

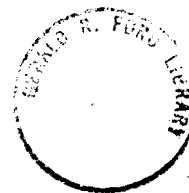
**The original documents are located in Box 45, folder “12/31/75 - Calendar Year End Interviews” of the Ron Nessen Papers at the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library.**

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CALENDAR YEAR-END INTERVIEWS  
TIME: TO BE DETERMINED  
FROM: JIM SHUMAN



PURPOSE:

The correspondents interviewing you would like to discuss, for year-end articles, what you feel your administration has accomplished and what you plan for in the future, both in setting new directions for the United States and in your own campaign for election.

The interviews come at a time when you and your staff are under heavy fire, and you are considered by some correspondents to be only a "caretaker President".

Your goal in these interviews will be to dispell this negative image by reviewing your domestic and foreign policy achievements, and by setting forth spiritedly both your vision of the America's future and how you plan to set the nation on the road to achieve that future. This vision and direction are particularly important as we enter the Bicentennial Era, for many people believe the next decade, as were the thirteen years between signing of the Declaration of Independence and the adoption of the Constitution, should be a creative time in which you set forth new directions for the United States.

BACKGROUND:

Aside from the to-be-expected liberal-vs-conservative criticism of your policies, criticism of your administration centers on these points:

Competence -- There is widespread questioning whether you have the qualities necessary to be President. Among the qualities allegedly lacking are a sense of vision, the ability to choose a first rate staff, and weakness of inconsistency in adhering to policy positions.

"Weak and indecisive," Patrick Buchanan wrote of you in the Chicago Tribune (12-18-75) summing up much of this press criticism, "no vision, no girding philosophy, no sense of command."

It is hard to find the reasons for these misconceptions.

Most likely, part is due to a post-Watergate feeling of distrust of any President, no matter who he might be. Part may be due to ideological differences - journalists who would prefer a Democrat, or ex-Nixon people who feel cheated of their place at the seat of power. Part may also be due to our explanations of our actions.

One effective way of changing the misconceptions is to put clearly into perspective your actions of the past year, and by strongly articulating the vision you have for America's future, as you did in the interview you granted Hugh Sidey of TIME, when you said:

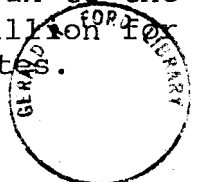
"I believe the third century ought to concentrate on explaining the freedom of individual citizens in the United States...on freeing the individual from being held down by big organizations, whether it is in education, in Government, in industry, in labor, or in religion."

What you have done so far has been merely laying the necessary groundwork for beginning to achieve that goal.

Let me review the two phases of your administration:  
Restoration of Confidence and Setting New Directions.

+ Restoration of Confidence -- When you took office, confidence in the Presidency and in the federal government was at an all-time low. Partly, this was due to the steady erosion of confidence in all American institutions brought on by inflation and the Vietnam War. But largely it was due to Watergate. You moved, both through your own personal integrity and honesty, and through insisting the same standards of honesty and integrity be adopted by your appointees to restore confidence in government and in the Presidency.

In addition, you wasted precious personal capital by traveling throughout the United States, first by opening access to the Presidency through White House Regional Conferences, and then to raise money for the Republican Party in many states. This was a little heralded effort to rebuild the two party system, which is essential to the proper functioning of American democracy. In doing so, you gave people a feeling that they could speak to the President and be heard, and you raised more than \$TK million for the Republican Party and for its Congressional candidates.



Even more important was your handling of domestic and foreign policy. In both, you not only effectively solved problems, you clearly delineated the issues, forcing people to realize that the Era of the Old Politics was over and that a New Era of Responsibility had begun.

When you took office, the major problem after lack of public confidence was the economy, hit simultaneously by inflation and recessionary high unemployment.

Before the end of your first year in office, you had turned the economy around.

Your policies reduced inflation from 12% in 1974 to an annual rate of 6% in 1975. The tide of unemployment has been stemmed and while it is still too high, there are 876,000 more Americans at work.

Equally important, you began a process of education on the need for responsible spending by vetoing a series of bills that would have burdened the taxpayers with billions of dollars of excess expenses. Many of these bills had politically attractive titles, but enlarged federal programs to benefit those who needed no help.

In vetoing the legislation, you said the taxpayers some \$7.6 billion in the 94th Congress and \$1.6 billion in the 93rd, a total of approximately \$100 for every taxpayer.

You also challenged Congress to join you in restraining Federal spending by keeping a \$395 billion ceiling on 1977 expenditures. Your requested cut of \$28 billion in the growth of Federal spending, coupled with a \$28 billion tax cut (a tax savings of \$412 for every typical family of four making \$14,000.) was watered down by Congress, but your compromise won the important point: Future tax cuts must be tied to cuts in the growth of spending.

Part of the philosophy of the New Era of Responsibility is the re-evaluation of the role of government in our lives. As a first step, you began steps to make government "more manageable, more responsive, more efficient, and less costly."

Among your specific actions and proposals were:

- Selection of an outstanding group of Cabinet Officers and other top Government officials.



- Reform of cumbersome, time-consuming, expensive and often anti-consumer Federal regulations.
- Revision of the Federal crime laws to protect the victim from the criminal.
- Development of an efficient national transportation system, including steps to expand urban mass transportation.
- Extension of Federal revenue sharing so that states and cities will have the money to make their own decisions and how best to deal with their own problems.
- Tax revision to create the jobs, energy plants and industry America needs for expanding future, and to remove from the hard-working middle-class an unduly heavy tax burden.
- Paving the way for the people of New York to solve the financial problems of New York City.
- Negotiating a long-term grain sale contract with the Soviet Union to assure a more stable market for American farmers.
- Proposal of a comprehensive national energy program designed to reduce dependence on foreign oil.
- Taken the first steps toward controlling federal spending, and linking spending with taxes.

#### INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

In international affairs, you also acted resolutely to solve a multitude of problems and to lay the foundation for a lasting peace.

When you took office, conditions in the Far East were deteriorating rapidly. South Vietnam was falling to the Communists, and Laos and Cambodia were tottering.

In the Middle East, war seemed imminent. In Europe, our long-time allies seemed on the verge of sliding away.



PROGRESS TOWARDS PEACE

By year's end there were no major wars anywhere in the world. In the Far East, the threat of a Communist takeover of Thailand, the Phillipines, Indonesia had diminished.

In Europe, you heard, determined leadership has put NATO back together again.

In the Middle East your efforts have kept the peace. Then efforts indicated consultations with Prime Minister Rabin of Isreal, President Sadat of Egypt, King Hussein of Jordan and Prime Minister Khaddam of Syria to bring about the September Sinai agreement, and directing the Secretary of State to intensify efforts to bring about a just, lasting and comprehensive settlement of the Arab - Israeli conflict.

You also worked with your fellow heads of State at the Rambouillet meeting outside Paris to co-ordinate economic policy.

And you furthered U.S. - China relations with a visit to Peking and a nearly two-hour conference with Chairman Mao Tse-Tung.

The program you began to outline and implement was aimed at achieving your vision of a prosperous and free America in the years ahead.

"Our third century," you said at Ft. McHenry on July 4, "should be an era of individual freedom."

Now, you will continue to work toward that goal of individual freedom, a society in which each American is free to develop his or her fullest potential.



## YEAR END INTERVIEWS

### POSSIBLE QUESTIONS

1. What do you feel were the major problems confronting you this past year?
2. What do you feel is your major success?
3. What do you feel did not go well?
4. Have you been able to achieve what you set out to achieve?
5. What do you still see left undone? What are your goals for this next year?
6. What are your goals for a full term, assuming you are elected?
7. How would you improve your relations with Congress?
8. How active a role will you take in your own campaign, both in planning and in actively campaigning?
9. How do you feel about your job? Do you like it?



PRESIDENT'S FOREIGN POLICY  
ACCOMPLISHMENTS

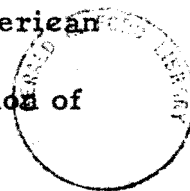
Q: Mr. President, what do you see as your Administration's foreign policy accomplishments this past year?

A year ago I said to you: "At no time in our peacetime history has the state of the Nation depended more heavily on the state of the world. And seldom if ever has the state of the world depended more heavily on the state of our Nation." This remains a stark fact. On a shrinking planet, with instant communications and missiles that span continents in minutes, in an interdependent global economy that helps to determine our own standard of living, we cannot forget that our own security and wellbeing are directly touched by events around the world.

A: The past year saw the end of an era in Indochina. There were serious repercussions, particularly in Asia. There were grave and genuine fears that this tragedy indicated -- or would precipitate -- America's abandonment of its responsibilities for global peace. But we did not allow these fears to be realized.

Within months, American leadership demonstrated its resilience and its strength.

-- An attempt by a small country in May to kidnap an American merchant ship, the Mayaguez, on the high seas, in violation of






international law, was thwarted by firm action, demonstrating that this country will never submit to blackmail.

-- A summit meeting of all the NATO nations at the end of May reaffirmed Atlantic solidarity, and indeed displayed greater cohesion on political, security and economic issues than at any time in recent decades.

-- In the Middle East, in August and September, the mediating effort of the United States helped produce an interim agreement between Egypt and Israel. This was the first agreement between Israel and an Arab state that was not just the aftermath of hostilities. It was an unprecedented step towards a settlement of basic issues; it was the essential basis for further steps which will be taken resolutely by the United States and the parties towards a just and comprehensive peace in accordance with Resolutions 242 and 338.

-- In Cyprus, once the U.S. embargo was partially lifted, Greece and Turkey and the parties on Cyprus began to move closer to a negotiated solution. With our encouragement, the intercommunal talks have begun again, with an opening to discuss all the issues comprehensively and cooperatively.



-- At the United Nations General Assembly Special Session in September, and again at the consumer-producer conference in Paris last month, the United States assumed a role of initiative and leadership on the fundamental issue of the relations between the industrialized world and the developing nations. This will be one of the central concerns of our foreign policy over the next generation. And our policy of practical proposals and two-way cooperation, coupled with our undoubted economic leadership, can help determine the kind of world environment our children will inhabit.

-- In November, an Economic Summit of the leaders of this country, Britain, France, West Germany, Italy, and Japan displayed and advanced the coordination with our closest partners the great industrial democracies, on basic economic questions. These issues -- energy policy, monetary policy, coordination of our recovery measures -- affect the lives of every American. And so our major alliances, which were forged a generation ago mainly for security concerns, have proved to be a fundamental partnership in a new era on a significant positive dimension of other concerns as well.



-- On this basis, we have continued to pursue what every American seeks -- a stable world peace. We live in an age of continuing ideological conflict. But we also live in an age of thermonuclear weapons -- and also in a period of new genuine opportunities for resolution of specific problems and relaxation of tensions. It is the inescapable duty of any Administration to seize these opportunities for peace.

Therefore, we continued this year to pursue an equitable strategic arms limitation agreement with the Soviet Union. Ninety percent of this work is completed, and I intend to continue this effort.

And I attended in July a 35 - nation summit of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe, at Helsinki, to confirm the stability and security in Europe that have been American objectives for thirty years. I also made clear that deeds, not words, will maintain this security. The document we signed made human rights and the freer movement of people and ideas a basic component of detente in Europe.

And on that same trip I visited Yugoslavia, Romania and Poland, to demonstrate that the benefits of relaxation of tensions now apply to Eastern, as well as Western Europe.



In October, we and the Soviet Union concluded a five-year agreement on grain purchases, by which the Soviet Union has committed to purchase \$1 billion of grain annually. This agreement stimulates the American economy, provided jobs for American transportation workers and seamen, and minimizes the inflationary impact for American consumers. This is a good two-way agreement. It is an example of the positive possibilities of relations between the world's two most powerful countries.

-- And just last month I visited China. It was the first Presidential meeting with Chinese leaders in nearly four years. We have some differences of view, but we also clarified and broadened the very significant areas of our agreement. We share opposition to any form of hegemony in Asia or in any other part of the world. Our new relationship with China is now a durable feature on the world scene.

-- I also visited Indonesia and the Philippines, and I enunciated in Hawaii the doctrine that even after Indochina, the United States remains a strong power in Asia, that will not abandon its friends, its principles, or its responsibilities for peace.



And so America today is at peace. Our foreign policy has restored us to a position of international respect and leadership. Just as 30 years ago, the United States responded with the Marshall Plan and our peacetime alliances and helped keep the peace of a generation, so today the world looks to us again for inspiration and courage.

I consider this, in the year of Indochina, to be an accomplishment of which every American can be proud.

In the coming year I intend to continue the American role of leadership.

