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PRESIDENT CARTER: THE WHITE HOUSE YEARS
A BOOK DISCUSSION WITH STUART EIZENSTAT

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P R O C E E D I N G S

MR. GALSTON: By way of introduction, I'm Bill Galston, a senior fellow in Governance Studies here at the Brookings Institution. In Governance Studies we study political institutions and processes, the presidency not least among them. And in that context we are enormously fortunate to have with us today Ambassador Stuart Eizenstat, who has written what I'm sure will be the definitive book on the Carter presidency. Stu and I were talking beforehand; it is a frank and candid book, it is the book of a deeply loyal senior aide to President Carter, who nonetheless in 37 years of reflection after the end of the Carter administration is able to turn a lawyer's eye, a diplomat's eye, a political professional's eye on the presidency. He tells it the way it was, the strengths and the weaknesses. And we have an hour and a half to discuss this with him and we are extraordinarily fortunate.

I suspect that for most of you in this room Ambassador Eizenstat needs no introduction, but I'll give him one anyway. There's a class of men and women in Washington whose commitment to public service is deep and lifelong. They are not in public service for the money, they are not in -- which there isn't much -- they are not in public service for honors and distinctions, although Ambassador Eizenstat has earned more than his share, they're in public service because they care deeply about their country and they are willing to disrupt their lives, often at great personal inconvenience and cost in order to serve. You have his full bio in your packets. You will know, therefore, about his ambassadorial representation of the United States to the European Union, you will know about his service in the Treasury Department, in the state Department, and in many other capacities, including his representation of the United States and the Jewish community in Holocaust reparations. Ambassador Eizenstat has done it all.

But we're not really here to talk about any of that today. We are here to talk about the four years he spent -- four years plus that he spent, including the campaign and the aftermath, closer to President Jimmy Carter than just about anyone else in the Administration. I can't imagine anyone who had a better bird's eye perch from which to see the ins and out of what was going on, seeing policy before it was made, as it was being made, and in the aftermath.

So it is with enormous pleasure that I welcome Stuart Eizenstat. We're going to proceed in a question and answer format and we're going to begin by talking about the appropriateness of this discussion here at the Brookings institution. Why are we doing this here at Brookings? What's the nature of the -- your connection and the Administration's connection with Brookings?

MR. EIZENSTAT: So the connection is multiple and very meaningful to me. And I can't really tell you how special it is to be with you as a long-time friend, but to be at Brookings.

So let me explain. The first is that in the '76 campaign I arranged for a full day of and participated with then-candidate Carter at Brookings across the board energy, foreign policy, nuclear policy, the economy, with your strongest senior fellows. And that day was very important to the president, to sort of lock in positions that he would take throughout the campaign.

Second, the Administration was literally loaded with senior fellows that we took from Brookings. Charlie Schultze was our chief economic advisor, Ed Fried on energy, Bill Quandt in the Middle East, and so forth. And even those who did not come into the Administration, like, for example Joe Pechman who headed your Economic Studies program, Art Okun, who had been LBJ's economic advisor, continued to have real impact. In fact, the Real Wage Insurance program we came up with as one of the

unsuccessful efforts to deal with inflation was really Art's idea and, had it passed in Congress, might actually have had an impact.

Third, the Middle East peace plan -- and we'll get into this as well -- the Middle East peace plan was really Carter's high water mark in terms of accomplishments -- it was born here in the December 1975 Brookings report. And not coincidentally, Bill Quandt, who became the Middle East senior person on the National Security Council staff, and Zbig Brzezinski, the National Security Advisor, were part of that study program. And Carter bought into that initial comprehensive plan, frankly, for better or for worse, lock, stock, and barrel.

Fourth, at the end of the Administration, when we had been defeated and before I went into law practice, I spent four months here as a guest scholar organizing what I think is one of the unique features of the book, and that is I took verbatim on the spot notes of every meeting, every phone all, over 5,000 pages of notes. And this was in a pre-computer era. Upstairs in my office here at Brookings I began to organize that mass of notes in a coherent way by subject matter alphabetically. A for abortion, A for agriculture. And it was here that really that started.

So really from start to finish, starting the campaign, during the administration, afterward, and writing the book, Brookings is an indelible part of this whole episode.

MR. GALSTON: Well, I have to say that is enormously comforting to those of us at Brookings today who sometimes wonder about our capacity to influence national affairs. But who knows what will happen.

Okay, let's move to the substance of the book. You make the case in the book that Jimmy Carter may well have been the most successful one term president in our nation's history. And flesh that out for us a little bit. What are the items here that

lead you to reach that conclusion?

MR. EIZENSTAT: Okay. Well, each has their own interesting story --

MR. GALSTON: Please.

MR. EIZENSTAT: -- and political profiles, but I don't want to dominate this with a soliloquy. So let me tell you why I think that the president was the most successful one term president and why he was the most underrated president that we've had in the modern era.

First, on the domestic side, the energy security that we enjoy today, the lack of dependence on OPEC oil, rests heavily on the energy bills that we passed -- three of them, Bill, during a four year period -- which did everything from deregulate oil and natural gas, which was incredibly difficult to do, and therefore spurred domestic production, to putting conservation at the centerpiece of our energy policy, meaning the first fuel efficiency standards and so forth, and inaugurated the clean energy revolution, solar, wind. And, symbolically, the president even put a solar panel on the White House to show that this was the future of energy. Today, 10 percent of our electricity comes from solar power.

Second, he was a great consumer champion and he totally transformed all of our transportation system, putting in pro consumer advocates to head the regulatory agencies and then deregulating everything from trucks to rail to buses, and most important to us as consumer, airlines. We wouldn't have had and wouldn't have the FedEx and UPS cargo efficiencies, we wouldn't have Southwest Airlines and Jet Blue and Spirit, and a regulated system. We democratized air travel and brought it to the middle class. That might not seem so great if you're sitting in the middle section of economy class, but we did really make it available. And we didn't stop there. We began the deregulation of telecommunications, inaugurating the cable era, and even removed

prohibition era regulations that blocked local craft beers from competing.

Third, all of the environmental legislation that was done made him, in my opinion, the single most important environmental president since Theodore Roosevelt. And I'll just give you one example. We literally doubled the size of the whole national park system that TR created by the Alaska Lands bill over the fierce opposition of the Alaska delegation, which wanted the whole state available for oil and gas exploration. And in typical Carter fashion, took a whole map of the estate, got on his hands and knees on the Oval Office run with Senator Ted Stevens. The republican senator showed him exactly where ever river and mountain, what would be in the park, what would be available development. And Stevens joked to us afterwards that Carter knew the state better than he did after representing it for 25 years.

Fourth, all the ethics legislation -- and this is more important than ever in an ethically challenged Washington -- all the ethics legislation in place today came as a result of our post-Watergate legislation. The 1978 Ethics Act, which regulated for the first time the disclosure of assets going in, limited gifts when you were in office, restricted lobbying afterward. The special counsel -- I mean where did Robert Mueller come from? It really morphed from our creation of the special counsel. Ironically, first used against Ham Jordan.

MR. GALSTON: Thanks a lot. (Laughing)

MR. EIZENSTAT: We can talk about that in a minute. Civil service reform, merit selection of judges, the Foreign Corrupt Practices Act. We just celebrated and had an event in Atlanta at the Carter Center the 40th anniversary of the Inspector General Law, which rooted out fraud, waste, and abuse. All of these, and many more, were part of the ethics legislation.

Then here's a southern president who appoints more women and more

African American and more Jews to senior positions in the Administration and to judgeships than all 38 presidents before him put together. He creates with Mondale, who you were very close to as well, the modern vice presidency as we know it, after being a constitutional afterthought. Checks off on every single item that Mondale wanted, access to all documents, all meetings, one on one Oval Office meetings every week, and even brings him over and -- that's where it's been since -- from the Executive Office across the street to the West Wing. All of these were done.

And even inflation, which we'll certainly get into, which was our Achilles' heel domestically, was also his finest hour when he decided he was going to risk his reelection by appointing Paul Volcker after everything else had failed, knowing in advance that Volcker was going to have a new monetary policy which was going to tighten the money supply, raise interest rates, raise unemployment, during an election campaign. And he never, Bill -- contrast that with what's happened now with Jerome Powell -- never once complained and never said it's Volcker that's the reason for double digit interest rates.

Foreign policy, the Middle East peace process, Camp David, the Egyptian-Israel peace treaty were in my opinion the single greatest act of personal presidential diplomacy in American history, more than Woodrow Wilson and the Paris Agreement after World War I. Great stories there about how that happened. Human rights being put at the center of foreign policy and applying it equally to right wing dictators who were pro American and anti communist, but very repressive, getting thousands of political prisoners released, activating the whole democratic movement, and then marrying that to the Panama Canal Treaty, which was our most challenging fight with the senate, and creating a whole new era in U.S.-Latin America relations. Applying also human rights to what I call the soft underbelly of the Soviet Union, championing

Soviet jury, championing the democratic movement there. Also applying hard power to the Soviet Union, even as most ferocious conservative critics feel that his finest hour was how he reacted to the Afghan invasion, the tough stand he took.

But more broadly, all the weapons systems -- and I give Reagan full credit for all these weapon systems he implemented -- we started. The mobile MX missile, the cruise missile, the Stealth Bomber, the introduction of intermediate nuclear weapons in Europe. It was a terrifically difficult battle with our own allies we green lighted. He reversed the post Viet Nam decline in defense spending.

China normalization, some great stories about how that happened and Deng Xiaoping's first visit to the White House.

MR. GALSTON: And the famous cowboy hat.

MR. EIZENSTAT: And the famous cowboy hat. But more humorously, he's in the cabinet room with carter, all 4'11" of him, and he says to the President, I really appreciate you restoring diplomatic relations with us, the first time in post World War II era that we've had diplomatic relations. But what I really want -- this will certainly sound like déjà vu all over again -- is the lowest tariff levels you can give our products so we can trade more with you. And I want the most favored nation treatment that every one of your trusted trading partners gets. And I know that there's a law -- Jackson-Vanik -- which precludes that because of the Soviet's restriction on immigration. We don't limit immigration. And he takes a little notepad, a White House notepad and pencil, and pushes it over to the President at the cabinet table, and say now put down on this notepad the number of Chinese you'd like us to send you each year, a million, 10 million. (Laughter) Carter, with a twinkle, says I'll tell you what, we'll make a deal right here, I'll take 10 million Chinese a year if you'll take 10,000 American journalists. (Laughter)

And, of course, we'll talk more about Iran, which I think was one of our --

so those are all huge accomplishments and almost every one of them, Bill, has a lasting tale to this very day. These were not one-stop things. They had a lasting impact.

MR. GALSTON: That is indeed an impressive list. And I'd like to drill down a little bit on what you yourself characterized as the high point in that list, the Camp David Accords, which you have described, and I think others would agree, as a personal triumph of presidential diplomacy in the face of almost overwhelming difficulty.

Tell us more about how that came about.

MR. EIZENSTAT: So I think that Camp David was not just 13 days and nights -- and I'll talk about that in a minute. You have to start at the beginning with the Brookings report. So Carter bought into the Brookings report of December 1975, hook, line, and sinker. What was the Brookings report? It said there should be a comprehensive peace agreement with all the Europe countries, the Soviets needed to be involved in reconvening a Geneva Conference that Kissinger for a day and had failed, there needed to be an Israeli withdrawal to virtually pre-1967 borders, there needed to be full autonomy for the Palestinians politically, or an affiliation with some Palestinian entity in Jordan. And we tried that. We tried to get to PLO involved. They wouldn't agree to accept UN Resolution 242 and accept Israel's existence, so they couldn't participate. When we had the Joint Communiqué bill of October 1, 1977 with the Soviets reconvening it, all hell broke loose. The Israelis said we're going to be ganged up by 22 Arab States, the Jewish community got very angry, and Dayan got him in a very embarrassing way to back off of that plan.

MR. GALSTON: This is Moshe Dayan?

MR. EIZENSTAT: Moshe Dayan. And interestingly that ended up, in my opinion -- and I think I make a case that has not been made before -- it's that which was the spur for Anwar Sadat to go to Jerusalem. Now, there were other reasons. He

wanted to ingratiate himself with the United States after throwing the Soviet advisors out. But he was convinced that if there was going to be a Geneva Conference with 22 Arab States and with naysayers like Asad, he would never get back what he wanted, which was the Egyptian Sinai. And so that I think was the catalyst for his trip. And interestingly, I happen to cross Carter in the hallway coming from the Oval Office after Sadat's historic trip, when he says no more wars, and he says to me, I'm not in favor of this, this is just going to be a bilateral deal between Egypt and Israel and it's going to upset the whole comprehensive plan. And I said, Mr. President, you can't do that. I mean this is incredibly historic.

So he did buy into it, but what then happened -- and here we get to the crux of it. So Carter flips, he makes this historic trip, which is unbelievably emotion. I describe what it was like to these hardened Israeli generals and politicians who had gone through five wars and just after the Sabbath on a Saturday night comes this gleaming white Boeing plane, Arab Republic of Egypt, and Sadat, very erect, comes down and literally people were crying. I mean hardened generals. Golda Meir says to Yitzhak Rabin, why didn't he come earlier and avoid all the losses in '73. He goes to see Sharon, who later became Prime Minister, was a great general, and he said, you know, I almost tracked you in the desert, I hope I don't have to do it again. And when he finally comes to Golda, she says I waited a long time for you to come. And he says, I'm here, shalom.

But what happened then is six months of fruitless negotiations bilaterally between Egypt and Israel. To fill out what it mean, no more wars. And they couldn't. So then Carter goes for a home run, over the objection, by the way, of almost all of his staff, and he says I'm going to invite them to Camp David. And we said, you know, it's not going to work. They're too far apart. And he said, I've got to try it because otherwise Sadat's historical trip will go down the drain. Thirteen agonizing days and nights, he

drafts 22 separate peace agreements, he has to negotiate separately --

MR. GALSTON: "He" being Jimmy Carter himself?

MR. EIZENSTAT: Jimmy Carter himself. He negotiates separately with Sadat and his team and Begin and his team because the first night we tried to put them together it was like two scorpions in a bottle. And then he adds two personal touches based on his study of these guys. He didn't go into this unprepared. So he takes them on the first Sunday to Gettysburg Battlefield to demonstrate what five wars means and that this is enough. And it had really kind of an electric effect. Sadat was a general, he had studied here in the National Defense University. He knew the Gettysburg Battle, and he starts expounding on all the errors the confederates made, pick and slash charge and so forth. Not necessarily something Carter wanted to hear as a southerner (laughter), but then Begin, who was certainly not a military man, verbatim, without any notes, delivers the entire Lincoln Gettysburg Address.

And then the last Sunday -- so we're now at the 13th day, we're close but not quite there -- and Begin says to carter, I'm not bluffing, I will not and cannot make any more concessions. I'm gone. I've got an (inaudible) plane waiting at Andrews. Get me a car to take me out of here. He joked to us it was a glorified concentration camp. And Carter realizing, Bill, that everything would go into flames, it would enflame the radicals, it would undercut Sadat, perhaps lead to his immediate assassination, it would engulf his own presidency, comes up with another personal touch. And that is knowing Begin's love for his grandchildren, he takes eight copies of photographs taken when they first came, the three of them, to Camp David, autographs it personally to each of his eight grandchildren, walks it over to Begin's cabin and sees Begin read each of the names of his grandchildren, and then tears start coming into his eyes, he puts his bags down and he says, Mr. President, I'll make one last try.

The rest is history. But people think that was the end of it. It wasn't. Camp David was not a treaty, it was a framework for a treaty. It was not legally binding. Within three months there was supposed to be a treaty. Six months later, there's no treaty. The same disagreements surface. Carter again -- and I can assure you over the strenuous objection of everyone -- decides to go to the region to see if he can finally convert this into a treaty. The last day after shuttle diplomacy, again close but not there, Begin refuses to agree to the last offer. Carter is packing his bags with Rosalynn, Air Force One is ready to go, the air space is cleared, suddenly Begin calls and says I want to come back to King David Hotel where you're staying at 9 o'clock in the morning. And a number of us are in the lobby, Carter phones down and says, look, I didn't expect this, I'm still getting dressed with Rosalynn, entertain the Prime Minister.

So he says, now, boys, you know, this is a very famous hotel, the King David. We say, oh, yeah, we know the King David is -- he said no, but not for the reason you think. When I was head of the Irgun during the British Mandate I blew this hotel up. But don't worry I'm not going to do it until Carter leaves.

MR. GALSTON: That is true, by the way, he did blow it up. And at the cost of many British lives.

MR. EIZENSTAT: And so he goes into the Presidential Suite and they seal the deal there. Coming down on the elevator it breaks, they have to be pulled butt first out. But that's how it was done. So it's a great story, it's an incredible story, and it's critical to Israel's security today and to our own national interest.

MR. GALSTON: Let's talk about another topic with a long tale, namely, Iran. I guess it's appropriate that we raise this topic on the very day that the sanctions against Iran are re-imposed. We all know about the hostage rescue mission that didn't turn out the way the President and his advisors wanted, but let's talk about what

preceded that. Is there anything that we could have done to handle relations with Iran in that crucial period from the revolution through the takeover of the embassy that might have set our long-term relations on a better footing, or was it just fated to turn out the way it did?

MR. EIZENSTAT: Well, first of all, I'm extraordinarily candid in this set of chapters.

MR. GALSTON: Yes, you are.

MR. EIZENSTAT: Because I think we made huge mistakes. I want to though deal with today and then I'll come immediately back. Because during the Clinton Administration when I was Under Secretary of State for Economic Affairs and negotiated a set of waivers on the Iran-Libya Sanctions Act, the same kind of secondary sanctions against European companies that were doing business with Iran. And I got something for it, more (inaudible) dual use things. So what's happening today has the risk of really opening a rift with our European allies.

Now, to go back to your immediate question, the question is could the Shah have been saved, could the Islamic revolution have been prevented. And I have come to the conclusion that it probably could not have, but that having said that, we sent extremely mixed signals. That is to say, first of all, Carter had his eyes on the Middle East peace process. It was, in my opinion, the single greatest intelligence failure in American failure, the CIA. They did not tell the President -- and his CIA director, Stan Turner, said so in my interview afterward, that we let him down -- they didn't let the President know that the Shah's political support at home rested on quicksand, he had alienated large segments, the bazaars, the middle class with taxes, the religious with empowering women, no veils and so forth, across the board. They didn't know -- can you imagine this -- he was our principle ally, we put this young 21 year old monarch back on

the throne in 1953 and a coup against the elected official, prime minister, and then 6 presidents give him every kind of military where we had F-15s and the like -- the CIA didn't know that for 5 years he was secretly getting cancer treatments for an incurable form of cancer, they didn't appreciate the role that the cassettes from outside of Paris that Ayatollah Khomeini, the leader of the revolution was having and fomenting it. I mean it was abysmal.

Now, had Carter known more of that, perhaps we could have taken action sooner. By the time we really appreciated the depth of opposition the only thing that could have possibly worked -- and here there were not clear signals -- was telling the Shah you have to immediately crack down and go after all the people in the street with military force. And Zahedi, his last ambassador, told me an interview -- one of the 350 I did for the book -- and the Shah says in his own memoirs, I could not make that order, I could not shoot all of my own people -- even though he had been very repressive before.

So absent that, probably not. Then the question was with the General Huyser mission, could there have been clearer signals then after the Shah had left to buck up his prime minister, his last prime minister after he had gone. Yes, there were mixed signals. Sullivan, the ambassador who Carter wanted to fire because he wrote a cable called "Thinking the Unthinkable", that we should reach out before the Shah left to Khomeini. And Carter wanted Vance to fire him for that.

So I think there were mixed signals given, but the end of the day, Bill, was once the Shah left the military support just evaporated. This prime minister he left didn't have the authority and the clout. And so I think in the same way that Eisenhower can't be blamed for the Cuban revolution in 1959 90 miles from our shore with Castro, the same way I don't think it would be fair to blame Obama for Mubarak and the so-called Arab Spring, I think it's very difficult from 6-7,000 miles away to influence things,

particularly when your intelligence is bad.

Now, having said that, the mistakes that were then made besides the CIA, that Carter had to decide, okay, the hostages were taken, now what do I do now. This is not a book that could have been entitled, if he had only listened to me, but this is one case where I wish he had and wish he had listened to Brzezinski, because we suggested immediate military action. Not bombing Tehran, but doing -- in fact I use this analogy -- what Kennedy had done in the Cuban Missile Crisis, blockading the harbors of Iran where all of their exports of oil went, which was their lifeline, to show we meant business immediately. Instead, Carter meets with the hostage families in a humanitarian gesture, says my number one priority is to get your loved ones out safe and sound, and he does, but at 444 humiliating days of innervating negotiations.

And then he makes another, I think, mistake by holing himself up in the White House to show he was working full-time on getting them out. Instead he becomes the hostage, he stops campaigning, he stops foreign trips. It gave the press the opportunity -- that's where Nightline came from for Ted Koppel, and Walter Cronkite, every bloody conclusion of his nightly news -- day 103, day 305, day 407 of the hostage crisis. It was incredible. And then the hostage rescue, which I think at the end -- and we have an expert here on the hostage crisis, on the rescue effort -- I think it was not too few helicopters, which is -- in fact, Carter added two more and we could only have so many to avoid Soviet reconnaissance. It was a lot of bad luck with sand storms, it was overly complex, but we had no joint command, Bill. Not once did all four military services practice the whole exercise. And I think that lack of coordination -- we later created the joint command -- was the undoing, again, with a lot of bad luck on sand storms and I think a plan that was so complex it had less than a 50 percent chance by far. And so when the one of the rotor blades of one of the helicopters hit the C130 cargo plane and

engulfed eight service members in flames, it also engulfed the Administration.

MR. GALSTON: Wow. A lot of memories came flooding back as you recited that history.

Let me now broaden out the foreign policy discussion a bit before moving to domestic policy. At one point in your book you make a very interesting claim that President Carter entered the White House with no strong foreign policy world view. And so he appointed very capable people who represented fundamentally different world views. How did that affect his presidency?

MR. EIZENSTAT: Well, dramatically, I think. So let's go back to the post election '76 transition. So I was the only aide Carter included in the CIA briefings after he is elected and before we're inaugurated. And during one of the breaks in the briefing -- and by the way, the briefer was a fellow named George H.W. Bush, who was the CIA director at the time (laughter) -- Carter -- we're in his home in Plains and he asked me to step outside. And he said I'm considering appointing Zbig Brzezinski my National Security Advisor, and Cy Vance as Secretary of State. And, you know, I work with a whole task force on foreign policy, so I knew both of them. I said, Mr. President, either one would be great, but together it would be oil and water. And he said, why. And I said because one is a hawk on your most important foreign policy challenge, which is the Soviet Union, Brzezinski, and the other is a dove, Cy Vance. And he said, I can handle it. I like differences of opinion. And that schism came through in multiple forms. There was the Naval Academy speech and others where he sort of stitched together. It only changed at the Afghan invasion, when clearly he shifted to Zbig's hard line. And it's why again I think it was in many ways his finest hour.

Now, look, they did agree on many things, China normalization, human rights and so forth. But that fundamental crack on Soviet policy was evident from start to

finish. And, interestingly, Vance resigned just before the hostage rescue. He said I don't think it will work. And after the full briefing on the plan, Carter came back to him and said, Cy, do you feel better about it. And he said, I do not. I was Secretary of the Army in the Kennedy-Johnson Administration during Vietnam, the military will never tell you something won't work. This will not work. I hope it does, I pray it does, but I'm going to resign.

Now, I interviewed Cy for this book. I think that was only the straw that broke the camel's back. I think he was simply exhausted by the daily running battle with Zbig on foreign policy and this really I think was just the final push.

MR. GALSTON: That raises actually a very interesting governance question, Stu. There's a passage of the book where you reflect on honorable resignations from government. And you work very hard, I think, surprisingly hard, to minimize the number of instances where you believe that that is an appropriate response. You said that in government, if you're a senior aide to a president, you're going win some and you're going to lose some, and resignation is hardly ever the appropriate response to losing a policy debate.

Would you apply that to Secretary Vance? In what circumstances is an honorable resignation not only justified but imperative?

MR. EIZENSTAT: So we had two resignations. The cabinet firing, which turned out to be a real problem. We can talk about that. One was Mark Siegel, who was our Jewish liaison, and he resigned over the F-15 sale to the Saudis.

MR. GALSTON: Yeah.

MR. EIZENSTAT: And the second was Cy. I try to make the case that when you're in an administration you argue very hard for your positions and you do win some and you lose some. And every time you lose some if you say I'm out of here, I

mean that's just not the way to act. I mean because then for the next issue you're not around to make your case. And, you know, there were plenty of times when I disagreed with him, and I laid it out very clearly, negotiations with Kennedy on national health insurance, and so forth. But my feeling was I owed an obligation to the president not to show up -- I mean he's the one that was elected, he's the one that has to make the decisions at the end of the day. My job is to present him the strongest, most objective arguments on both sides and let him decide.

Now, does there come a time when something is so fundamentally contrary to my own values where you have to -- sure, I'm sure you could come up with one, but I certainly didn't even come close to one. Again, that's why I think it wasn't just the fact that Cy felt the rescue effort wouldn't work. I think it was just the drip, drip, drip of over three years of disagreements. And do I wish he hadn't resigned? Yes. Do I feel he shouldn't have resigned? Yes. But I can't second guess him given the fact that there were so many other instances.

Now, one of the almost resignations we can talk about, if you want to get into it.

MR. GALSTON: I'd love to get into this. The back story here is that I spent two and a half years as the policy director for Walter Mondale during his presidential campaign, and you're about to hear a story that astonished me when I read it in Stu's book.

MR. EIZENSTAT: So, remember that genuinely -- genuinely Carter and Mondale made the vice presidency what it is today, a real partner of the president. They took it out of the sidelines, you know, John Nance Garner's statement with FDR, it wasn't worth a bucket of warm spit, and Eisenhower's --

MR. GALSTON: That's the cleaned up version.

MR. EIZENSTAT: That's the cleaned up version. (Laughter) The Brookings version. And when Nixon is running for president the first time, he's still vice president, Eisenhower is asked, can you say something about what Nixon has done. He says, give me a week and I'll try to think about it. Okay. So he made Mondale a real partner.

Okay. Now, here's what happens. I don't want to get into at this point the whole -- but I'll just summarize it. So Carter comes back from the G7 Summit in Tokyo, polls are down. We have an energy speech ready for him. He said -- and Gerry Rafshoon is here, he was part of this -- he says, I'm not going to give the energy speech. Gerry says, what do you mean, you've announced it nationally. I'm not going to give it. Gerry says, what do I say? Say the President doesn't want to give an energy speech. He retreats to Camp David, he has the "best and brightest" come up to try to right his presidency. Mondale doesn't participate at all in that, not at all. One of the most humorous of the best and brightest is a young 32-year-old governor from Arkansas who says to him, Mr. President, the problem is you're always talking about sacrifice. Be happy, love politics -- it's a guy named Bill Clinton.

Okay, so, we're through with that exercise. After like 12 or 13 days we have to give a speech. So then we have a battle -- and I lay it out here. I'm telling you it's as close to a prize fight as you'll ever see in an administration. So we're at the same cabinet table at which Camp David is laid. Mondale and I are one side, on the other side is 29 year old wunderkind pollster, Pat Caddell, who has come up with the notion that the real problem with carter's polls is there is a malaise in the country. Carter never used that term in his speech. There is a narcissistic society; we only care about ourselves and not the country. And Carter and Rosalynn buy into this, as do Ham and the others. And Mondale goes nuts at the cabinet table. I mean he was an understated Norwegian. I'm

telling you, he turns beet red. And if he were closer to Caddell, I think he would have choked him. He said, this is poppycock, this is high school stuff -- narcissism. The reason we're down in the polls is because there are gas lines and double digit inflation and high unemployment.

So we end up marrying my energy draft with this crisis of confidence speech. And contrary to my own judgment -- and here I admit again being wrong. I was wrong a lot of times. The speech is a wild success. It touched a nerve in people. He never uses the term malaise. Seventeen percent rise in the polls the first day afterward. I campaigned with him for several days afterward. All the magic was back. An old lady in the mailroom who had been there since FDR's days said, I've never seen such a profusion of long letters and mail. And then what happens is he decides to show he's in control, he's going to file the whole cabinet and ask for their resignations. And this old lady says, all the mail stopped and all the momentum stopped.

So when does Mondale find out about the cabinet firing? This is the guy who is involved in every decision, right? So he's campaigning for our SALT II nuclear treaty in Tennessee and he reads on the wire that carter has asked for everybody to resign. I mean he's asked by the press. I mean he doesn't even know what to say. So he calls me when he comes back. We had a really unique relationship. I mean I think it's the only time a vice president and a presidential aide had this kind of an intimate relationship. He asked me to lunch at the Blue Moon Restaurant across the National Cathedral, a Chinese restaurant.

MR. GALSTON: The worst Chinese restaurant ever. (Laughter)

MR. EIZENSTAT: Well, he says it's a quiet place where I want to share something. Well, it's quiet because if you ever ate the food there, you know why.

MR. GALSTON: You never go back. (Laughter)

MR. EIZENSTAT: So we're at this lunch and he says I am resigning. He says, I am out of here. I am going to resign. So I've since interviewed Mike Berman, his legal counsel, and others, and he literally asked them -- I said you can't do that. I mean look at -- you're a partner with the President. Okay, you know, it's a mistake, but you can't do this. Plus your own political career. He ends up his fall back is well, okay, I just won't run under the ticket. But he comes literally within a hare's breadth of resigning.

He says in the end I really was just blowing smoke off. Okay, even if you take that, it shows the depth of his anger at the whole episode.

MR. GALSTON: Yeah. For another few minutes, now let's segue, as you've already done with the story about Vice President Mondale, to domestic policy, because we spent a lot of time on foreign policy.

You make a parallel statement in your book to the statement that you made about foreign policy, and that is that the President entered the office with "no guiding economic philosophy". And tell me what you meant by that and how that affected the presidency.

MR. EIZENSTAT: Actually, I think he had a guiding philosophy from his time as governor, which was balanced budgets, tight fiscal policy, but here's the dilemma -- and, again, I thought about this for a long time, because I think it's influencing the democratic party even today -- we ran the '76 campaign against Ford on two bases. One was the pardon and Watergate, restoring trust and confidence in the presidency, all the ethics stuff. The other was the "Ford recession". We wouldn't have won the election without that. So we come into office and all the interest groups, labor, mayors, and so forth, are waiting for a big stimulus. Charlie Schultze, from Brookings, prepares a modest sized stimulus, tax cuts and spending programs and so forth. The liberal wing doesn't think it's enough, but, okay, we do it.

Carter from the first bill is uncomfortable with this. We ended up with a stimulus in '77, another one in '78. And just think of this, we are dealing with a decade-long problem economically that economists had no name for, so they called it stagflation -- simultaneous slow growth and high inflation. It bedeviled Nixon, Ford, and Carter. So which end of this string do we pull on? Well, Carter's instinct is more the conservative side, but he's a democrat. He's got this base. He's run against the Ford recession. So he tries as much as he can to balance his own instinctive conservatism on spending with the demands from warfare, head start, and job training, and tax cuts. And that dissidence is there for the first several years, just like it was on foreign policy. He tries to tack to the left to satisfy labor, minimum wage increases, for example, labor law reform. But it's never enough. He gives five anti-inflation speeches. His first -- this is a democratic president -- his first was March of '77, two and a half months after he's elected. He gives five of t them, increasingly warning that this is a bigger problem than unemployment. He has to cut budgets, alienating the domestic wing. He tries every conceivable thing -- voluntary wage and price guidelines, procurement sanctions, two anti inflation czars, and then he comes to what was a heroic decision for a democrat. So we're going into a reelection mode, July of '79 and he says to us, I have tried everything to deal with this endemic inflation with the wage price spiral, nothing has worked, and I'm going to take the stiffest medicine can tolerate, I'm going to appoint Paul Volcker to chair the fed, knowing in advance -- and I describe it in a celebrated meeting between the two of them in the Oval Office -- knowing in advance exactly what Volcker was going to do. He said, Mr. President -- and I'm quoting him almost exactly in the interview -- don't appoint me if you're not willing to back up what I'm going to do. And what I'm going to do is I'm going to tighten the money supply. You ran a monetary policy that was too loose. It's going to cause a rise in interest rates, it's going to cause a rise in unemployment in the middle of

an election campaign. If you're not willing to back me, don't appoint me to begin with. And Carter said to him and to us, I've tried everything. I don't want my legacy to be this double digit inflation, even if it means my reelection, which it did. And not once during the campaign did he ever complain. He let it run its course. And inflation dropped like a rock. Volcker was successful in the first year of the Reagan presidency, not in time to help our reelection.

So our biggest mistake, and everyone got it wrong, Charlie Schultze and everybody else, even Blumenthal, who argues he was the inflation hawk, nobody wanted the kind of monetary medicine that Volcker has applied. And ever since, the reason we still have low inflation is because of confidence that the fed will step in, as William McChesney Martin once said during -- he was the longest service Chairman of the fed -- you know, my job is to take away the punch bowl when the party is just starting.

MR. GALSTON: No, he said when it's getting good.

MR. EIZENSTAT: When it's getting good. And so, you know -- but confidence in the fed started. And the reason Volcker endorsed my book and also says that Carter deserves huge credit for combating inflation, because he never once complained. Now, had we done that two years earlier, Bill, we could have washed inflation out of the system. But I was against it, Charlie Schultze was against it. Nobody wanted the results, certainly in the democratic party, of what that tremendous tightening of monetary policy would have made. Again, it would have produced results in the end, but that's not what we ran against. That's not what a democrat does. And the base of the party wanted no touch anti inflation program at all. We were way ahead of where they were.

MR. GALSTON: Last thing, on the convention floor, 1980. I had been at the '68 convention as Humphrey's research director with all the stink bombs and the anti

Viet Nam stuff. As much as there was passion there, we were on the floor of the convention with over 60 minority planks by Kennedy, one of which was in the midst of this anti inflation program for a new $13 billion spending program. And I'm on the floor trying to combat it, and I'm telling you that the anger and bitterness -- I really felt like my own life was at risk. It was just passionate.

Danny Inouye, who chaired the Rules Committee, the senator from Hawaii, Kennedy wanted an "open convention", meaning that all the primaries and caucuses we won would be thrown out, they would vote their conscience so to speak. And Inouye, who was a veteran of World War II lost his arm in the Italian campaign, said I've never smelled such sweat, blood, and anger since I was in Italy.

MR. GALSTON: Wow. Well, we're almost at the audience part of this program. But I have two final questions to put to you, both of which are political questions.

The first has to do with President Carter's relationship to the democratic party as he found it. You've already touched on this, but to what -- he certainly started off his campaign to become the nominee as an outsider and a centrist. To what extent did the democratic party as he found it give him problems, to what extent did he have to accommodate to it? What were the consequences of that relationship?

MR. EIZENSTAT: I'm going to answer it in two ways. First of all, the reason why we got almost 70 percent of our legislation passed -- again, just under the percentage of Lyndon Johnson -- was because we had weekly democratic policy breakfasts to go over our priorities. So he wasn't a schmoozer and so forth, but that masks the broader issue that you're talking about.

So we win the nomination in '76 as an outsider, not a traditional democrat. And Ham Jordon and other of his political advisors, feel that the reason why

we lost almost all of a 30 point lead coming out of the convention and only won by 1/2 of 1 percent was because he felt like he had to tack to the left and embrace the base of the party and their interests. And he was looked at then as just another traditional democrat.

So this was, again, a tremendous tension. He now had to take on all the barnacles of the party. And he says to me in one of the interviews, I felt that the traditional democratic party was "an albatross around my neck". I wanted to be more independent. The problem is you could not run solely as an independent. You're a democratic president, you're in Washington, the interest groups are necessary to get things passed. So that tension between the traditional base of the party, which he never felt comfortable with, and the instinct to be independent, to be the peanut farmer, the small businessman, the fiscal moderate, the social liberal was always a tension within the party.

It's sort of encapsulated by one humorous event that I talk about in the book, which we call the George Hardy memorial lunch. So early in the administration we have a lunch in the Roosevelt Room with the AFL/CIO leadership and all of the constituent presidents, including George Hardy, who starts telling, in sort of union hall fashion, off color jokes while Carter, who is this sort of strict Baptist is sort of cringing. And we leave the lunch and Carter says to me as we're leaving, Stu, I'll never do this again. Sort of typified the relationship with a key, you know, base of the party.

MR. GALSTON: Yeah, well, I have a story like that from Fritz Mondale's presidential campaign.

MR. EIZENSTAT: But I had to say the one that hurts me most personally is that here's a president who gets the first peace agreement between Israel and its most powerful Arab neighbor, who breaks the back of the Arab boycott with the Arab boycott legislation still enforced today, who champions the cause of Soviet jury, who

gets 50 -- and this is also an untold story until now -- we got 50,000 Iranian Jews out with a creative use of the asylum process, he's the unquestioned father of the Holocaust Museum, and yet he gets the lowest percentage of Jewish votes in the '80 election of any democratic candidate or president. Any -- even, for god's sake, McGovern gets 70 percent against Nixon. We get 40 percent after getting 70 percent against Ford, after getting 70 percent in the Illinois primary. And there's a reason for that, which I can talk about, but the point is even that base of the party evaporates after all the things that were done that were beneficial for Israel and the Jewish community.

MR. GALSTON: Here's my last question before it's your turn. And I've saved it for last because it's my most striking take away from your book, notwithstanding everything else we've talked about for the past 55 minutes. And that is President Carter's troubled relationship to politics as a matter of give and take. And I want to T this question up more carefully than any of the preceding ones with some outtakes from your book.

You say at one point very flatly that Jimmy Carter hated the politics of his job. You quote him as describing himself as an engineer, a scientist, a businessman, a farmer, but not a politician. You quote John Bratamus as saying that he had "a Calvinist white man's burden attitude about politics". That's really -- he found compromise distasteful, he thought that's what men like Bert Lance were for. And you say in your own name on one of your famous yellow legal pads, "maybe he felt he was better than them", talking about the politicians who were importuning him for bridges in return for votes, et cetera.

Can you be a successful president if you don't like the stuff of ordinary politics?

MR. EIZENSTAT: Well, the answer is probably no. But if we frankly hadn't had this unusually difficult stagflation problem, if there hadn't been the Iran crisis,

and the economy was good, he could have gotten away with it because of all the things he had one.

Now, let's go back. So this is a president who is a ferocious campaigner, he spends 100 days in Iowa alone before the caucus.

MR. GALSTON: 100 days.

MR. EIZENSTAT: 100 days. And he's willing to do what he has to do to get elected. He tells me, for example, in May of '76 when the UAW, the United Auto Workers, says they'll endorse him if he'll endorse national health insurance, he doesn't want to endorse it but he agrees to let me negotiate some principles with flexibility. Okay. He was willing to do what he -- but he had the view -- and it's an odd view -- that you park politics at the Oval Office door once you're elected and if you do the right thing, as he saw it, if you're successful you're ultimately rewarded. It's not that he didn't want to be reelected, of course he did. That was his view. Gerry is here -- Ham Jordan said to me very early on -- and Ham knew him better than anyone -- Stu, if you want to have your recommendation accepted by the President, never tell him it will help him politically. (Laughter)

He really resented the notion. He felt that politics in Reinhold Niebuhr, phrase, his famous philosopher, the sad duty of politics is to do justice in a sinful world. I mean that sort of sums it up. There was a Jeremiah quality about him. And in the end, our most successful Presidents are almost our most successful politicians. Now, could he have done more to prevent Kennedy from running and splitting the party? It's not that we didn't try. I think if we had endorsed Kennedy's watered down national health insurance proposal that I tried, maybe we could have done it, but Ham felt he was looking for an excuse anyway. Carter's polls were down.

So I think at the end our most successful presidents are also our most

successful politicians. But, again, with a little luck here or there, he could have gotten away with it by doing the right thing. When you can't control your party and you don't have your party behind you, in the end it has to reflect on you. When you end up losing an election and getting only six states, I can give you all the reasons, Iran and inflation and so forth, it has to reflect on your political skills, your communication skills.

MR. GALSTON: Well, I came in here with three pages of typed questions. We've gotten through a half of one of those pages. And so if we had another six hours by my calculation, we could get through all of them. Believe me, there are lots of other questions, but there are lots of people in this room who've waited a long time.

Now, there is a young woman with a roving microphone. When you're welcomed, please wait until the microphone arrives, and then please state your name and institutional affiliation, if you think it's relevant, and please frame a question as opposed to a lengthy statement.

So we're going to start in the back of the room and move forward. There's a woman way over there with her hand in the air.

MR. EIZENSTAT: Bill, I do want to recognize who won't have the temerity to ask a question of me. I have a lot of people from the Carter Administration here, and that's my daughter-in-law, so I do appreciate her coming.

MR. GALSTON: Yes, ma'am?

MS. CARILLO: Thank you. Hi, thank you, Ambassador Eizenstat. I'm Rachel Carillo. I'm a writer and I'm involved in the United Nations Association and also a climate activist. And my question is relating to climate change and solar energy.

President Carter helped found or founded the SERI, which became the National Renewable Energy Laboratory out in Golden, Colorado. Current day, solar is gaining a lot more attention and attraction. As you said, it's accounting for about 10

percent of our energy mix. I'm wondering if President Carter were president today how you think he could or would handle competition with China and solar and the impacts of climate change resulting from fossil fuels.

MR. EIZENSTAT: Well, first of all, remember that in 1976-77 through '81 nobody knew about climate change. But having said that, he had the instinct, which is why he pressed for alternative energy, that burning fossil fuels were not good for the environment, they were not good for our dependence on foreign oil, and that's why he started the solar and wind and geothermal revolutions, why he put conservation at the centerpiece. And why one of the I would say unrecognized and most important parts of our energy bill was the little known provision called PURPA. If any of you get from the State of Maryland or Virginia or the District, check off where you can get alternative energy. What PURPA did is it allowed alternative energy producers of clean energy to have access to the utility lines of the monopolies, like PepCo, for example, at so-called avoided cost, so it was competitive for them to do it.

That was a huge spur for the alternative energy. So all the things that Obama tried to do, the power plant stuff and all of that, I mean Carter would have been 100 percent behind it.

MR. GALSTON: Next question from the rear. Yes, there's a gentleman on the aisle there.

MR. CHIMES: Hi, my name is Art Chimes. I was the Voice of America correspondent in Jerusalem in the early '90s. But I don't want to ask you about the Middle East, I want to ask you about today. When Jimmy Carter's reputation is middling at best I would say.

MR. EIZENSTAT: You're being, you know, unfairly kind.

MR. CHIMES: Yeah. Many people think he is a wonderful, fantastic,

admirable post presidency, but his presidency was eh, meh. But you made a really stirring argument for his successes. And I wonder if you could talk a little bit about why that argument hasn't really taken hold, why American's mostly don't think of Jimmy Carter as one of our great presidents.

MR. EIZENSTAT: Yes. I mean I think --

MR. CHIMES: And by the way, it's the day before the election, so if you have any comments about that, now's a good time.

MR. GALSTON: Thank you.

MR. EIZENSTAT: First of all, if you ask the question about the election of me, 48 hours from now I'll be very clairvoyant (Laughter)

So the reason, in my opinion, why all these accomplishments have been obscured over the last 40 years is because in particular -- I mentioned four "I's", inflation, Iran, inexperience by himself and his Georgia mafia, and interparty warfare. When you have a party that's split, as it was at the convention, and never reconciled -- I mean, look, I wish Kennedy hadn't run against us, but what I'm most upset about is that after the convention when he decisively lost, there was no reconciliation. But even more significant, and that's not insignificant, was inflation and the hostage rescue. We had huge long gas lines. I mean I had to wait 30 minutes at my Exxon station around the corner from my house in Chevy Chase to get to the White House to try to solve the gas line problem. So that was part of it.

But in the end it really was the Iran crisis. There's no question about it. I think we could have sustained the Kennedy challenge, I think we could have sustained inflation. We couldn't sustain those two on top of the Iran hostage crisis. It was incredibly innervating. Here was people saying if we can't handle a "third rate country", if we can't get our hostages out, if we can't handle this aging Ayatollah, then I need to

make a change. I mean I really think that was the decisive factor.

And here's an interesting factoid, which again is not realized, we only won six states and the District of Columbia. We lost the popular vote by like 10 million votes. The weekend before the election we were dead even. We lost the debate. We should never have to agreed to a debate eight weeks before the election. They stole our debate book. Jim Baker admits. They knew all of our lines. In my interview -- I mean I would have loved to have their debate book. Okay. But we end up coming back from that debate loss. In the last weekend, not just our own internal polls -- CBS, NBC -- we're dead even with the momentum on our side.

So then what happens, we're in Chicago on the Sunday before the Tuesday election. At worst it would have been very, very close, but I think we really would have had a shot. Our ads against Reagan and sort of the cowboy with the ready gun and all that, was starting to have a bite. And then at 3:00 a.m. in the morning I'm awakened by the secret service and they say the President wants to go back to Washington, we have a new offer from the Iranians. I argued strenuously not to do it. First, if there was a new offer we could have looked at it from Chicago and determined that while it was a step forward it wasn't sufficient. Second, it was going to bring the whole issue back. Instead, he goes back. And then Gerry Rafshoon and I say, okay, if you're going to do this you need to go back and say if the offer is unsuccessful -- the hardest statement you can make. These Iranians are not going to influence our election, to hell with them. Instead he says, it's a positive step forward. It's not enough. Bang, the polls just go down. That was the end. The floodgates just opened.

MR. GALSTON: I'm going to interrupt this flow to ask you a question that can be answered yes or no, based on something you just said in the course of --

MR. EIZENSTAT: Not maybe?

MR. GALSTON: Not maybe. You described the incident where Jim Baker admits that he got your debate book. If you had gotten theirs, would you have taken it?

MR. EIZENSTAT: I'll give the same answer that Jim Baker gave to me, he said that Bill Casey, who had been the head of the OSS, by the way, during World War II, plops this debate book down about two weeks before the debate, says I think you'd like to look at it. Baker says he looks at it and thinks, Gee, you know, I mean this was stolen, I'm not sure I should use it. And then I said, I think I'm going to. And I think I would have done the same thing.

MR. GALSTON: You realize that a later presidential candidate made the opposite choice?

QUESTIONER: (Off mic) have a debate book. (Laughter)

MR. GALSTON: Moving now forward, I'm going to start in the front row and then move back. Yes, sir, you are?

MR. ROSE: Herb Rose. I have two very brief questions. One relating to a subject that you had not discussed, and that was going metric.

MR. EIZENSTAT: Going metric?

MR. ROSE: Yes. It pushed the metric system. We changed some of the signs around the country. The only thing that remains from that push was we now buy our soda in liter and half liter bottles. Why couldn't he go further in that or what went wrong with that?

The other question relates to something you brought up with regard to the Iran situation. You said that one of the things he should have done was gather together the heads of all the four military branches and discuss it with them. He came from a military background, why didn't he see the benefit of that?

MR. EIZENSTAT: Okay, so let's deal with the metric thing in one phrase. It had nothing to do with our losing the election. I mean he shouldn't have even gone that far. It was too complicated to switch everything. He was an engineer and he had been in the Navy and the metric system made sense, everybody else did it. I mean he just didn't want to go any further because it would have been too disruptive.

Now, on the military thing, it's very important. Here's a Naval Academy graduate, a submariner in a nuclear submarine. And I interviewed the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General Jones, and his Deputy, General Pustay, and they said that Carter told them, I am not going to micromanage this as Commander in Chief. Now, ironically he micromanaged everything else.

MR. GALSTON: Everything else.

MR. EIZENSTAT: But he said I'm going to leave it to you guys. And he said -- and Jones said this showed to me his greatness -- he said if it succeeds it will be the military's success, if it fails, it will be my failure as Commander in Chief. So should he have done more? Perhaps. But I think he didn't want to try to micromanage it. He wanted to rely on his military services. I wish he had done more, but I understand why he felt like even though I'm a Naval man, it's not my job to micromanage all of this.

And one of the people -- in fact, I got this from an interview that Gerry Rafshoon did of Colonel Beckwith, who led our rescue effort, and there's a wonderfully humorous period where Beckwith comes to brief the President on the rescue efforts. So it's not that he didn't know what was going to happen, he knew every step, he just let them do it. And Beckwith says afterward, in this interview that Gerry did, he says -- first of all, I'm from Sumter County, which turns out to be the same county as Carter, and they start talking about common friends. It was amazing. But afterward, when it fails, he said if Bear Bryant, the then legendary coach of Alabama, or Wally Butts of Georgia, when

they practice before a game, the tailback and the halfback and the linebacker all know what the plan is and they all practice it together. We never did. And that I think was the fundamental flaw. And that is the kind of thing a commander in Chief could have said, without micromanaging, you know, does each service know what they're doing and are they coordinating.

MR. GALSTON: But of course, that why the Goldwater-Nichols bill was such a revolution and jointness is now the rule rather than the exception. And that's one of the few things the President doesn't need to worry so much about.

I'm going to take a question here and then go back over here.

QUESTIONER: My name is Eddie Artiss. And I wanted to ask you about Iran in '77-'78. Was there any thought of basically siding with those who understood that the Shah was a dictator, an outrageous dictator, and siding with the people, sort of like -- I don't think there's direct, but the way that Trump now has supported Saudi Arabia and not supported those fighting --

MR. EIZENSTAT: So the answer is no. And this is why it aggravates me that Carter is blamed for undercutting the Shah. Our Ambassador Sullivan did say we should, that he's gone, he writes a cable called "Thinking the Unthinkable", that he's lost, that we should reach out to Khomeini, unfortunately, not to the martyred opposition. And Carter wants him fired. So Carter is stuck with him, he did not try to undercut him. Could he have said shoot your -- you know, the demonstrators? Okay, but short of that, we did not try to embrace Khomeini. We did not try to embrace Khomeini.

MR. GALSTON: Yes, sir.

QUESTIONER: Michael Calliar here, Stu. A question on governance. Anybody, when they become president the first time they bring certain experienced executives in terms of how to run the government, which is a huge job, and all sorts of

decisions. How good a job did Jimmy Carter do?

MR. EIZENSTAT: Okay. So this was really one of our failures. And that is the organization of the White House. So there are two things that should have been done that weren't. The first is he over read the problems of Watergate in thinking that one of Nixon's prime problems was having H.R. Haldeman as Chief of Staff and keeping everyone from Nixon. Well, I mean the problem wasn't having a chief of staff, it was having Haldeman. And so he wanted to be his own chief of staff for the first two years, meaning there was not traffic cop, there was nobody to set priorities, there was no one to combine politics and policy. That was a huge mistake.

Again, an anecdote. Ford becomes president, accidental president with Nixon's resignation. He's a congressman for 25 years. He doesn't know anything about governance either, Michael. And so he doesn't want a chief of staff for the first couple of months. Like he ran his congressional office, just -- it was called spokes of the wheel, five or six top aides, have equal access, no hierarchy.

So Dick Chaney, who I interviewed for the book, tells me the following story. He becomes ultimately the chief of staff. They lose the election to us. As a post election sort of roast of him by his staff and they give him a broken bicycle wheel with the spokes broken, saying this is what happens when you take -- and he leaves it on Ham Jordan's desk, with a note saying don't take this spokes of the wheel, get a chief of staff. We didn't.

So that was a huge organizational problem and I think was responsible for the lack of priorities, for throwing so much on the table that when we won a lot it always paled in comparison. I mean a president has a chance in our divided system. I mean we had a congress that was two-thirds democratic. To get two or three things done, not ten done. And when you throw ten things out and you get two or three things

done, it looks like you've lost on seven or eight.

MR. GALSTON: Yes, I'm going to take a question here, a question here, and then I'm going to move back to the middle of the room.

Yes, sir.

MR. TATE: My name is Dan Tate. I worked with Stuart in the Carter White House. Stuart, your book is over 900 pages long.

MR. EIZENSTAT: No, 898. (Laughter) It's the indexes and the rest that are --

MR. TATE: For a fellow from Georgia who moves his lips when he reads, that's a lot of reading. How much did you have to cut out of your original manuscript? (Laughter)

MR. EIZENSTAT: That's a good question. The first is the book is organized thematically. So if what you're interested in is the Middle East, you can just read the four Middle East chapters. If you're interested in the economy, you can read those. So you don't have to read -- but, having said that, we cut out 250,000 words, which will be available for historians ultimately.

MR. TATE: It will be?

MR. EIZENSTAT: Yes.

MR. TATE: That's the important thing because, as a --

MR. EIZENSTAT: In fact, everybody who says why am I not in the book, I say well it was in the other 250,000 words. (Laughter)

MR. EIZENSTAT: My editor made me excise you, right. There's a question right back here, and then I'm going to back to the --

QUESTIONER: Gerard Schnekelson, the Washington liaison to Global Special Operations Command Forces Foundation. A question, you sort of alluded to it

when you talked about the guidance that the Shah was getting, coming from three different directions. He was getting it from the ambassador, he was getting it from the four star in Europe -- my old boss, Bill McRaven, Admiral McRaven, who led the successful operation against Bin Laden, one of his key things is we can surge forces but we can't surge trust. And the concern I think that Wyche Fowler has also alluded with his close relationship with the Saudis, is their concerns are you going to pull the plug on us, I can pull the plug on the Shah. Like we did Mumbarak. Even though he had his faults, we pulled the plug on him. What we did to the Vietnamese, that we pulled the logistics plug on them. And these countries around the world, can we really trust you to be there when the sun comes up.

MR. EIZENSTAT: So it's a very good question. And my feeling is we did not pull the plug n the Shah. I mean I think the shah lost Iran, not Jimmy Carter. Now, again, could there have been clearer signals? Yes. But at the end of the day he simply had lost the support of the public segments. And here is a military man. The Shah had no joint command. He kept each military service separate because he was afraid if they got together they might depose him.

And then with the hostage situation, this is really again high drama. So in February of '70, just after Khomeini comes in, there's a first effort to breach our embassy. And we go to the Iranian government, it was the Khomeini government but with a basically secular -- Bazargan and so forth, prime minister, and they get the students out immediately. So Carter thought, okay, well, maybe this will happen if it happens a second time. But then when we finally found out that the Shah is in fact suffering from cancer, he goes into exile, he wants medical treatment, he wants to come to the United States. And there's a classic meeting in which every single advisor, even Vance at the end, who was a holdout saying no, Mondale who said no and then reversed

himself -- Carter is the last holdout and he says to everyone, if I admit the Shah what happens if they storm our embassy again. He felt that this was going to be a result of it. Why? Because for the Iranians, having the Shah back in the U.S. was a replay of 1953 when we put the Shah back in.

MR. GALSTON: Right. So I'll --

MR. EIZENSTAT: And they, the Iranians, said -- the government, let one of our doctors examine him to see if he really is suffering from incurable cancer and we said no. We let our medical reports do that. I think that could have made a difference perhaps.

MR. GALSTON: Well, in this connection, I'll put to you in question in public the question that I put to you in private, if the President has such a strong sense of the possible consequences of admitting the Shah into the country, why not withdraw our personnel before doing that?

MR. EIZENSTAT: Okay. So this was a very good question. And if you look at what happened in Lebanon under the Reagan Administration when 241 marines were killed and Reggie Bartholomew was then our ambassador and he's almost killed in a separate blast a couple of days afterward, and Reagan withdraws all the personnel. So the question is, could we have allowed the Shah in but emptied the embassy. And the answer is it's easier said than done. Why wasn't that done? Because we still had hope that -- now, remember, we have not yet been taken hostage -- we still had the hope we could work with the hope we could work with the civilian government. Why? Because we had billions of dollars of military assistance waiting in warehouses to be sent to them, and because we thought we could establish a relationship. We did not know -- it's 20/20 hindsight that as is the case today, that the supreme decision maker is the Ayatollah. We didn't know that. We thought, okay, he's going to be a sort of symbolic leader. The

people we're dealing with, the prime minister, the foreign minister Yazdi, who were reasonable people, and we will therefore rebuild a post Shah relationship. It won't be the same, but it won't be a disaster.

It really is 20/20 hindsight to say well, you should have known the Shah was going to be the same person. What happens after the hostages are finally taken, the prime minister does the same thing he did in February, he orders the police to evacuate, and Khomeini says, this time I'm going to back the students because his own power base at that time was shaky. He was told by his son, if you don't go with the radical students, you could lose out. And so what happens, the prime minister and the foreign minister resign because they can't get the police to get the radical students out.

MR. GALSTON: Well, it is somehow appropriate that we have to end this session on a question that bedeviled us 40 years ago and still does.

After the formal end of this session, Ambassador Eizenstat has graciously consented to remain behind to sign copies of his book. But before that happens, please join me in thanking someone who has witnessed history and also made it. (Applause)

MR. EIZENSTAT: Thank you very much. I'll be glad to sign books and talk to you afterward.

MR. GALSTON: Absolutely.

MR. EIZENSTAT: Thank you.

MR. GALSTON: Thank you.

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