICE PRESIDENT ROCKEFELLER: That's why I'm trying to answer it.

DUKE: To follow up on Martin's question, Mr. Vice President, aren't you terribly disillusioned with the Republican Party? After all, you've never achieved your great goal of being President and you lost out to Richard Nixon when you sought the nomination. And now many Republicans are trying to drive you

off the ticket next year.

VICE PRESIDENT ROCKEFELLER: Listen, if I was disillusioned by the Republican Party now, it would only be for one reason, and that would be that I was an extremely naive person. I may be a lot of things, but I'm not naive. I have been in the Republican Party, have been active in the Republican Party for forty years.

DUKE: Wouldn't you have been happier as a Democrat?

VICE PRESIDENT ROCKEFELLER: Well, I had that opportunity on many occasions and requested by at least one President, Democratic President. Two. Well, one and one Vice President to shift....

AGRONSKY: They were?

VICE PRESIDENT ROCKEFELLER: ...parties.

AGRONSKY: Who were they?

VICE PRESIDENT ROCKEFELLER: Harry Truman was the first. And as you know, Hubert Humphrey asked me to come as his Vice President in '68, which I appreciated. And they were good friends of mine.

AGRONSKY: And you're aware -- you're aware too that Lyndon Johnson said that he preferred to have you as his successor?

VICE PRESIDENT ROCKEFELLER: Sure. And I spent the last weekend, Happy and I did, with Lyndon Johnson up at Camp David, just with him and his family. They were very good friends of mine.

AGRONSKY: Might you have made it to the White House as a Democrat?

VICE PRESIDENT ROCKEFELLER: Probably would have. At least a lot of people think. But that's not my point. I believe in the Republican Party principles. I would rather be in a position of pulling people forward because of my make-up than holding them back.

AGRONSKY: No on -- no one doubts your belief, Mr. Vice President. The statistics demonstrate that not more than eighteen or twenty percent of the American people are willing to describe themselves as Republicans today....

VICE PRESIDENT ROCKEFELLER: That's correct.

AGRONSKY: ...despite your belief. Why? What's wrong?

What's the matter with the party?

VICE PRESIDENT ROCKEFELLER: Well, only forty-five percent describe themselves as Democrats. What's wrong with that?

AGRONSKY: Well, that's better than twice as many.

VICE PRESIDENT ROCKEFELLER: But it's still wrong. The numbers don't make things right or wrong. A big percent or small percent has nothing to do with values.

DUKE: But you have long advocated a broadening of the base of the Republican Party....

VICE PRESIDENT ROCKEFELLER: Well, of course I do.

DUKE: And now the Republican Party seems to be growing more to the right....

VICE PRESIDENT ROCKEFELLER: I don't think it is. I don't really think it is.

DUKE: Well, then, how do you explain the growing support for Ronald Reagan?

VICE PRESIDENT ROCKEFELLER: I don't think there is growing support for Ronald Reagan. That's one of the -- that's one of the artificial situations. If you look at the polls, he's going down in the polls and the President's coming up. Now how can you say there's growing support? So his people say, well, that support of President Ford's very thin. Well, that's a good argument, if you want to make an argument. But I want to tell you that I think that the President, President Ford, represents the fundamental middle-of-the-road Americans in his beliefs, in his actions and in his sincerity and his openness. And I think we're very lucky to have him.

AGRONSKY: You have no concern at, again, the prevalent attitude that he is moving to the right to opt [sic] Mr. Reagan's positions? You think that is not true? You think that that's not where philosophically he's moving or politically he's going? I mean, you really don't think he is?

VICE PRESIDENT ROCKEFELLER: No, I don't think he's moving. I think he is a man who is in the middle of the road, who believes in fiscal integrity, who believes in work, productivity as being the basic strength of this country, who deeply believes in human beings and doing everything he can to help those who cannot help themselves, but not doing it in a way that's going to destroy the whole country. He is totally opposed to inflation,

thinks it's the most insidious force, has had the courage to veto measures for education, for other social programs, which most Presidents wouldn't have had the courage, because, short-term, it's politically devastating. But he feels it's in the best interests of the nation. And thank God there's a man who's willing to put the nation ahead of his own personal political advantage.

AGRONSKY: And you're with him on all these vetoes?

VICE PRESIDENT ROCKEFELLER: Sure.

AGRONSKY: None of these -- none of these positions he's taken are in any sense in conflict with your own philosophy and political feeling?

VICE PRESIDENT ROCKEFELLER: No, my philosophy is very simple. I want to help people too, just as much as we can. But I don't want to do it in a way that destroys our system. Then we're not going to be able to help anybody. And therefore, it seems to me that's perfectly stupid.

Now we've been rushing headlong. Now if you take a very interesting thing on this. If you read Governor Brown or the Governor of Massachusetts or the Governor of New York, all Democrats -- or I was in Denver, the Governor of Colorado -- all of them talking exactly as President Ford is: "we've got to stop this spending; we've got to stop these programs." Governor Brown just vetoed a day care center program, said we can't go on this basis. But the Democrats in Congress haven't gotten the message yet from the people, and they're still on -- or at least many of them on this spending spree. But it can't last. The country can't afford it. Now the President is a tower of strength in this situation. It isn't because he doesn't believe in people or want to help people. He does. But he wants to do it on a basis that's not going to destroy not only them, but the rest.

This is tough. This is a very tough time. And we're talking right at the heart of the issues. And the real question is: have we the self-discipline, as a free people, to meet this kind of a tough situation, or are we going to go under? And I don't think we will.

DUKE: Well, what you're saying, it seems to me, Mr. Vice President, is that you have really basically changed your philosophy, because you used to be....

VICE PRESIDENT ROCKEFELLER: No, I haven't changed it.

DUKE: ...known as an activist. You were an activist....

VICE PRESIDENT ROCKEFELLER: And I still am an activist.

DUKE: You started many new programs in New York....

VICE PRESIDENT ROCKEFELLER: That's right.

DUKE: You were down here testifying almost every week before congressional committees for some new federal aid plan....

VICE PRESIDENT ROCKEFELLER: No, sir. I was down here for revenue sharing -- that's the big one I was here for -- which I think is the right concept. I've always believed, and the governors have believed, and they still do, that the federal government should return a portion of the money which they collect from the states unencumbered by all these detailed restrictions and that they ought to have more confidence in governors and mayors and county executives. And I believe in that myself.

And therefore, I put a great deal of effort into revenue sharing and block grants as against categorical grants. Now I really -- if you'll forgive me, I really think I do understand a little bit about government at all levels. I've worked in it most all of my life, and I've also worked in private enterprise. And I'm chairman right now of the President's committee -- or it's a congressionally appointed committee on productivity. One of the problems that's cutting down productivity in this country is government regulations which change and are constantly being readjusted, which leave individuals in private enterprise in a position where they don't know what the rules of the game are going to be. Therefore, they're not going to invest. And if they don't invest, we won't have jobs and production.

AGRONSKY: Mr. Vice President, I want to put this directly -- and I'm afraid it comes out crudely....

VICE PRESIDENT ROCKEFELLER: That's all right. Maybe I'll give you a crude answer.

AGRONSKY: Yeah. Every indication is -- and there've been many indications, which you've denied -- that the President wants to dump you, in effect. Now, you say you want the President....

VICE PRESIDENT ROCKEFELLER: That's not true....

AGRONSKY: ...to be re-elected.

VICE PRESIDENT ROCKEFELLER: ...when you say "every in-

dication...."

AGRONSKY: Many indications.

VICE PRESIDENT ROCKEFELLER: All right. There are indications, but not every indication.

AGRONSKY: All right.

VICE PRESIDENT ROCKEFELLER: All right, go ahead.

AGRONSKY: Well, I always wonder. Here's the Vice President and the President of the United States. Do you ever walk into the Oval Office, sit down and say to the President of the United States, "Look, Mr. President, I serve at your pleasure. Do you want to get rid of me? Do you think you should get rid of me to get re-elected?" Do you ever -- is that -- could such a conversation take place? Did it?

VICE PRESIDENT ROCKEFELLER: No. Let me give you -- you say I'm a sophisticated, politically. Okay. The first thing I said after I was cleared by the -- what do you call it? -- confirmed by the Congress -- two things. One, that I was confident that the President would be a candidate for re-election or election, as you pointed out. This I'd not cleared with him, and apparently there was a little conflict there with some things he'd said before. But I just as a politician figured you don't start two and a half years as a lameduck in Congress -- I mean in any office. That's number one. Number two, I said I'm not a candidate for re-election or election as Vice President. In fact, I will not say whether I'll be available or not. Therefore, I'm not a candidate for re-election as Vice President. I'm not campaigning for the job, and I'm not even willing to say whether I would be available next year for that job. That is the correct position. That is the sound political position. And I added to that "The President, when he's nominated, should then be totally free to pick, before the convention or at the convention, whomever he feels it will be in the best national interest to have as his Vice President and also for the party."

That's my position. I have no worries and no concerns. I can serve this country in a whole host of different ways, and I always will try to.

AGRONSKY: That's very noble of you. I compliment you on it. But wouldn't it be nice if the President said, "Nelson, I'd like you to stay?"

VICE PRESIDENT ROCKEFELLER: What the President says to me is between the President and myself. The President's posture politically, realistically, has got to be, I think -- and

this is what Bo Callaway's job is -- is to create the impression and the hope on the part of large numbers of people that they might be Vice President. And this always encourages people to be active in the support of the President. The important thing is his nomination.

AGRONSKY: Put on your philosopher's hat for a moment. You know, Shakespeare wrote once that there's a tide in the affairs of men which taken at the flood, leads on to fortune, omitted, all the voyage of their lives is bound in shallows and in miseries (?).

VICE PRESIDENT ROCKEFELLER: That's not a bad quote.

AGRONSKY: Was there a tide in your affairs which, taken at the flood, could have led on to fortune, and that you failed to take the tide at the flood. Looking back now, was there such a point in your life? How do you feel about it?

VICE PRESIDENT ROCKEFELLER: Well, when you say "led on to fortune," we have to define that. I feel that I've been....

AGRONSKY: Fortune is the presidency for you. You've said so.

VICE PRESIDENT ROCKEFELLER: No, no, I didn't say so. Excuse me. I....

AGRONSKY: I thought you said the aim of a politician....

VICE PRESIDENT ROCKEFELLER: I said that about politician's in general. My purpose has been to serve this country which I love. And I'll do it in any way. I have had the most interesting, exciting life in public life down here in Washington, Governor for fifteen years, study groups, back in Washington as Vice President at a crucial moment in history. I'm deeply grateful and I'm totally relaxed. Whatever happens is going to be in the best interest of the country, I'm confident, and that's all I care. So I have no worries.

DUKE: No worries whatsoever, huh?

VICE PRESIDENT ROCKEFELLER: No, sir.

DUKE: And yet the polls show that only thirty-four percent of the people would like you to continue as Vice President.

VICE PRESIDENT ROCKEFELLER: Yeah, and what do the polls show about Congress, what they think of Congress? Is it twelve percent or seventeen percent that think Congress is doing

a good job. So I'm twice as good as Congress, and that's got to be very good.

DUKE: Well, we have about ten seconds, Mr. Vice President, for further historical reflection. And I'd like to ask you, is it true that you like presiding over the Senate because Barry Goldwater can call you Mr. President?

VICE PRESIDENT ROCKEFELLER: No, that's a nice term, and I'm very fond of Barry. I like to preside over the Senate because it's the greatest institution of its kind in the world and because my grandfather Aldrich was, for seventeen years, the leader, Majority Leader of the Senate. He was there thirty-two years, and so to me it has tremendous human nostalgic connections.

DUKE: Thank you, Mr. Vice President.

VICE PRESIDENT ROCKEFELLER: It's a pleasure.