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“World Affairs Forum”

Forest Amsden, Rebecca Bell, David Burrington, George Montgomery, and Carl Stern
Portland State University
January 24, 1974

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FOREST AMSDEN: Good evening. Thank you very much for coming. My name is Forest Amsden, KGW-TV, we're most pleased that you came out on this rainy evening to join the National Broadcasting Company and KGW-TV and the King Broadcasting Company, in this world affairs forum featuring four outstanding NBC news correspondents. The format will be that each of the correspondents in turn will speak about their particular area of news coverage for several minutes. Each of you should have been given a small card when you came in to write questions on that occur to you as the initial presentations occur. After all of the initial presentations, we'll recess for about five minutes and leave the podium for five minutes while the cards are being passed to the aisles and picked up by ushers. Then we'll come back on and try to answer as many of the questions as we can until either the correspondents or you get tired of it.

Our first speaker is Rebecca Bell, NBC News correspondent based in Chicago. You will be unable to detect it in her speech, but she was born and raised in Vicksburg, Mississippi. She was a graduate of Cornell in 1962 and was preparing to start law school that autumn, but took a summer replacement reporter's job on WSDU-TV in New Orleans, and has never gotten near a law school in that sense because she fell in love with reporting. She has held television reporting jobs in Philadelphia, Cleveland, Washington D.C., and in New York City before becoming an NBC correspondent a year ago this month. She is based in Chicago. She keeps two suitcases constantly packed: one at home and one at the office, because she spends most of her time on airplanes flying anywhere from Denver to Russia to cover world events. Farm riots, farm news, riots, or what have you. Rebecca Bell.

[applause]

REBECCA BELL: They've asked me to talk a little bit tonight about the mood of the country. As far as I am based in Chicago I'm not there very much, but a couple of weeks ago when I was there, there was something that happened that I thought bore a little bit on the mood of the country. We have a gentleman in Chicago you may have heard of named Richard Daley. [laughter] Mr. Daley has a couple of young sons starting out in life, and it seems that his two sons went into the insurance business. There was a bit of a flap because the Better Government Association discovered that the major share of the city's business in insurance was going to the firms where Mayor Daley's sons were newly employed. There was a bit of a flap about it and a scandal, and why were thousands and thousands of city dollars going to the sons of Mayor Daley. He was asked about this rather quickly by some reporters at a press conference, and he answered immediately when he was asked, "What about this and your sons?" and the mayor said, "Well, if a man can't help his sons, what can he do?" [laughter]

The point being that the answer was prompt and straightforward. In this country, there have been a lot of questions asked of the national administration, and most of them are still unanswered, and each day it seems there are more questions asked. There was a cartoon in the *New Yorker* a couple of weeks ago that pointed out kind of a serious problem. It showed a living room scene, the television set was on for the 5:30 news, and there was a family gathered around: Mom, Dad, and the kids and a cat. As soon as the announcer on the TV screen said, "And now for today's news," the entire family dropped to the floor and hid behind the couch waiting for the latest crisis. [laughter] ...Because we seem to have become, in the past year, a crisis-oriented society. We had a meat crisis. We had a constitutional crisis when our law and order Vice President turned out to have to leave office because he had flagrantly violated the law. We had the Watergate crisis that is still with us, and now, of course, we have an energy crisis, which I'm sure you in this state are more familiar with than most.

And all of this is very difficult to absorb. If I had to use one word to describe the mood of the American people right now, I guess it would have to be uncertainty. People are skeptical of the energy crisis, whether it's real or contrived. They want to know how much of an impact it's going to have on their way of life. People are concerned about the leadership of this country. They want to know if the President has become so shackled by Watergate that he can no longer lead. People are concerned about the cost of living. They want to know if there's ever a chance that it will stabilize.

You all know. You pick up a newspaper or watch TV. You wake up one morning and the Bakers' Association tells us by the end of the year we may be paying a dollar a loaf of bread, this while

I'm told you can get bread in Moscow for twenty-three cents a loaf. You wake up one morning and gasoline that you used to pay thirty-nine cents a gallon for is now sixty, seventy cents in many parts of the country if you can get it. Make no mistake about it, we do have an energy problem now, and obviously you know it better than most people in this country. First, you had the electrical problem, now you have the gasoline problem. I saw on the local news this evening the automobile association here is saying that forty-one percent of the gasoline stations in Oregon will be out of gas by the end of the month. Before the end of the month, rather.

So there is a problem, and whether we believe it evolved or was contrived, it exists. There are now, at last count, about four Congressional committees and the Federal Trade Commission trying to find out the answer to just that question. But it seems, I think the best I can gather, the problem is twofold. Number one, there is a shortage problem. In some places, it's inconvenience, and some places it's serious. And secondly, and perhaps more important, is the price problem.

The cost of imported crude oil has quadrupled in the past year, and what that means is that the cost of just about everything that uses energy is going up. It only follows inevitably that if it costs more to make steel, automobiles cost more. If it costs more to fuel a tractor, wheat costs more, bread costs more. And these prices are passed on. They're now predicting that in '74, inflation will become worse. As [...] put it, it's going to become as familiar to Americans as John Wayne, because it's going to continue and it's going to intensify. Food prices for example, as you all know, went up 20 percent in '73, and they're going up even more in '74. If we get back to the price of bread a bit, the Bakeries' Association is saying it's going up to about a dollar a loaf. This is an exaggeration, it will never go that far. Mr. Nixon can't allow that kind of thing to happen, but bread will go up about ten to fifteen percent. One of the problems is that you have granaries and wheat obviously in this state and you're very familiar with it, that we've sold so much of our wheat abroad, that now we face a problem of possible shortages. We're being reassured about this constantly. The agriculture department is telling us that the various countries we've sold wheat to will take late delivery, and I understand now that the agriculture department is negotiating with Canada to buy wheat to stave off any possible shortage, so we wouldn't face the prospect of a dollar a loaf bread. But bread will be higher, and cattlemen are now telling us to expect a shortfall of beef in the first half of this year, which means we'll go through that cycle again, of beef prices going on.

So these are just a couple of examples of the cost of living, and I'm sure you're just as familiar with them as we are who report on them. Plus, we all know we have a problem with a lack of confidence in the administration and this lack of confidence has spread through the business community. Six months ago, or so, the business community was saying if Mr. Nixon were to be

impeached or resigned, that it would mean economic disaster in this country. Now some of them are saying that it would mean the Dow Jones average would go up a hundred points.

[laughter] They are not joking, some of them, they mean it seriously.

But in spite of all of the problems, the energy problem, inflation, the shortages, the credibility gap, I still see room for optimism. We must remember, of course, that we're not fighting a war this year. The value of the American dollar is much higher now than it was in seventy-three.

Consumer spending is up. Researches are telling us that the energy crisis will become an energy problem as we find various partial solutions to the situation. I guess what I'm saying is this, that we do face severe problems in '74, but basically we're a very strong nation with rich natural resources, and given any kind of coherent leadership from Washington, the people of this country will find ways to cope with those problems. Thank you.

[applause]

AMSDEN: Thank you, Miss Bell. David Burrington is a native of Rapid City, South Dakota, and he holds bachelor's and master's degrees from the University of Minnesota, and also spent a year at the Sorbonne doing whatever a Rapid City boy does at the Sorbonne. [laughter] He became an NBC...

DAVID BURRINGTON: I'll never tell. [laughter]

AMSDEN: He became an NBC News correspondent in 1966 and his first major assignment was a long tour of duty covering combat in the Vietnamese war. Since then, he's been based in a number of foreign fields, and since 1971, has been NBC's correspondent in Tel Aviv. When he was here four years ago, David Burrington was, when he came to a similar panel about four years ago, he was fresh from the battlefields of Vietnam, and tonight he is fresh from the battlefields of the most recent Mideast war. David Burrington.

[applause]

BURRINGTON: I feel fresh from the battlefields of the energy crisis. Now I know what it's all about. This is the first time we ever had to bicycle over to an affair like this. [laughter] Last night we were in Seattle at the University of Washington, and I was very impressed with the interest and the depth of insight that the students there showed in regards to the Middle East crisis. Walking up to the auditorium we saw some graffiti on the wall in capital letters that said "Support Israel," and scribbled underneath was "Why, does it have varicose veins?" [laughter] Well, in fact, Israel is suffering from varicose veins, among other things. Its image, its dashing image of being able to somehow snatch victory from the jaws of defeat has been reversed. In

fact, an officer there said to me, shortly after the October war had come to an end, “We’ve managed to snatch defeat from the jaws of victory.” But that image has gone down... it has been difficult to tarnish, and to illustrate that, I’d like to you a story that happened during the days of the October war when we were satelliting from Tel Aviv every night. We were so exhausted that we frankly, for geographical reasons, and the fact that we were so tired, it was very difficult to come up with fresh stories for the *Today Show* in the morning. We would satellite every day for the *Today Show* too, but there really was very little new material, especially, since to get new material meant driving six hours to the Sinai and six hours back. You just couldn’t do that and have material in time for that show.

Nonetheless, the *Today Show* producer would call every morning, promptly about nine o’clock in the morning, saying “What do you have new today?” And the answer usually was, “Sorry, but all we can do is recut what we satellited last night for the nightly news.” The producer in Tel Aviv got more and more irritated at this daily procedure, and one day the *Today Show* producer called and said, “I understand that Golda [Meir] has visited the Israeli troops in Egypt. Do you have any film?” With sarcasm in his voice, the Tel Aviv producer said: “Sure, we have film of Golda parachuting into Egypt.” [laughter] There was silence, and the *Today Show* producer finally said: “Gee, that sounds like a pretty good story.” [laughter]

Well, the producer in Tel Aviv knew he couldn’t let go of this one, so he said, “Sorry, but that film is out of focus and unusable,” and he hung up. Half an hour later he got another call from the *Today Show* producer who said, “You know we’re really short this morning. Couldn’t you salvage just thirty or forty seconds of Golda parachuting into Egypt?” [laughter] And he said, “No. The film is not only out of focus, it’s scratched and it’s really unusable.” He couldn’t believe it. About an hour later he got another call and the producer said, “You know, you are pulling my leg. There’s nothing on AP, there’s nothing on UPI about Golda parachuting into Egypt.” He said, “You *were* kidding, weren’t you?” [laughter]

So you can’t accuse NBC of a credibility gap. Some of our producers will believe anything! The fact is that Golda did not, and will not, and never will parachute into Egypt. In fact, the Israelis are now in the process of withdrawing from Egypt in an agreement that does offer some hope in the Middle East, but there will be a lot of tough bargaining ahead before any kind of real peace is achieved.

To give you some indication of as to how tough that bargaining is going to be, I’d like to relate another story. This one took place when Kissinger was in Jerusalem to finalize the details of the Geneva talks which followed; this was in December. After a late cabinet meeting, he asked if he could have a look at the Western Wall or the Wailing Wall in East Jerusalem, and Golda Meir

said fine, she'd be glad to take him over, and Abba Eban, the foreign minister, came along. When they got there Golda explained to Kissinger that this was the most holy place for the Jewish people, that this was all that remained of the ancient temple of Herod's time, and that if he cared to pray here, his prayer would go directly to God because it was such a holy place. So Kissinger did go to the wall and he prayed for the peace and prosperity of the Jewish people, and the peace and prosperity of the Arab people. He was about to leave when he said, "You know, I'd like to say another prayer," and Golda again reiterated that it was such a holy wall, such a special place that any prayer he gave would go directly into the ear of God. So Kissinger prayed. He said, "God, will you help me convince the Israelis that the only solution to the Middle East crisis is for them to give back every inch of the land that they took in the 1967 war, and to return entirely to the old borders. That's the only way for us to solve this problem." Well, there was silence and finally, Golda turned to Eban and said, "Look at that silly man talking to himself by that old wall." [laughter]

Oh, she is a tough old bird, and they are a stubborn people. I think it's hard to understand, but I think to understand it you have to realize their point of view. When she speaks to Jewish groups either here or in Israel, she is always appalled at the fact that young Jews, especially in America, but throughout the Western world are being assimilated at a very rapid rate. They're losing their Jewishness, they don't care about their religion, and they don't really care much about their history. For those who are idealistic, who do care, Israel is, of course, a beacon. It's a refuge for those who are persecuted, and as far as Mrs. Meir is concerned it's the only thing, Israel is the only thing that holds its people together. So when she holds out for a strategic point or is hard to budge on a piece of ground, it's not only that she is worrying about the survival of a piece of real estate, she is worrying about the survival of a whole people because she feels that if Israel goes, if finally it disappears in this Middle East conflict, that the entire Jewish people will eventually disappear with it.

A lot of Israelis feel the same way and I think you have to understand this to understand their point of view. Nonetheless, Golda Meir aside, and I think she will be aside and will step down sometime this year because she's old and sick, and they desperately need new leadership. The Israelis that I have talked to in Jerusalem before coming back, said off the record, and without being identified—and they would deny it if confronted with it—nonetheless, they said most Israelis, including most government people, are reconciled to giving back most of the territory that was taken in 1967. What they will demand... Most if not all. What they will demand in return will be wide areas of that are demilitarized, so that if another attack should come, as it came on October 6th, that they would have some warning, therefore some time to prepare.

Secondly, that they be supplied by the United States with the very latest arms and in large quantities, so that if an attack came they could hope to defend themselves. Now, they are pessimistic as to what's going to happen following this pullback. Perhaps too pessimistic. But let me tell you the scenario that one hears in Jerusalem, and it goes like this. They have agreed, though it hasn't been widely reported, to pull back further than the passes that are behind the Suez canal. When that pullback will come exactly is not known, but there will be another pullback. And there will be pullbacks following that. There will be a progressive withdrawal towards those old borders. This is the scenario I get. Each pullback will be tied to some form of *quid pro quo*. In return, they will demand, for example, passage through the Suez canal. Then some sort of cultural and economic exchange with Egypt. Finally, the biggest prize of all, which will be diplomatic recognition and a feeling that they had a real place in the Middle East community.

Their fear is that somewhere along the line this is going to bog down. That they will say, okay, we'll pullback another 50 kilometers in exchange for some demand, and that Egypt for whatever reason will say no, sorry, you pull back, but we aren't giving in on that. When this point is reached, if it's reached, it would mean a new stalemate, and from the Israeli point of view, probably a new war of attrition which would probably break out on both fronts. It would require the Israelis again to mobilize if, in fact, they do de-mobilize, which would bleed the country economically. They see this scenario as leading finally, ultimately to another Middle Eastern war. This is what they are preparing for in Israel, rightly or wrongly. You can expect there very soon I think a devaluation, a new austerity that will make luxury goods very scarce, and an effort to put the people back in that spartan frame of mind that they had in 1948 when the country was formed. Now whether or not this is a true picture, and it may be, as I said, too pessimistic, this is what they are preparing for because as far as Israel is concerned, this latest phase is nothing but a new phase in their constant effort to survive. Thank you.

[applause]

AMSDEN: Thank you, David. Our next correspondent, George Montgomery, is originally from Cleveland, Ohio, and attended Columbia University before the Second World War called him to military duty. Following the war, he worked for a number of United States newspapers before joining Reuters, the famous British wire service, in London 16 years ago. For the past ten years, he has been an NBC correspondent in London covering British affairs, and flying throughout the world to cover many other stories, such as the formation of Bangladesh and the Egyptian side of the 1967 six-day war. Following that war, he was interned for his labors by the Egyptians and deported along with other Western correspondents. George Montgomery.

[applause]

GEORGE MONTGOMERY: Well, David Burrington has just been talking about Israel. Somebody said in England the other day that the Israelis, with all their energy, ought to take over Britain, which is in a bit of a mess these days, having an energy crisis which goes back about 25 years or more back to the end of the Second World War. And in connection with the energy crisis, of course, we have the British sort of self-induced psychological energy crisis, we might say. We have the 3 day week. So you'll be relieved to hear that I've thrown away two-fifths of my speech. [laughter] I've thrown away the bits that deal with the nuts and bolts of the current British crisis, because that's available to you on television, newspapers, news magazines, and all the rest of it. What I'd like to talk about is the background of the crisis.

I view the crisis as basically the outcome of bad industrial relations in Britain ever since the Second World War and very often before. And I'd like to look at some of the basic reasons. I think one basic problem in Britain is the nature of the country as a very ancient, and very conservative society. I feel that this conservatism makes for a very pleasant country, certainly a very lovely and delightful country in many ways, but a country with no strong desire to solve the problems or change anything very much. The British prefer, as we often say and they often say, to muddle through. This means really that they've been putting the problems of industrial relations under the rug, and now that rug is very very bumpy with problems, some of them made out of coal and coal miners. And Britain has tripped over some of these bumps and may end up falling into what many people fear will be a severe depression.

Britain's second basic problem in my opinion is class, another aspect of being an old and conservative society. Class divisions are very strong there despite the denials you will often get of this fact from many British people. Workers' accents, as we all know, are different than bosses' accents. Bernard Shaw, I think it was, once said an Englishman can never open his mouth without another Englishman hating him for the way he speaks. [laughter] The workers often feel that their class origins keep them from getting ahead in the world. They are bitter, very often, and they dislike and mistrust what they call the toffee-nosed or snobbish upper-middle and upper-class people running industry, and Mr. Edward Heath's Tory government. This feeling is mutual. Often the two sides seem unable to talk rationally in what many people regard as a split society. Class feelings seem to get in the way. Stubborn disputes, like the current miners' case built around inflation as the pretext and having other root causes, develop and hurt everybody.

The third problem in my view stems from Britain's role as the birthplace of the industrial revolution. In the past, workers were badly exploited in the country, and I think most people,

capitalists and everybody else, admit this today. The working class developed grievances that it's never completely lost. These grievances have been handed down from father to son like sort of hair shirt, heirlooms. And even today many workers, even though they are not very badly off, but by British standards, they still have these grievances against bosses and these grievances again hamper the dialogue between management and labor. In the 19th century and the early 20th century, the workers developed unions and a British Labor Party which along European lines advocated socialism. Instead of the unions wanting a bigger slice of the capitalist cake, they often wanted, along with their Labor Party, to nationalize the bakery.

The fourth problem, and this is one mentioned by many Britons themselves quite disparagingly, is quite simply laziness. The empire helped breed it in the view of many people, especially among the managerial class. They could afford to act like aristocrats and not work too hard or too efficiently, because the empire provided safe, politically protected markets against the competing goods of other nations. The empire is gone today, but too many older British businessmen don't seem to know it yet. Laziness is not restricted to them. In the old days, and in some cases even now, workers got second rate money, very second rate money. In return, the deal seemed to be, sort of an unspoken thing, second rate effort in return for this second rate money. The habit of second rate effort hangs on. We have it with us today. I know of workers who come on to a job and are warned by the old-timers to stop doing so much. Do you want to ruin it for the rest of us? That's the way the refrain goes, slow down. It's sort of *Dolce Vita* with tea.

In addition, due to featherbedding and inefficiency plus low capital investment, there was full employment for years. Nobody ran scared on the shop floor, or really in the board room. People worked slowly so they could have plenty of overtime and other evil built into the system. Welfare state benefits cushioned the shock of going on strike. I have met workers, who due to welfare state benefits—and I'm not making a speech against the welfare state, I'm in favor of it. But I've known workers, in Britain, who because of their bad pay and because of welfare state benefits and income tax rebates while on strike, were better off on strike than working. Which I think is a sad commentary on wages in Britain that some people have.

Anyway, they've developed, in many areas of society, the idea that the material standard of living must be an ever-expanding one without the productive processes working any better, any more efficiently, or without people working any harder. The result, of course, is inflation and the Tory government's rather patchy and really unsuccessful and inept efforts to slow down this inflation. Hence the crunch with the miners and the pressure, the inflationary pressure of rising prices making more and more workers dissatisfied and wanting more and more wage increases. So as far as I can see, the three-day week crisis is simply an unusually severe result of

what's been going on for years in Britain. There's nothing very mysterious about it. You have a conservative people divided by class antagonisms and historic grievances, often unwilling and unable to solve their industrial relations problems. Often seemingly unable to see that they have problems. Recently when the three-day week started, the head of the amalgamated engineering workers' union in Britain said that as soon as we get some overtime back to ban, we shall ban it so that we can get a wage increase, so we can get on the employers. But he said we're not gonna ban overtime now because there isn't any overtime. Very, very forward-thinking. [laughter]

Belatedly, the present Tory government has been trying to solve some of the problems in the economy and in the society, taking Britain into the common market. Again, something which the conservatism or insularity, if you will, of many of the British makes them resent common market membership. All and all, many observers regard the government as inept and the emotional climate as adverse, even though there are many, many changes for the better in British society. Many people are waking up to some of the problems that I have mentioned, but unfortunately, mental attitudes change very slowly, and I think these things will hang on long after this present crisis has been resolved.

But it would be the biggest mistake in the world to sell the British short. That would be very, very silly. A number of people have done it, Adolf Hitler was one of them, and before him, there was an interesting gentleman in Britain, the pre-war fascist leader Oswald Mosley. Who, in about 1938, held a big rally in London at a hall, and he came out in his black shirt in the spotlight, dressed as a true fascist, and they rolled the drums and he stood there in the spotlight with his hand upraised. It was a terribly dramatic moment, there stood Oswald, Sir Oswald Mosley the great fascist, except that something went wrong. There was a little Cockney lady down in the front row, and she looked and she said, "Oh yes, Oswald, you may leave the room now, dear." [laughter]

I'd like to say a word about Northern Ireland. I'm afraid in my opinion, once more we find that the British, and particularly British politicians, since Ireland is a real deathtrap for British politicians, did virtually nothing for 50 years in Northern Ireland. Letting the Protestant majority make second class citizens out of the Catholics. Finally, after almost a thousand deaths over the last four years, the British have set up a fair system of Protestant-Catholic power-sharing in the Ulster provincial government. For the first time, Catholics have some say in the way their provincial government is run. But the British allowed the Protestant politicians to have it their own way for so long, that many of them won't accept this new fair deal and are out to wreck it, and in the next few months may very well succeed in doing so. Northern Ireland is one of the cruelest places that I've ever worked in, and many cruel jokes come out of it. But I'd like to end

one story which is not a joke, it's a true story, unfortunately, and it involves a very decent trade union leader in Belfast who came out with a public statement against intimidation, which is a constant feature of life in Northern Ireland. He got a phone call late one night and the always anonymous voice on the other end of the telephone said, you've gotta quit talking about all this intimidation, and he said "Why?" There isn't any intimidation. And he said, "Oh yes there is," and the anonymous voice said, "No, there isn't any intimidation, and if you keep on talking about intimidation, we're gonna have to burn you out." Thank you.

[applause]

AMSDEN: Thank you, George. Carl Stern is a Long Islander who has high credits for both journalism and law. He is an attorney admitted to practice in both Washington D.C. and in the state of Ohio. He began his journalism career in radio, in Cleveland. His primary NBC correspondent duties have been covering nation-shaking trials, including in recent years Watergate, the Berragins' cases, the trials of Sam Shepard, James Hoffa, Mohammed Ali, Clay Shaw, and Arthur Bremmer. We have seen him on NBC most frequently in the last year in Watergate-related court cases and congressional hearings. Carl Stern.

[applause]

CARL STERN: Thank you. Becky talked a little bit about municipal corruption at the beginning of her speech, and I'm gonna have to talk about corruption at a somewhat higher level. We saw a story this morning, however, in the Seattle paper, which I thought was delightful. Apparently a paper somewhere had printed a story that as to their town, half the city councilmen were corrupt. And the city council took a dim view of that and insisted on a retraction, and so the paper printed the following headline, *Half the city councilmen are not corrupt*. [laughter]

On the morning of June 17th, 1972, the president's deputy campaign director Jeb Magruder telephoned campaign coordinator Robert Mardian and said, "Bob, we seem to have a slight PR problem." [laughter] That was the beginning of Watergate. The end of Watergate is nowhere in sight. The Teapot Dome scandal ran for more than 6 years and by comparison, that matter was puny. Only 3 persons were convicted of anything. Compare that to the current situation. So far already 9 persons have been sent to prison, including two former White House aides. Four more former top officials have pleaded guilty to charges, and just about everyone else who was close to the president has been notified that he or she is the target of a criminal investigation. Two former cabinet members have been indicted. A third is in danger of being indicted. The former White House number three man has been indicted. All told, the Watergate casualty list adds up to at least 54 persons by my count, and that does not take into account such minor

incidental events of the last years. The departures of Cox, Richardson, and Ruckleshaus, the Agnew case, and what may turn out to be the biggest case of them all, the possible impeachment. Just about all the lawyers in Washington are tied up these days, half of them as counsel and the other half as defendants. [laughter]

Yet, a curious thing has happened which I think defies the conventional wisdom. Now, the mail that I get suggests no debasement of our body politic or new cynicism or a lack of moral indignation. On the other hand, to the contrary, I find that people have not lowered their expectations, the standards they demand of public office holders; but rather they have seemed to use Watergate to reaffirm and to redefine basic standards. For those of us who cover Watergate as a day-to-day matter, there's something exhilarating, almost cleansing about it.

Now I'm not talking about cleaning up petty dishonesty. The administration's problems, as you well know, were not in graft or traditional corruption, but the corruption of power and privilege. To impound openly, to bomb secretly, to fire the independent prosecutor, to defy subpoenas. Watergate did restore the rule of law to the very front of our daily consciousness. Made it something more than just a slogan and that the local bar association runs in these public service announcements on law day each year. We don't believe in a system of unchecked power. I think that's clear. Perhaps the year's most stirring moment for me, the year 1973, was in the summer, in Judge Sirica's courtroom, when the grand jurors, most of them Black, all of them ordinary people—I recall only one I think even had a suit on—stood up one-by-one and affirmed that it was their command to the president of the United States that he respond to their subpoena.

Now the president might have overcome such problems if he had a sufficient store of credit with the public to draw upon, but he did not. We were treated to 3 versions of how the president financed his San Clemente property, 4 versions of the Howard Hughes donation. In 5 years we got 4 different figures on as simple a matter as to how much the president got for the sale of his Park Avenue apartment. As to how much public money was spent on the presidential properties, you may recall the first figure was \$39,000. Within one month the figure had been twice revised under steady questioning, and had risen to one and a third million dollars. Two months after that, after a congressional committee subpoenaed GSA records, the figure was finally set at 10,200,000 dollars. At the Disney World speech, newsmen counted up 15 misstatements in the president's responses to 17 questions. Add to such matters such assorted surprises as nonexistent tapes, hums, sinister forces, tax contrivances, and so on, and it's not hard to see that Mr. Nixon did not have a strong base of believability on which to defend and justify the major new assertions of power and privilege that he was making.

If 1973 was a year of action, 1974 is going to be a year of reaction. A series of major indictments are coming in the next month or two. The joint economic committee will report, as well as internal revenue. The Senate Watergate committee is to complete its work. The House judiciary committee will have to reach a judgment soon on the impeachment question. George Meany has suggested 19 grounds for the president's impeachment. Not to be outdone, the ACLU came up with 28. [laughter] I can report to you tonight that the present title holder in this new derby is President Johnson's former counsel Joseph Califano, who in a speech to the federal bar association and was able to recite and to outline 38 reasons.

At the risk of oversimplifying, I don't think one has to look very far or to look to very complicated formulas to view the impeachment question. I think it boils down simply to this, and forgive me if I put it in somewhat lawyer-like terms, did the president break the contract that he has with the American people, by virtue of his oath of office, to support and defend the Constitution, and to take care that the laws are faithfully executed? I can't tell you on this matter where the bottom line will be, to use the current White House idiom, but Jeb Magruder and Bob Mardian would be the first to tell you that Watergate turned out to be far more than a PR problem. Thank you.

[applause]

AMSDEN: Thank you very much, Carl. Correspondents are gonna take about a five-minute break now to have a smoke, and while you write out your questions; pass them to the aisles and they'll be picked up. We'll be right back, thank you.

[applause]

[some chatter off mic]

AMSDEN: Being unaccustomed to public speaking, I frequently forget to make announcements that I'm supposed to make. You're a fifth short on your number of correspondents tonight. Tom Stridehorse, a Latin American correspondent for NBC, was supposed to be here, and was advertised as going to be here, and he was on the early part of the tour, but was called away. He's on his way to Cuba. I think he's in Mexico City tonight on his way to Cuba. The president of NBC, Julian Goodman, ran out of cigars. [laughter] But the other correspondents each talked a fifth longer on the earlier presentations and that filled it up. No, Mr. Stridehorse has been trying to get into Cuba for years, and his visa came through completely unexpectedly early this week and he thought he'd better get there before they withdrew it.

The first question from the audience is directed both Carl Stern and Rebecca Bell, and the question is, if and when Gerald Ford should become president, do you think he will be effective. We'll ask Ms. Bell to begin.

[laughter]

BELL: Carl, covering the Washington beat, is more familiar with the situation. [laughter] I think I'll give that to you Carl.

STERN: Can you imagine if some politician tried to duck her question that way? She'd be all over.

BELL: That's why it's so much more fun to be a reporter than a politician. We ask the questions, we don't have to answer usually.

STERN: This buck keeps passing back and forth in front of me.

AMSDEN: Would you like to answer?

STERN: I'll give it a stab. I think you have to divide the question into domestic and foreign matters. As to domestic matters, I think the vice president would be effective, because I think he's committed to open government. And I think if we've learned—or appears to be—one thing from Watergate and related natural disasters, it's been that the vice, the biggest vice in government is excessive secrecy. So I'm optimistic on that score with respect to Mr. Ford. As to foreign policy, an odd thing has sort of happened, I'm not sure that it really worked in Mr. Nixon's interest, by letting Dr. Kissinger roam around in this jet plane all over the world arriving at somewhat inventive solutions to the world's problems. He has succeeded in suggesting, in a way, that Dr. Kissinger is severable from whoever sits in the executive mansion. Consequently, we assume and even have some reason to believe from recent news reports that Dr. Kissinger would remain on no matter who the president might be. Therefore, I think we have no reason to fear about our foreign policy, if you happen to be a fan of Dr. Kissinger. So dividing it up that way, for both reasons, I would say that I have no reason to believe that Gerald Ford would not be an effective president.

BELL: If I might add just one postscript. We were talking about this earlier today, and the only thing that I find disconcerting right now is Mr. Ford in his Atlantic City speech and in a statement he made a couple of days ago, seems to be following the pattern of Mr. Agnew in that he is defending the administration very strongly, and being extremely critical of "theys" that are attacking Mr. Nixon. This was his Atlantic City speech a couple of weeks ago, but just a

couple of days ago, Mr. Ford said that he was convinced of the president's innocence and that the president made available to him a transcript that would prove that innocence, but he hadn't had time to read the transcript. [laughter] This was his statement, and what concerns me is that he would publicly defend anybody and say he was convinced before reading the evidence. I find it disconcerting.

MONTGOMERY: I wonder, could I ask Carl a.... [interrupted by applause] what in the House of Commons they call a supplementary question. Was that a Freudian slip, when you almost referred to Gerald Ford as president?

STERN: No. [laughter]

MONTGOMERY: Secondly, in a more serious way, in Europe, by many people, Mr. Ford is regarded as a non-entity. Not in the sense of not being known, but as a man who seems to have given no evidence of any great ability. [audience calls for louder volume] How is that, is that okay? I say by many people in Western Europe, Mr. Ford is regarded as a non-entity, not in the sense of not being known, but as a man who has demonstrated no great evidence of any tremendous ability.

STERN: Well, I think that might be refreshing. [laughter] We've had people of tremendous intellect, well at least natural or native intelligence. I think Mr. Nixon is a highly intelligent man, but... and also we might say the same of President Johnson, former President Johnson, but these people have turned out to be highly ambitious, quite shrewd, and perhaps a little bit too smart for our own good. I'm not concerned about that. If Gerald Ford has managed to survive 25 years of national politics, I think he can manage to find his way around the White House. [laughter]

AMSDEN: A question for David Burrington. Are the Arabs really as united as the oil crunch seems to make them? How soon might there be a relaxing of the embargo?

BURRINGTON: Two questions. I'm tempted to say I don't know, but in an occasion similar to this some time ago, an NBC correspondent answered a question saying "I don't know" and he got a telegram the next day from the president of NBC saying, "You are not paid not to know." [laughter] I would say the degree of unity between the Arab countries is very fragile indeed. The only thing they really all agree on is that their dislike of Israel and their wish that it would go away. Egypt seems to be more reconciled now to the acceptance of a Jewish state in the Middle East, and at the moment President Sadat in fact has been traveling around trying to sell his point of view to the other Arab countries, more concretely explain why he signed this

agreement, the cease-fire agreement which permitted the Israelis to pull back across the canal which will ultimately, apparently result in the reopening of the Suez canal.

Now on other issues, the Arabs, for decades, for hundreds of years, have been at each other's throats. They have tried the oil boycott before and it didn't work. It was a miserable failure. They have tried to unify their countries and that hasn't worked. What people fail to realize is that when we say "the Arabs" and lump all of these countries together, we are really talking about many different peoples who have two things in common. One is their religion, their Muslim religion, and the other is their language, even though there are many dialects. But before Nasser, what you have to realize is that the Egyptians never considered themselves Arabs. They considered themselves superior to the Arabs, and it was only when Nasser finally decided he wanted to be the leader, that it was better to be the leader of the Arabs than simply the leader of the Egyptians, and he decided that the Egyptians were in fact Arabs. So there are these ancient conflicts, and they break out again and again; we've seen Tunisia and Libya make an effort to join hands that seems already to have gone astray.

On the issue of Israel, on the issue of oil, they seem to have finally found some form of unity. I think it's historic that they have joined hands, finally, on this issue. The Russians have been encouraging them for years to finally join together on the oil issue, and they finally have and it's proved to be extremely successful. It would seem that in the future, because this has been a success, we can expect on these issues where they have a common interest, they will work more and more closely together. As far as relaxing the oil boycott, it seems from what the oil ministers have said that they are conscious that they must not go too far to bring the economies of the Western world tumbling down. Therefore, it would appear that they would not go too far either in raising the price of oil—they've gone plenty far, but by too far I mean to the point of actually causing these economies to collapse. Also, there have been indications that they will relieve the oil boycott of the United States and Holland once the Israelis have really made a serious effort to pull back from the Suez canal. But on the other hand, some of the oil ministers say that the Israelis must pull back all the way before they will relax the boycott, and I think only time will really tell exactly how long it's gonna take. I do think that is a temporary phenomenon, that boycott, but the increase in price is what is really going to hurt the Western world, and coping with that is something that will be a very serious problem in the future, as we all know.

AMSDEN: Thank you. A question for Carl Stern. Is there a conspiracy among the news media to get Nixon? [laughter]

STERN: Well, in a word, no. I think if anyone still thinks that Watergate is a media invention by this stage of the game, then there's no possible answer that I could give you that would sink in. No, I think that Mr. Nixon has some difficulties. He came into office at a time when some of us had learned not to be entirely trustful of the things we were told by the White House. I was a reporter in the last 16 months of the Johnson administration working in the White House. Some of us still feel rather badly today that perhaps we didn't do enough back then. If we were told that the light was at the end of the tunnel, we simply went out and wrote stories that the light was at the end of the tunnel. If we were told that the bombing of North Vietnam was surgically precise, we went out and wrote a story that the bombing of North Vietnam was surgically precise. We think to ourselves quite often, perhaps if we had been a little bit more aggressive, perhaps a little bit more questioning, had done our job a little bit better, who knows what savings there could have been in lives and national fortune. So perhaps when Mr. Nixon came in, he did run into a little bit of that buzz saw. That we were determined to do our job better, but I don't see that that's a sin. If the problem is that we're doing our... trying to do our job better then I'll readily confess to that.

AMSDEN: Question for George Montgomery. Aside from the political situation in Northern Ireland, do you feel there is anything in the Irish psychology and character that adds to the problem there? [laughter]

MONTGOMERY: Sometimes a bit too much Guinness on Saturday night. [laughter] But putting it seriously, the Irish character, despite what you might think about the trouble in Northern Ireland, the Irish are normal people responding to a bitter history of English intervention in their country that goes back over 800 years. You have two cultures in Ireland. You have the Irish, Irish Catholics who are nationalists, who want to see a united Ireland. You have the other culture, the other way of looking at life, represented by the people who are known as Protestants. These are the descendants of largely English and Scottish settlers who came as colonists to Northern Ireland. You have these two opposing peoples, really two cultures, and that's the basic problem there. The two cultures really could beautifully complement one another if they could learn to live together, because the Catholics are lyrical and imaginative, and perhaps sometimes not as industrious as everybody might hope, but they have great gifts of imagination. The Protestants in Northern Ireland very often tend to be hard-working, perhaps a little dour, perhaps not as imaginative, but much more efficient. So the two, if they could be brought together, they could found a truly great society there without being grandiloquent.

AMSDEN: Question for Rebecca Bell. Would you comment on the status of newswomen? Are you restricted in assignments and performance of your job because you are a woman?

BELL: Not at all. I think times have changed quite a bit. When I started in the news business, 10 or 11 years ago, I was paid half what the men were paid at the station, because everybody knew that women didn't need very much money. I was expected to work harder than the men to keep the job, but that's changed a great deal. My assignments... NBC hasn't the time or the interest to parcel out special favors to correspondents. If you're a correspondent you're expected to carry your part of the load. When an assignment comes up, whoever is available in the bullpen... I'm based in the Midwest bureau; there are three of us there and whoever is in town gets the next assignment, and they don't waste time trying to suit it to the individual. So, I've covered riots, I've covered floods, I guess somebody might say very un-feminine things, but that's part of being a correspondent and I don't consider myself a woman reporter, I consider myself a reporter and I think NBC does too. [applause]

AMSDEN: There's quite a number of questions asking for speculation on the possibilities of impeachment of the president; in the House, the question's about what is the nose count in the House Judiciary Committee one way or the other, and in the entire Congress, and questions about what effect impeachment would have in the country if it were to occur. I'll ask Carl Stern to begin speculating about the possibilities and the possible effects.

STERN: Well, I don't want to predict. The last political prediction that I made, that I backed up with any money, was that Lyndon Johnson would run again. Let me just say what the situation is now. It looks like the House Judiciary Committee will approve the impeachment resolution and send it to the floor. On the floor itself, that is to say, the full House, I would as of today say because of the experts' report on the 18-minute gap, that the margin has now shifted against the president; not by much, maybe in the neighborhood of 51-49, but it means the president and his people are going to have to swim upstream. They're gonna have to do a little bit of arm twisting and a little bit of work to stop the impeachment of the president. Now, I can't judge at this point whether they're going to be able to be successful, but the main matter that I have to point out to you is that I think it has tilted now against the president. In the Senate, it would require a two-thirds vote to convict the president. That vote is not there today. I'm not at all certain that it will ever be there. I tend to think, simply on the basis of what we know now, that it will not be there, but as you know each day we learn something new. I think once critical pressure point that I could identify for you, and it is a pressure point, is, if in fact the matter goes over to the Senate, there will be considerable pressure brought to bear on the president by senior Republicans to quit, to resign, rather than to take this lengthy bloodletting procedure in the Senate. And that is going to be a very difficult time for the president. That will be crisis 7, 8, 9, and 10 I guess put together. So that is a critical point to watch. Now there was a second part to that question.

AMSDEN: What effect would it have on the country?

STERN: Up until about a month or so ago, I was kinda fearful of the impeachment proceeding, for much the same reasons as I'm sure many of you are. Could the body politic take the trauma and so on, but the more I've thought about it, I'm not sure that's so any longer. I think you have to separate the question of the policy, whether they want to do it as a matter of wisdom, of course, when the question is whether there's evidence that would support an impeachment. I think there's evidence 10 times over as a strictly legal matter. Let's just look to the other side of that question. Do we want to do it as a matter of policy? On that score, I think number 1, the Agnew case showed us certainly that high public officials can be removed almost effortlessly. We're a very mature system. We have a system that functions, that works; so I'm not concerned about that.

Perhaps the thing that... and as I thought about it, it struck me very hard that we're not gonna get Watergate behind us so long as a principal actor in Watergate, a man who was at the center of it—and I'm not saying that he specifically went into the Watergate and committed the burglary and so on—but Mr. Nixon is in there someplace in the Watergate scheme of things. He was not just someone who read about it in the papers. So long as he runs the affairs of 210 million Americans, he's going to be at the center of public interest, he's going to be topical. As details of Watergate unfold in the criminal trials, and in the civil trials yet ahead, they are going to be of daily interest to us. So long as Mr. Nixon occupies center stage running our affairs, and rightly so, if he is the president he should be the subject of daily, constant interest. So as a practical matter what I am suggesting is that we're in for another three years of heavy Watergate seas so long as Mr. Nixon is there, and that may be a reason. I'm not saying I advocate it; I want you to understand that. What I'm saying is in the consideration of this problem, you also have to toss into it now the fact that you're not going to get Watergate behind us so long as Mr. Nixon remains in the White House. I could go on to address the question of Mr. Nixon's role in Watergate, but I don't think that was the question. Did you want me to go into that?

AMSDEN: No.

STERN: Okay. Somebody ask me about that later. [applause]

AMSDEN: Anyone else want to comment? Question for David, although it's really a statement, for David Burrington. The questioner is asking your opinion of this statement: that the Jews

handled the Palestinian Arab, I assume refugee problem, so badly that this resulted in some of their current problems.

BURRINGTON: As a highly biased reporter, I really like an objective question like that. [laughter] Well, neither side has handled the problem of the Palestinians very well. The Arab countries have refused to really try to help the Palestinians because as long as they were there, there was always a problem there, and the basic gut issue of the conflict in the Middle East was alive. The Israelis hoped the Palestinians would go away in a sense that they tried to integrate them, the refugees, into the economy; and actually it made quite a bit of progress in this scheme before this war took place, whereby the area where most of the Palestinian refugees are within the Israeli lines, which is the Gaza strip, were working in Israel—most of them—but making a good wage. And most of the refugee camps had more or less quietly been annexed by the towns which they were near. It was almost as if one day the Israelis could say to the United Nations, there are no refugees, because under your definition they can't be making x amount of money, and they are, and also there are no camps because the camps have been annexed. Well, this scheme, which was rather brilliant from a tactical point of view, worried a lot of the Palestinian leaders because it seemed to be working, but the war brought that to a crashing halt.

Now, there's no question but what they have not come to terms with the Palestinian problem, in fact, they've said that this is a problem that the Arab countries must decide. It is at the core of a final settlement, and what it's going to boil down to eventually is whether or not a Palestinian state will be set up in this area that Israel pulls back from. Whether that area will be turned back to Jordan and the Palestinians integrated into that area, or whether finally, the Palestinian solution—and any time you hear an Arab leader talk about the rights of the Palestinians, he means the rights of the Palestinians to return to their territory in Israel, in other words, the territory that they either fled or pushed out of in 1948—to return to that area and regain their lands. That solution means that Israel would within a very short time become a... have a majority of Arabs in it, and would cease to become a Jewish state. So the Palestinian solution, whenever you hear that phrase by an Arab leader, means the end of a Jewish state in the Middle East. So those are the three possibilities. Neither side has really confronted the problem, and there's gonna be a lot of painful confrontation in the months ahead if there is a real serious effort to solve the conflict there.

AMSDEN: George Montgomery makes it sound as though the effort to keep Britain out of the common market is beneath contempt. Can he for the benefit of this audience try to give the other and negative side of the issue?

MONTGOMERY: Oh, certainly. Incidentally, my own personal view, for what it's worth which is nil, I've always felt that the British wouldn't be too well-off in the market, but would be even worse off out of it due to their geographical position. You know it's the old story, they are part of Europe, even though the *Daily Telegraph* I believe it was once came out with a headline which said "Fog in Channel. Continent cut off." [laughter] But anyway, on the negative side of the picture it's always been said that number 1, that Britain by joining the market was deserting her old friends in the commonwealth, particularly in the white parts of the commonwealth, which... along with India which furnished so many troops for two world wars. They were deserting Caribbean sugar producers by joining the market and raising tariffs against Caribbean sugar and New Zealand lamb and so on and so forth. This sort of thing, these are peripheral arguments, getting to the basic argument, it is said that the financial arrangements for British membership particularly revolving around food would make British membership of the market much too costly. That the result would be that Britain would shift from a policy of cheap food to very expensive food. This is the major argument, and that British payments into the European common market's agricultural fund would also be very damaging, and that Britain would not sufficiently benefit from entering a market of some 250 million people from a market of 50 million. That there wouldn't be sufficient benefit in this, and that Britain would be better to stay out of it; and on the political level the big thing, the big argument against common market membership has always been that Parliament, which I think is a thousand years old basically, that the rights of the so-called mother of parliaments were being surrendered to faceless bureaucrats in Brussels who haven't been elected by anybody at all. There is a certain amount, in my opinion, a certain amount of merit in these arguments, and those are the basic ones.

AMSDEN: I'm gonna ask, I shouldn't do this, but I'm going to go right back to George Montgomery. Do you see the possibility of a real settlement of the Irish question? [laughter] What is it, about 2,000 years now?

MONTGOMERY: Well, maybe not quite that long. That's a hard one, because there are so many intractable things there, and so much emotion involved, so much history, and so many impacted attitudes. I can only guess. I like to be optimistic about it. I can see a possibility, as a guess, in another generation—a generation's about thirty years—you can see the beginnings of a sort of a stalemate out of exhaustion in Northern Ireland. People are tired of being shot at, blown up, and all the rest of it. This has turned a lot of the Catholics off the IRA, and it's turned a lot of the Protestants off some of their similar terror groups. Also, the British have made these moves that I've talked about in my few remarks there. So there's the beginning of something there but it's very, very fragile, but I think there's also the geographical imperative of a united Ireland, and I think it will come. I don't really care if it comes, I think any rational person would just like to see Irish people, no matter under what flag, live happily and without poverty. I think

the settlement will work itself out in about 30 years around a united Ireland in which the two religions, if you want to call it that, let's say the two traditions can make a happy home.

AMSDEN: Question for David Burrington. Please discuss the physical condition of the Suez Canal. Will it be open soon and who will want to use it? [laughter]

BURRINGTON: Physical condition, it's full of junk. Both the Egyptian army and the Israeli army have poured rubble into it to build causeways for their troops. It's blocked by sunken ships and it's full of silt, but still, it has a lot of promise. Egypt feels it can have the canal open in 4 months, that's probably optimistic. I can't imagine how they could get all that junk cleared out in less than 6 months to a year. Now, the canal is now outdated; it can't handle the big supertankers that are sailing the seas today. It can carry smaller tankers that are still economical in terms of supplying oil to Eastern Europe and to the Mediterranean countries. General cargo, it's still profitable for that; and it's especially profitable for the Russian navy, which will use it to send its fleet from the Black Sea down through the Mediterranean, the Suez Canal, the Red Sea into the Indian Ocean, where it's making its influence felt very strongly. So the Suez Canal is still a factor to be reckoned with. There's a lot of talk that a brand new canal will be built once it's open, a separate canal to handle the supertankers, and I think it has a great future and will play a great role in the future of Egypt if, in fact, finally they do get the thing reopened.

AMSDEN: So there's a question for anyone and I don't know who we should give it to. We gave Russia one billion dollars in wheat, why don't we demand oil from her?

BELL: You can demand all you like and you wouldn't get it. You can't compare the two. They paid us for that wheat. Now in retrospect, you may say that we made a poor deal; at the time we made the deal it seemed very good. If you remember back in the Eisenhower years, we had tremendous surpluses of agricultural products, grains of all kinds, and the Nixon administration in diplomatic moves opened up brand new markets in Russia and China for agricultural goods. That gave the farmers of this country one of the best years they ever had. Getting back to the point, can we demand that Russia give us oil? I just don't see putting the two together. It was a business deal, although the government opened up the avenue for the trade; this was private business, private grain companies dealing with Russia. The United States government didn't sell the grain per se, it opened up the trade avenues and made it possible. I don't think you can put the two together at all.

AMSDEN: Can I ask Carl a question? Do you know if there is any evidence of any crookedness in that deal? Are there people that benefited from that wheat deal in a criminal way?

STERN: Well, some evidence, but no proof. [laughter] By the way, I just want to add something to what Becky was saying. This wasn't all just a free enterprise. For example, the Soviet purchase of wheat this calendar year is being helped along by the American taxpayer to the tune of 150 million dollars in credits toward their purchase. We're doing that so that we can pay 49 cents a loaf for bread that's sold on the streets of Moscow made entirely of American wheat for 23 cents a loaf.

AMSDEN: Question for Carl Stern asks for comments on the possibility of indictments being returned this year against the Ohio National Guard and or ex-governor Rhodes in connection with the Kent State affair of 1970.

STERN: When the case was reopened I did talk to some of the investigators on it for the Justice Department. Essentially what they told me, and this may change because it's in front of the grand jury now and who knows what they're getting into, was that the old problem remains the same, that as to the conduct of the National Guardsmen prior to the shooting, you cannot prove, nor is there any evidence of the sense that they had some sort of agreement beforehand to inflict corporal punishment on these kids by shooting them. That's what you would need to sustain a conviction. On the other hand, there is considerable evidence that after the fact, after the shooting, the guardsmen got together and fabricated stories. That's what the grand jury was looking into initially when it reconvened. Consequently, I think there is a strong likelihood of indictments with respect to the crime of making false statements to a federal officer and so on, but I don't know whether there will be any indictments as to the substantive crimes, and I certainly don't think that either of the two matters I just mentioned would possibly lead to a criminal indictment against the governor of the state.

AMSDEN: With this question you will all know you're in the Pacific Northwest. Does Senator Jackson have enough charisma to get the presidential nomination? We have two people covering domestic affairs. Ms. Bell and Mr. Stern. I'll ask Ms. Bell what her opinion of Scoop's charisma might be.

BELL: I don't know how to begin to answer a question like that, because it's asking for a personal judgment about charisma, and I don't think my personal judgment has any more value than the people in this room. I think each of you knows yourself whether he has charisma or not. I think I'd rather pass on that.

STERN: Let me say that in Israel he has tremendous charisma. [laughter] I'd say in Israel he is Mr. Charisma and they'd love to see him as president of the United States, but they don't have much to say about him.

AMSDEN: David Burrington: was the most recent Middle Eastern war fairly reported?

BURRINGTON: It's hard for me to say, because I wasn't on this end watching what was coming in, I was on the other end sending it out from one specific point. The real problem was that in Israel after the first week, during which we were severely limited because they were losing, once they started pushing back the invading armies they were much more willing to let us go to the front lines, and cooperated with us to such a degree that we were able to on the same day come back with two or three stories every night, process them, satellite them to the United States on the very latest satellite equipment. Having every cooperation, having a censor who looked at all the stuff, but the censor was very easygoing. Now, the problem was that at the same time in the Arab countries, with the exception of Jordan, there were no satellite facilities, so the stories were much later. But even more important, it was very, very difficult to get anywhere near the fighting. It was very, very difficult to get information, it was nearly impossible to shoot film. As evidence of this, the NBC correspondent that was in Cairo at this time, Chuck Quinn, I remember seeing him across kilometer 101 on the day that the ceasefire was signed in a state of outrage, waving his hands, jumping up and down, and nearly creating an international incident trying to convince the Egyptians that he should be permitted to pass his film, which he had taken from his side, over to our side so that we could satellite it. Later he said that he had no cooperation, was almost totally prohibited from covering the war from that side of the line. So what you got was a lot of stories coming out of Israel, and very few stories coming out of the Arab world, simply because it was so much more difficult to do stories on the Arab side. I feel this led to an imbalance, but it's not an imbalance of viewpoint, it's a technical imbalance due to whether or not you can cover the story. So far as I know from what I've heard, it was fairly covered with this qualification.

AMSDEN: This isn't a question, but I imagine it's a request of Carl Stern. It says, "If the president were to resign and you find out about it early, would you please call me at..." and there's a telephone number. [laughter; applause] "...I would like to invest in the stock market before it goes up a hundred points." [laughter]

STERN: I thought that was from Dr. Kissinger? [laughter]

AMSDEN: This is a question for Carl Stern. What was the armed forces alert call in October; what is known about it?

STERN: Well, you can get differences of opinion on that. As far as we know, it was a legitimate matter and it was not solely politically motivated. That's not to say that one of the matters that was cranked into the equation might not have been the president's feeling that the public had to be reminded that there was a serious, in his view, business to be done and these are perilous times. But I have no reason to believe the decision on that was taken solely as a matter of politics.

AMSDEN: This is the closing appearance for these correspondents after two weeks of one-night stands and I detect a little weariness in them. The closer: can I ask each of them, starting with Ms. Bell, please venture an opinion on what kind of a year 1974 will be in the area you cover.

BELL: Well, covering the economy and agriculture and some other things, we know that economists are now predicting about a 6 percent unemployment rate; we know that we had an inflation rate of about 8.8 percent; and we're now being told that the cost of living will be going up again; that to expect another about 9 percent or so. We know that the energy crisis is going to affect many of us. These are all the bad things. We're going to have inflation, we're going to have a higher cost of living, etc. So '74 is going to be very difficult in those respects, but as I tried to touch on earlier, I still am confident that the people of this country are resilient enough. When Stridehorse was with us, the Buenos Aires correspondent, we were talking about this because of the difference in the American people and those he covers in Latin America. If this was happening in Latin America, you would have revolts in the street and burning of the White House, and that's not happening here. And so despite all the problems we're gonna have in '74, I'm still optimistic about it.

AMSDEN: David Burrington, what sort of year will we have in 1974 in the Middle East?

BURRINGTON: Well, I think it's a year of possibility. For the first time in history, the Egyptians and the Israelis are talking to each other at a very high level. It's never happened before at this level. They are both compromising and making profound compromises which they've never done before. This spirit of compromise has not yet been evidenced in the more radical countries like Libya or even Syria, certainly not Iraq, but there's a possibility it will spread if the ceasefire holds up. I would caution everyone to be aware of the fact the basic conflict, the fact that these countries want all of their land back including East Jerusalem, and the fact that the Israelis at the moment are going to be very, very reluctant to give all of this land back until they have some kind of really firm guarantee that they are not going to be annihilated once they have given it back. This basic conflict still exists, and as long as it exists, this tentative movement toward a peace could collapse and a new war could break out.

AMSDEN: George Montgomery, what sort of year in Western Europe and the British Isles?

MONTGOMERY: I fear the picture's a little bit grim, I think. In Western Europe generally, I think you can look forward to a great year of European disunity with squabbling over oil supplies and problems within the common market. A distinct possibility that it's already on the way. I think if a recession, coupled with if there is widespread discontent and widespread unemployment there will be severe social discontent. In Britain, I think a stiffer recession, the possibility of an election, with I think a distinct possibility of a new British Labor government which in turn will give way more to union pressure, will bring on more inflation, and I think there's another possibility of more gloom and doom, the breakdown of the new power-sharing set up in Northern Ireland, but thank heavens we have going a romance apparently, an apparent romance between Prince Charles and a very charming young lady. Just to put in sort of a plug, with the pound at about 216 to 218 dollars, Britain is gonna be a very good buy for tourists and they're really going to need to see you. [laughter]

AMSDEN: Carl Stern, how about 1974 on topic number one?

STERN: Well, in addition to the matters I outlined, indictments, and trials, and that sort of thing, I think it's gonna be a year that is very interesting and it's going to be a very dynamic year. I think we're going to learn a great deal about our ability to govern ourselves. I think one has to be optimistic. If anything, the past year has shown to us, hearing from people like you, how mature the American body politic is. We hear a lot of moaning and groaning about how everyone wants to forget about Watergate. Well, the fact remains that during the summer, during the height of the Watergate hearing, take July. Our mail, or at least the mail I was getting, was running 7 to 1 in favor of continuing the coverage of the Senate Watergate committee. That tells me a great deal about public concern, about the quality and the character of their government. I think that's terribly important and I think it's terribly encouraging.

There will be moments of White House counterattacks, that's for sure. We have it now going that Senator Scott has this nonsense about the transcripts showing that Dean lied. You may recall that just on that point, for example, that the president himself informed Senator Ervin on July 23rd that he couldn't supply the tapes because they'd be subject to misinterpretation, they could be read either way. And now Scott is saying the transcripts of those tapes show that Dean was lying. Obviously there's gotta be something wrong with that sort of formulation.

Beyond everything else, there's a cartoon in the *New Yorker* this week. Some of you may have seen it; it shows a corporate board chairman addressing the people at the meeting and he's

saying, "I think we better postpone that decision until after the post-Watergate morality has passed." [laughter] If this is the era of a post-Watergate morality, that's wonderful. If in fact there is a new morality, if in fact there is a new public concern, that's hardly anything to brood about, and I think those of us who cover this sort of thing should be applauding you. [applause]

AMSDEN: I have one plug for my station. All four of these correspondents will be on the special hour-long *Viewpoint* program which we recorded this afternoon. It will be played back at 3 o'clock next Sunday afternoon on the 27th. Finally, I want to thank you, for KGW-TV... on behalf of KGW-TV and on behalf of the National Broadcasting Company for coming out tonight. Goodnight.

[applause]

[program ends]