

**TOM PUTNAM:** Good evening. I'm Tom Putnam, Director of the John F. Kennedy Presidential Library and Museum, and on behalf of John Shattuck, CEO of the Kennedy Library Foundation, and all of my Library colleagues, I thank you for coming and acknowledge the sponsors of the Kennedy Library Forums, including lead sponsor Bank of America, Boston Capital, the Lowell Institute, the Corcoran Jennison Companies, and our media sponsors, *The Boston Globe*, WBUR, and NECN. Tonight's forum is part of the Library's sequential series chronicling the presidencies of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, beginning with Calvin Coolidge. This evening, we'll examine the life and legacy of our nation's 37<sup>th</sup> President, Richard M. Nixon. This forum, I promise, will focus on his presidency, but in this building, Richard Nixon is forever frozen in time as the 1960 Republican nominee. Walk through our museum, and it is this face and this voice that you will hear appealing to the American public for their vote.

[audio clip]

**TOM PUTNAM:** Now I did not have a hand in developing our exhibit chronicling the Kennedy-Nixon debates, but, to be honest, I wince a bit each time when I see that we choose to include an unflattering camera angle of Richard Nixon, or that of the hundreds of questions within those debates asked, we chose the one from Sander Vanocur. "Mr. Vice President, how do you answer the charge that you have more executive experience than your opponent, when in his news conference on August 24<sup>th</sup>, President Eisenhower was asked to give one example of a major idea of yours that he adopted, and he replied, 'If you give me a week, I might think of one. I don't remember.'" But each side gives as good as it gets, and I'm told that under its former direction, the Nixon Library's debate exhibit concluded with a statement that the fact that many who viewed those debates on TV felt Kennedy the better candidate simply gave proof to the adage that style often wins over substance. Some rivalries die hard.

I say under its former direction, for as we meet during a historic year, when the once privately operated Nixon Library and birthplace has been successfully transferred to the

federal government. David Eisenhower and his wife, Julie Nixon Eisenhower, were the prime movers behind this successful transition, and so we thank him tonight for having made the Presidential Library system whole. This has also been a year filled with a spate of Nixon histories: Nixon and Kissinger, Nixon and China, and, of course, straight biographies. In hers, Elizabeth Drew describes Richard Nixon as our most improbable president, our most Shakespearian president, and possibly our last progressive Republican president. She writes that many of Nixon's opponents assume that his loss in 1960 marked the end of a political career, but to do so was to underestimate Richard Nixon's remarkable resilience and grit.

Here tonight to discuss Richard Nixon, the man, the president, the father-in-law, we are honored to have David Eisenhower, who is currently a teacher and Public Policy Fellow at the Annenberg School of Communications at the University of Pennsylvania, and is currently at work on a book on Richard Nixon and the 1968 campaign. As you may know, in 1953, David's grandfather, President Dwight D. Eisenhower, named the presidential mountain retreat, Camp David, after him.

Ray Price was a core member of President Nixon's 1968 presidential campaign, and the collaborator on both Inaugural addresses, all of President Nixon's State of the Union addresses, his August 1974 address from the Oval Office, announcing his resignation, and his first three post-presidential books. From 1985 to 2004, Mr. Price served as the President of the Economic Club of New York, and throughout Richard Nixon's post-White House years, traveled extensively with the former president.

David Greenberg is a historian and professor at Rutgers University, and writer on political and cultural affairs. His first book, *Nixon's Shadow: The History of an Image*, won numerous awards for its fresh look chronicling how Richard Nixon pioneered new methods for shaping his own political persona. David once worked as an intern here at the Kennedy Library, and while we would like to claim some responsibility for his

academic success, I'm prevented from doing so knowing that his parents are in the audience with us tonight, to whom the real credit is due.

Our moderator this evening is Ellen Fitzpatrick, the Carpenter Professor of History and Director of Graduate Studies at the University of New Hampshire. She's also taught at Lesley, MIT, and Harvard. She's written widely in areas of modern American history and intellectual history, and is a regular contributor to "The News Hour with Jim Lehrer." And while we who lived through the 1960 campaign, and later the 1962 California Gubernatorial campaign, might not believe it, here we are, live from the Kennedy Library, discussing the presidency of Richard M. Nixon.

[applause]

**ELLEN FITZPATRICK:** I just have a couple of remarks that I want to make in the way of framing the discussion that we're about to have, which I think will be extremely interesting. I'm glad to be here tonight. President Lincoln once observed that, no matter how much a President might wish otherwise, there was no escaping the judgment of history. "We of this Congress and this administration will be remembered in spite of ourselves," he said, in his 1862 message to Congress. "No personal significance or insignificance can spare one or another of us. The fiery trial through which we pass will light us down, in honor or dishonor, to the latest generation. The fiery trial of war and the presidency itself has indeed lit our views of the men who have led this nation. But it is also true that the judgment of history has been neither singular nor static. As each generation revisits the record of our presidents, we do so in light of the nation's current preoccupations, its contemporary dilemmas, its shifting dreams, and its ongoing realities."

It seems, therefore, especially appropriate that we read this at the Presidency of Richard Nixon, as we approach the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the 1968 election that swept him into the nation's highest office. Few modern presidents have inspired as much passion, pro and con, as has President Nixon. For as one historian has observed, there is much nagging,

irony, and paradox in his remarkable career. If he reached the depths and the difficult history of the modern presidency, Roger Morris has observed, he also reached extraordinary heights as well. Morris' observation that Nixon was our "most listened in on president," underscores a stark reality. We probably know more about the inner workings of the Nixon presidency-- and I guess this is a bit of a heresy to say this at the JFK Library, but I think it stands-- than we do about any other presidency in American history.

And yet, for all the information, it remains very difficult to take the measure of President Nixon and his legacy. This is so in part, I think, because the issues that informed the Nixon presidency and shaped his decision as chief executive, remain very much alive in American society. President Nixon anticipated the post-Cold War world that we now inhabit. And his pursuit of multi-polarity, in his China Initiative, for example, reflected a shrewd and pragmatic assessment of American national security interest long term. Nixon was a war time president who faced the agony of extricating the nation from an unpopular war without sacrificing the stated cause, damaging American credibility, and accepting defeat. That was his intention at any rate.

In domestic life, President Nixon struggled to advance welfare reform, and the revitalizing of a stagnating economy. He also sought to transform the Supreme Court, through the appointment of conservative justices, and transformed the Republican Party base. Even as his Labor Department inaugurated some of the first affirmative action programs in American history. In this, and in many other ways, his presidency reflected and shaped the contradictions that continue to inform American political life in these early years of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

How, then, should we assess the Nixon presidency, given subsequent American political history? That's the question that I hope our panelists will engage today in their reflections on the Nixon presidency. For surely in the realms of war and national security, the United States's role as an international citizen, the pressing needs of our society, the domestic

needs of our society. And in the dynamics of American political life itself, we continue to inhabit a world that bears the stamp of Richard Nixon. So I want to turn to each of our panelists and ask them to kind of weigh in as an initial statement, and then we'll take it from there. We'll talk among ourselves for about an hour, and then take your questions and see if we can shed a little bit of light on what the Nixon presidency means to us now. Thank you. David, you want to start?

**DAVID GREENBERG:** Sure. Let me begin. Tonight we're here to think about Nixon's influence and his impact on American life and politics in the roughly 40 years since his election. And we'll get into all kinds of areas of domestic policy and foreign policy. But I think I'm probably expressing what's-- maybe it doesn't require historians to say, but I think it often does need restating, which is that Nixon's greatest influence, I'm fairly confident, is currently felt and I think will long be felt in the area of criminal wrongdoing by a president. His constitutional violations; his abuses of power. The whole train of abuses that came to be known as Watergate, which of course is the name of a particular hotel and office building that was broken into, and the name of that break in, but came to mean much, much more. The whole chain of violations for which he was eventually forced to resign.

Now that doesn't mean the other things he did weren't important. But I think when we look back on his legacy, whether it was in the obituaries that were written at the time of his death... When you look about us in the culture, what is the one thing that some people-- If people know only one thing about Nixon, what is it? It is Watergate. It is that he had to resign. It is that we had the spectacle of a president saying, "I am not a crook," to the public. And that that was an important moment in American history, and one I think that won't be eclipsed very soon or very easily.

My book, *Nixon's Shadow*, is about-- it's not just a biography of Nixon. It's really an account of what Nixon meant. Not just the story of what he did but what he meant and how he was seen by many different groups of people. And so he's of course left different

legacies, and different groups of people will interpret him, have interpreted him, in very different ways. He was our most controversial president, and I think he will remain that way. And yet, the consensus has been that the lasting legacy was that Watergate was a crime that warranted his removal from office.

Now, while most Americans endorse this judgment, there were some who felt that the reaction to Watergate was too strong. That we had crippled the presidency. That there was too much both constitutional restraints or legal restraints placed on presidential power, but also cultural skepticism of authority. Doubting of the presidency, distrust of the president, lack of faith in government. Many people felt that those were healthy correctives after Watergate, but a kind of minority strain felt we had gone too far. And I think that minority strain in some ways had its day with the Bush administration. Dick Cheney was among those who say we went too far in reigning in the imperial presidency. And I think to a degree, he and George W. Bush have brought it back.

We're not here to talk exclusively about today's politics, but I think this administration has shown a Nixonian imprint in a whole host of ways. Its concern and its aggressive use of executive power. Its readiness to invoke secrecy. Its delight and easy resort to political hardball. Its treatment of adversaries as enemies. Its demonizing of the press, of the media. And perhaps underpinning it all, the justification of national security as the reason for why it was impelled to do such things. And so I think you see these traits in the current administration. They're very much a bequest of the Nixon administration, and, to some degree, of Richard Nixon personally. If I'm going to pick one area in which Nixon's influence is most greatly felt, that is where I would begin.

**ELLEN FITZPATRICK:** Okay. We quickly begin with Watergate. And I hope we'll move backwards, and if Watergate is the tip of the iceberg, look at that iceberg that is underneath it. David Eisenhower, would you like to--

**DAVID EISENHOWER:** Ray, you want to go or-- ?

**RAY PRICE:** Go ahead.

**DAVID EISENHOWER:** Me, okay. Well I don't think I'll be quite as long or detailed or long winded. I think that something that both Ellen and David have pointed out here is that Nixon is going to be-- Mr. Nixon as I call him-- is going to be very difficult to categorize. I see his presidency as a transition presidency, and he's difficult to categorize in this sense. This is the end of the post-war phase of the Cold War. It begins in 1968, runs through 1974. And Cold War is an oxymoron. Are we at war, or are we not at war?

In 1968, which is the year that I'm working on right now in a manuscript, we're all familiar, or many of us are familiar with the scenes that year of the Democratic Party essentially imploding and going to war with itself in the Chicago convention. We remember the assassinations of that year: Robert Kennedy, Martin Luther King. The turmoil surrounding the country. A segment of this nation, in 1968, made something explicit that President Kennedy made, or implied, at his American University address in 1963. And that is we were really moving toward peace. That we were at peace, no longer at war. And yet, in 1968, this is the bloodiest year of the Vietnam War. By 1969, the second bloodiest year of the Vietnam War, we have Woodstock.

Americans in 1968 and '69 are involved in a transition period. And we're not sure whether we're at war, or whether we're at peace. The categorization of Richard Nixon, as a result, is very difficult. Was he a war-time president, or was he not? If he was a war-time president, he was by far the most benign war-time president we have ever had. If he was a peace-time president, he's the biggest pirate who's ever been President of the United States. He's almost impossible to categorize. And I think that these contrary assessments of where the country was in 1968 and 1969 is something that has never been entirely resolved, which is why I found your book very interesting, Professor Greenberg, because the idea of Richard Nixon living on as a sort-of cultural symbol or a cultural

question in America is a sign to me that we have not resolved these questions, this problem of categorizing the era and the challenge that the Nixon presidency faced.

What I do know about him, and Ray, I was reading your book-- One of the things that you remember, or what you state in your book with Nixon that you did know about Nixon, is that it looked different from the inside than it did from the outside. That's something I can state-- I can confirm that. That is something I know about him. What I also know about him is that he will be remembered for a long time. He'll be remembered for a long time because of a characteristic that impressed me when I first got to know him when I was 18, 19 years old. Something I guess I was witness to when he was in office. And something that slowly, once again, was really impressed on me again in his later years, when Julie and I spent so much time around him. And that is his extraordinary intelligence and perceptiveness, and I would say vision.

In 1968, Richard Nixon, entering a very controversial phase in our history, one that we still wonder about, did have a vision of what would follow Vietnam. This is something that's often missed about him. Something that the histories do miss about him. He had a notion that, if the Vietnam War could be ended in a certain sort of way, that America could win the peace. This is the oxymoron, or the riddle, that he ran on in 1968. To end the war and win the peace.

The clip we just saw from the 1960 debate is a very interesting clip. That is from the first debate incidentally. I've seen the first debate in total, and recently we've had projects on it in my program. There is Richard Nixon, talking about releasing "creative energies," in America, which in the vernacular of 1960 means curtailing regulation, shifting prestige to the private sector, and encouraging entrepreneurship. This is a vision of a kind of Reagan-era America, which, as early as 1960, Nixon sees as a possibility and objective that he's working towards. He had an extraordinary vision, which I think accounts for his durability as a politician.

He's also somebody who resonated in American life in ways that interested me and surprised me getting to know him as a young person, and then watching him through the years. The controversy surrounding him have never entirely made sense to me, but they are real enough. He is a man who means many things to many people. But above all, I guarantee you, he will never be forgotten. Ray?

**ELLEN FITZPATRICK:** Ray?

**RAY PRICE:** One thing I think you have to bear in mind in evaluating the Nixon presidency-- you've got to remember what we inherited when we came in in January of '69. We inherited the legacy of the 1960s, which to me is the second most disastrous decade in American history; second only to the 1860s, when we were in actual civil war. It was the nearest thing to a civil war. For several years, it had been fashionable to burn whole sections of cities, to trash, to riot. This was going on even at his own inauguration. The Inaugural Parade made its way down to the White House. His car was being pelted by rocks and bottles from a mob of 300 people. And then we had one riot after another.

If any of you happen to have been here for our speechwriting panel last February, I may have thrown this question out then. If so, please don't give away the answer. One thing I sometimes do with an audience to try to give them some sense of what we confronted is to ask-- I'm going to throw out a question, give you a moment to think about it, and then ask for a show of hands on various ranges of numbers. What would be your guess about the combined number of actual bombings, attempted bombings, and bomb threats in the United States during our first 16 months in office? Think about it a little bit. Okay. How many say from 1 to 20? How many 20 to 40? How many 40 to 70? How many 70 to 200? How many 200 to 500? 500 to 1,000? I think I see about two hands. The actual number was 40,000. 40,000 actual bombings, attempted bombings, and bomb threats by Americans, of Americans, during our first 16 months in office.

That was part of the legacy that we inherited and that we had to deal with. It was not easy. The 60s were a catastrophic decade. And we came in in January of 1969. Nixon came in determined to make some very fundamental changes in American policy and in America. One was to settle down the violence, to restore civilization to the country. Of course, we also inherited the Vietnam War. Now today we have a war halfway around the world in a distant place. We have 150,000 soldiers there. Then we had a war halfway around the world in a distant place in the jungles of Vietnam with over half a million soldiers there. And the half a million soldiers in Vietnam were mostly draftees. Those in Iraq are all volunteers. That makes quite a difference. The strains were immense from that.

And at the time that we came in, there was no plan in place, either for ending the war or for winning it. He had ways he intended to address it. He did. And it worked. It began with Vietnamization-- that is gradually turning the task over to the Vietnamese, but preparing them along the way so that they could do it, step by step, until finally it was the Vietnamese who were doing it. But also working with the communist powers, and working with the other nations of Asia.

One thing that I think is very interesting is there was a lot of scoffing at the Domino Theory. That was fashionable. The idea that if Vietnam failed, that other nations out there, like a row of dominoes, one after another, would topple, because you had China, you had Russia, you had the North Vietnamese, all communist powers, all aggressive communist powers ready to take over. I made a trip out there with him in 1967, as he was preparing for what might be a campaign, in that we met with virtually all of the dominoes. Without exception, the dominoes were fervent believers in the Domino Theory. They did not resent our presence. They were deadly afraid of the prospect of our absence.

Even Indira Ghandi, we met with her in Delhi. She was the Prime Minister of India. She was standing up on her soapbox and sucking up to the Soviets, and saying, "America get

out, America get out.” But when we arrived, she put on a big, glittering, official lunch for us with gold plated rice and all the trimmings, and lots of toasts and so forth. The next day, we met with her privately in her home. Just the three of us: Nixon, Indira, and me. In that private meeting, she said, “If you become president, one thing you must do is hang tough in Vietnam. The security and safety of every nation out here and India depends on it.” One result, of course, of that was that he never again trusted Indira if she would be that hypocritical in public about something that in private she felt was that important to the security of her own country. But also, I think it was a window into the way things did look from out there. So it was important to get out of Vietnam, but to do it in the right way. It had to be done in the right way. The consequences of not doing it in the right way could’ve been catastrophic. But it worked. It took time, but it worked. And we did leave, and we did leave the rest of Southeast Asia strengthened.

He also, though, was determined to reshape the relationships among the great powers, knowing that this was really crucial to the future of the world. And the one thing above all that he hoped to do with his presidency was to establish what he called a “structure of peace.” That is, a structure of relations among the great powers that could keep the peace for a generation and beyond. Most people are not aware of this, but even before he came in, he had already flagged what would become the opening to China.

This was in an article for *Foreign Affairs Magazine*, put out by the Council on Foreign Relations in New York. The October 1967 issue, called “Asia After Vietnam,” in which he basically laid out what became known as the Nixon Doctrine, but he also, in that, had a little mention in there about China, which was a flag of what he did. Within days of taking office, he began taking the steps, putting the pieces in place, to make that opening possible, which he finally did in 1972 with his historic first trip to China.

And that began the radical transformation of our relationships with China. Changing our relations with China was also a big card for him in trying to change our relations with the Soviets, because they were also afraid of China, and the Chinese were afraid of them.

And triangulation worked very often. In this case it did. He was able to establish a whole new relationship with the Soviets. Went over for summits in '72, '73, '74, until he and the leaders of the Soviet Union could work things out together. This is something that has lasted. But it was typical of the way he approached things: strategically, not just tactically, but strategically, and the tactics had to fit within these strategic frames. That's all for now.

**ELLEN FITZPATRICK:** You can see here, in microcosm, the range of views. I think that each one of our panelists nicely illustrates the complexities that I referred to in my opening remarks in terms of our ways of understanding Nixon's presidency. And one thing I would ask the panelists to just briefly weigh in on is: We often hear that it was Ronald Reagan who ended the Cold War. There are those who take exception to that and say that the Soviet Union conveniently collapsed, and that was critical to ending the Cold War as well. But if we sort of roll it back a bit, how much credit should Richard Nixon get for what we have seen since his presidency? The end of the Cold War, the end of this enmity with the Soviet Union, the much more complex global, political alliances that we see today in the United States? It might be a heresy for those who can't see beyond Watergate, but should we be celebrating the contributions of Richard Nixon to this, rather than Ronald Reagan? Briefly, would each of you weigh in on this?

**DAVID GREENBERG:** Sure. Reagan's legacy with the Cold War is so complicated because we sort of had two different Ronald Reagans as president. There were admittedly important consistencies in Reagan. He always was something of an idealist, who always did envision nuclear abolition. But when he first came into office, it was marked how much he kind of overturned a lot of the policies that Nixon had helped to put in place. But in fairness to Nixon's predecessors, too, with Kennedy and Johnson, the policy had been toward greater arms control talks. "Detente" was a term that first became used during the Kennedy administration, I believe, but certainly Nixon was the one who kind of put it in everyone's consciousness.

But a lot of those gains, I think, were undone. That they didn't have the lasting impact that they might have because of Ronald Reagan's decision to up the anti, to return to a much more militaristic posture, much more antagonistic posture in the early 80s. Now, this was also a reflection on the Soviet side by Leonid Brezhnev. But there was an upping of tensions that I think did help kind of exclude the path to greater stability that had been there for some time.

**ELLEN FITZPATRICK:** David?

**DAVID EISENHOWER:** I think Ronald Reagan, somebody that we study very carefully at the University of Pennsylvania, deserves enormous credit for ending and winning the Cold War. And I think that what Ronald Reagan did is that he dramatized a fact that most did not see, and no one could act on. And that was that the United States and the free world had... And this is an interesting fact about the Vietnam War which I think future historians will comment upon. Without an intervening event between 1974 and 1983, the United States emerging from its so-called defeat in Vietnam finds itself in a position where it confronts the Soviet Union and is about to carry out the biggest geopolitical sweep any nation has ever organized from the international scene ever.

This was the voluntary liquidation of the Soviet-Communist empire. That happened without an intervening event between 1975 and 1983. What changed was perceptions. And Ronald Reagan changed the perceptions in 1979 and 1980. It's a glass half full, glass half empty. What Ronald Reagan says in his Notre Dame commencement in June of 1981 is that the, "very last chapters of Marxism and Leninism in the Soviet Union are being written as I speak." The intelligence here in this country didn't see it. He drew attention to it.

What Nixon draws attention to in 1969 and '70 was the fact that some saw, no one could act on it. And that was the idea that the communist world was a monolith and was marching in walk-step. And posed a threat in the form of a Sino-Soviet combination,

which was an awesome combination in the 1950s in terms of man power and military and so forth. That that combination was no longer a reality, and the fact that the splits in the communist world could be made to work to our advantages was one of the, I would say, difficulties that the Nixon presidency had to face in the early years, and this is something that I vividly remember.

In fact, remember the August we spent in 1969 in San Clemente? We were all sitting around. I was in college at the time. But Dr. Kissinger was our new NSC advisor and this Nixon-Kissinger partnership is forming that summer. And the Soviets and the Chinese were practically on open warfare along the Ussuri River and along the Northern frontier. The Soviets had more atomic power and conventional power massed on the Chinese frontier than they had facing NATO in the summer of 1969.

What I'm saying is the challenge that Nixon faced in '69 and '70, and Vietnam bears on this, was to understand this reality and to act on it. And what acting on it meant was intervening in the affairs of the so-called socialist commonwealth, and, in a manner of speaking, taking sides in this conflict. That took I would say a considerable amount of nerve on one hand. Vietnam is not unrelated to this because Vietnam, in the context of 1970 and '71, becomes a demonstration of our ability to be effective, despite our internal problems, number one, and number two, our interest in the region of Asia. Another area in which Richard Nixon, in the '67 article and others, indicates as a coming arena where he intends the United States to make its mark.

The latter ends the Cold War in principle. The former ends it in fact. And I see Nixon in effect, in the 1971-72 period, through the agony of Vietnam. And the brilliance of Nixon-Kissinger diplomacy in this period. And I would say their determination to stay the course brought China out. One of the interesting things about the '68 project I'm doing is that in all of the notes that Nixon gathers in his travels to Asia in '67 and '66, he makes a very important point.

For China, for an American-Chinese relationship to develop, China must approach us. We open the door, they walk through it. They must walk through it because they're the only ones in a position to assess their true security dilemma, these would be the Soviet Union. Will the Soviet Union invade China the way they invaded Czechoslovakia? The way they invaded Hungary to try to muscle them back into the Socialist commonwealth? Were we intervening in an intra-communist war? Only the Chinese can assess their own safety and so forth.

This was the imponderable that Nixon faced. This was hard work. It was not pleasant work. You called Richard Nixon an improbable president. He was in many ways. Ray, I don't know if you would agree with this or not. He is the only president in American history who lost a national election, was denied re-nomination by his party, and then went on to win the presidency in 1968. He was called a loser in 1968. The idea of going to losers in a national campaign is something that happens in Europe. It doesn't happen in America. We look for winners.

This is something that has always been unique and odd about him, which underscores again the uniqueness of this transition. America in 1968 was experiencing something they had never experienced in their history. They were losing a war. And this extricating the United States from this war, in a way that redeemed America's future in the world, was going to involve a great deal of heavy lifting. It was not pretty in many respects.

However, I would say, in principle, by 1972 and '73, the Cold War was over. In principle. In fact, basically 10 years elapsed before James Reston, in January of 1983, in a column that I remember reading with real fascination, says gee, I'm listening to President Reagan, I'm listening to these speeches he's giving, and all these people say this is outrageous and these things can't be said, but you know, I think we won the Cold War and don't know it. That's exactly where we were by 1983, after Vietnam, without, for the record, an intervening event.

**ELLEN FITZPATRICK:** If he opened the door and told the Chinese that they had to enter it, it seems to me it can be said that he made perhaps one of the more dramatic gestures in the modern presidency when he visited China and gave the United States and American citizens their first glimpse of the largest nation in the world in decades. Ray, can you say a bit about the China Initiative as you saw it from your vantage point?

**RAY PRICE:** Well, just that it had been a priority of his from the beginning. It was a matter of working out the timing and the means and so forth. The preparatory stuff had to be done in total secrecy, of course. And when it was finally sprung, it was sprung as quite a surprise. But it was simply part of his own strategic vision to do this. And in respect of the Nixon-Kissinger relationship, that was an extraordinarily productive relationship. It was very difficult for both of them, but I don't think either one could have done what he did without the other.

They both were strategic thinkers, first class strategic thinkers. And they both had the same sort of strategic vision. And Henry put together a first rate staff. He drove them brutally. And I would not have worked for him. But he got terrific work out of them. And Nixon had the courage to take the heat for the unpopular things, while Henry took the credit for the popular ones. It worked out pretty well, and a lot of good things got done because of it that I don't think could have been otherwise. But Henry, with his staff, and the high degree of professionalism that they brought to this whole strategic project globally was a key to our success.

Also, just while I think of it, David just mentioned his problem as a loser coming up for nomination. That loser image was the reason why, in 1968, he decided that the only way he would get the nomination would be to enter all the major contested primaries, which he did, and he won them all. And that made it very difficult for the people he had defeated to call him a loser.

**ELLEN FITZPATRICK:** I think that when we think back to the Watergate issue, and you mentioned the infamous “I am not a crook” lines which called to mind another president’s recent protestations, “I did not have sexual intercourse with that woman,” do we in some way have to rethink the crimes of the Nixon administration in light of what we now know about the workings of the presidency over the last 30 years? That is, is corruption endemic to the office?

Does the tale of the American presidency in the modern period tell us that our presidents have clay feet? That they have misused and even abused the power of the executive branch? Was Richard Nixon a product of a series of trends in the concentration of power in the White House? Or do we see him as the particular architect of those misuses of the executive power that have continued, or perhaps not, depending on one’s point of view, in the years since his presidency? David, you’re the expert on this.

**DAVID GREENBERG:** Okay, well, I was just going to suggest we vary it up, but I’ll take it anyway. I mean I think that the folks on Clinton actually underscores the magnitude and uniqueness of what Nixon did. The Lewinsky affair was not good for Richard Nixon. It was actually not so bad for Bill Clinton in the end. He survived it with very high ratings and left office as the most popular president since Franklin Roosevelt. So it didn’t end up really hurting Bill Clinton so much. In the impeachment process, it was amazing how many times you heard Nixon’s-- the impeachment effort, which of course never came to fruition because he resigned, but that impeachment process was invoked both as a kind of procedural precedent, but both sides kind of invoked it. Those who wanted to impeach Clinton of course said, “this is very similar, we had somebody who was lying to the public and of course that was true,” and those who thought impeachment was the wrong course with Clinton pointed to Watergate to say, “No, that’s what impeachment is for.” And that was the argument that carried the day.

And I think in the end, we’ve had I think between the Clinton impeachment and the Bush fight to win the Florida election in 2000 and many of the actions of the Bush presidency,

what I would call Nixon's revenge. There is sort of this reassertion of Nixonian political style. The reassertion of certain values, saying we're not going to kind of let those liberals get away with it on the part of some people, who I don't think ever represented a majority of the nation, and again this wasn't all that Nixon was. As we've heard about his foreign policy, there was more to Nixon than this. But I think when we get further and further away from Watergate, it looks not less important but more important. It looks increasingly like the defining episode of Nixon's career, rather than, I think, as Nixon had rather hoped, less so.

And Nixon himself actually admitted this in a book that Monica Crowley, his assistant toward the end of his life, published of her conversations with him. She reported on the response to one of Nixon's later books, *Memoirs*, in which he discussed foreign policy a lot. And he was very upset about the reviews that came in, and he said, there's all this stuff on Russia and China, but Watergate, that's what people want to know about. That's what's going to define me. And I think in the end-- I didn't know him firsthand like these gentlemen did, but I think in the end he probably did understand that about himself.

**ELLEN FITZPATRICK:** I wonder if there is, however, in the iteration and the emphasis on Watergate, a danger of really obscuring some of the deeper and more lasting pro or con, good or bad, significance of the Nixon years. And that is, we can turn American political history into a morality play in the later 20<sup>th</sup> century, and we can have a cast of characters and say these are evil and these are good. It may be difficult to cast the latter group. And reduce it all to that. But you've written a book about the shadow of Nixon. The substance of Nixon, with all of the good and bad, the pros and the cons, it would seem to me deserves, somehow, to be penetrated beyond the Watergate tale.

**DAVID GREENBERG:** Well, I think Watergate was an expression of things very deep in Richard Nixon. And I argue precisely that in *Nixon's Shadow*, that he should not be reduced to a caricature of an evil man. That there were many sides of Nixon, many Nixons, that were real. That have legitimacy. But I think it's a fallacy to think that

Watergate can somehow be cordoned off and sort of treated separately. Yes, we can take away the kind of easy moral judgments and the cartoon character stuff, I agree with that.

But what drove Nixon? Again, not just the Watergate break in, but from the start of-- Very early on in his administration, he and Kissinger were wire tapping reporters and their subordinates to find out about leaks. There was a siege mentality which, I think both Ray and David have described well, was very much a product of real facts on the ground in the 1960s, but was also the product of Richard Nixon and the way he saw the world. And so I think the deeper you go into the real person and substance of Richard Nixon, you find what is in a sense Watergate, metaphorically.

**ELLEN FITZPATRICK:** We always have a tension between the historical moment in which the President is living, the challenges that the President faces, and the personality, the character, the approach to these issues that the executive takes. And I guess Ray, you were there. How do we weigh Watergate in assessing the Nixon presidency? To what extent do you see it as a product of the man, and to what extent are you persuaded, and I suspect that you are, that the presidency in some way transcends its least attractive moment?

**RAY PRICE:** No, of course I think it transcends that. But I also take a somewhat different view of all the Watergate things, I think, than David does, having myself lived through that. I wrote all the Watergate speeches, worked with our lawyers on it. I was deeply involved with our handling of it. I was not involved in any of the Watergate stuff, but having done that and then having, in the course of writing my own 1977 book on the Nixon years, tried to dig back in to find out what I could about the facts behind the headlines. It all began to look a lot smaller and to me, what sums it up best I think is-- Sure there's a lot of stuff, but it was unprecedented to begin with.

I still remember a time during the height of the Watergate frenzy when we were out in San Clemente, and Rose Mary Woods, his longtime secretary who was a close friend of

mine, and once sitting with her on the deck of the house she was staying in there. When the phone rang and she went in to get the call and came back, and turned out it had been Jimmy Roosevelt calling. FDR's son, the six-term Democratic Congressman from California, was calling to complain bitterly. Not about what Nixon had done, not about what his colleagues in the House were doing, his Democratic colleagues in the House, he being a Democratic Congressman. Saying everything they even accused Nixon of, Father did twice as much of! So to call this all horrible, unprecedented, and so forth, I think, well, it doesn't ring true to me.

And so much of what I read at the time I knew to be untrue, and so much of what I read now is by people who built their own careers on the devil theory of Richard Nixon, and as I was mentioning to someone coming in here, I think as I've often said in recent years, I think eventually Nixon is going to be rated one of our better and perhaps one of our best presidents, but not until the evaluations are no longer being made by those who have built their own reputations on the devil theory. That's my prejudice view and I state my prejudices up front.

**ELLEN FITZPATRICK:** David?

**DAVID EISENHOWER:** I would distinguish between-- Well, you take the Clinton process in 1998, and I think that you can say that when you have something that is as mixed up as that was with personal conduct, that we can now discount that. I'm responding to your suggestion that we have to rethink standards in a certain sort of way. Personal standards, I don't know if they have any bearing on a president's position in history. Presidents are very extraordinary people. You look at a Bill Clinton or a Richard Nixon; what are the odds of the Bill Clinton? Ask yourself. One in 50 million? We are talking about what drives Nixon. He's one of the most driven people in history. He wouldn't have been a president unless he were driven.

But I think that the personal side of it I think we can now discount. I don't think that historians have ever been particularly interested in the personal peccadilloes of presidents or leaders, and I think the Clinton dismissal, or the Clinton procedure brought that to light. In the Nixon case, I would say that when illegalities came to light, and a presidential rule could be legally established, he had no recourse but to step down. He did.

Richard Nixon spent a year and a half trying to remember his actions in 1972 in a light that will allow him to continue to serve in the presidency, and when he was finally confronted with irrefutable evidence that is going to become known, he's aware that he has cut corners. Presidents have cut corners. But when that becomes unmistakable, and the system is asked to accept that or to act on it, he understands that he has to leave, and there is no way he can serve. And so he does resign.

The last thing that we want to do is revise our standards. Look at the Watergate tale and say, because now if we're going to re-evaluate Nixon, and we're suddenly going to take all these so-called misdeeds and say that presidents can do this, that's not the meaning of his resignation at all. We were both around a lot in that period, Ray, and I think that he looked at this profoundly hoping that he could get away with it. But I think that he was also prepared as a lawyer and somebody who respected the institution of the presidency.

He knew that if it turned out that he could not get away with it, he had allowed this issue to develop in such a way that he would never ask the American people to say, that's all right. If charges as alleged or whatever were in fact tied to him, then he could no longer serve, and when that became irrefutable, he did step down. I don't see Watergate as an episode that necessarily spreads the blame or whatever. What it does is it re-establishes standards. It re-establishes standards, and I think the Jimmy Roosevelt anecdote is something that...

You know, beginning in 1933, we had a concept of the presidency as a kind of a infallible individual. We lived in a chronic state of emergency from 1933 until the Watergate period. Hand in hand with the Watergate process in 1973 and '74, we had War Powers Act, we had the repeal of all these states of emergency, we have one law after another that curtails our effort in Indo-China. America in 1974 and '75 said, "Enough of all this. We are going to merge out of this era of emergency into a kind of a post- Cold War." In the era of emergencies, presidents cut corners. They all did. And I think, however, this is not a standard. It was justified under certain circumstances, as justified by exceptional circumstances

When the practices were sort of held up in 1973 and '74, it was impossible to carry on into the post-Vietnam era, ratifying the presidential conduct, his and others somewhat like it. Carry that on into the post-war. In no way do we sit here and say, well, we can respect the achievements. We can agree that he will never be forgotten. And to say that having established that, that we're going to accept illegality as a sort of common--

**ELLEN FITZPATRICK:** I want to make it clear that I was not suggesting that we should ditch standards for presidents. I guess the question really is what has happened in American society in the post-Watergate years to our view of the presidency? It seems to me that Watergate indeed did have a tremendous impact on the level of respect that Americans have had, and this kind of cynicism that many Americans have harbored about American public life and about the presidency since then.

**DAVID EISENHOWER:** But let me just say this. If you were to remove the Vietnam era from those attitudes, if you were to remove the Vietnam War from that, the Nixon impeachment would be, as you say, this would be an event. It would in no way affect attitudes in my opinion. Today, cynicism towards government, what we're talking about is the residue of a war that we waged for 20 years, more or less, in our minds. It was lost as we entered in 1964, according to McMaster and *Dereliction of Duty*. We nonetheless sustained it for 10 years at horrible domestic cost. That is what it counts for. The red

state, blue state divide as a kind of echo of the Vietnam era today, and as the polarization of American politics, which is a kind of legacy of that war, which I think counts for the real what you would call cynicism.

**DAVID GREENBERG:** May I just jump in? I mean I don't think I would put it all on Vietnam and none on Watergate. But I think you're right to, and I don't mean to mischaracterize--

**DAVID EISENHOWER:** What I think is, without Vietnam, I don't think that the cynicism that we associate with knowledge that we gained to the presidency because of Watergate would be the phenomenon that it is. Ray compared the 1860s and the 1960s. Try two elections out. I've got a favorite website. It's called "USElectionAtlas.org," which has got maps of elections. Try this one out. Look at the election in 1904, which is 40 years after the American Civil War. Look at Teddy Roosevelt versus Alton Parker in that election. It is a perfect replay of the American Civil War. Perfect. There is not a county out of place. What you have 40 years later is an echo of an earlier conflict. And I suppose if we had had a lot of pundits in, they would've called that a polarized nation. North versus South.

If you look at the 2004 election, you have a perfect echo of the breakage over the Vietnam era. Almost perfect. And what this means is that Americans became greatly divided over this question: Are we at war or aren't we? In the Vietnam era. Are there any stakes in Vietnam? Is this a war worth fighting? And we were divided over that. And what that does is that takes Nixon's misconduct and, tied to that, accounts for cynicism. Nixon's conduct by itself would be like Pete Rose in other context. I don't think it would be nearly the resonate event. That's what I meant.

**DAVID GREENBERG:** Yes. Right. That's the part I would disagree with, but I would agree very much with the emphasis that the context of Vietnam is all important here. I mean, I think the questions you're getting at are these kind of perennial, historical

questions, all events are an interplay of the actions of individuals, and then larger social forces, economic forces, that are at work at a moment in society. But I think there is sometimes a temptation to reduce Watergate only to the expression of cultural turmoil of the sixties. And although it was certainly a product of that, as well as a product of the growing powers of the imperial presidency that date back to FDR, if not Teddy Roosevelt.

Nonetheless, a useful thought experiment is how would a different president, Dwight Eisenhower for example, have handled Watergate, had some of the crimes come to his knowledge as President? Or Jimmy Carter, or Teddy Roosevelt. To think about, would they have handled it as Richard Nixon did, and would the outcome have been the same? I think the answer we would all arrive at is no, and that does show you that the individual in the office and his own psychological predilections, political concerns, personal concerns, do very much make themselves felt on the body politic, and so the personal role of Nixon has to be kept front and center, even though yes, of course, both the culture, the culture wars of the sixties and Vietnam, and the imperial presidency are also a very important part of the story.

**ELLEN FITZPATRICK:** See, I think, in the discussion tonight, the tension between victim versus architect and the way we think about our presidents. Are they moved by their circumstances to act in particular ways, and are they defined by their historical moment? Or do they define the moment? And of course as David says, it's both. The time is now here when we can entertain your questions. I think the format is to come forward to the microphone. If you could identify yourself... And let me, before we do that, interject that there are a lot of people here tonight. I assume there are many questions. Please don't give a speech. Ask a question, make it short, and if you could identify to whom your question is directed, so much the better. Sir?

**AUDIENCE MEMBER:** Hi, my name is Steven Goode and I'm a teacher at the John D. O'Bryant School of Math and Science. And actually I had a question for Mr. Price. You

said something that sort of raised a brow with me. You said something about restoring civilization in America, and I wanted to elaborate a little more on restoring civilization in America during the time that you referred to the number of riots. And the other question, I guess, I'm cheating here asking two, the other question is, Nixon-- I want to ask that question, the next question would be about Nixon and how he split China and the Soviet Union. How would he view our relationship with China today? Would he be happy with that, or would he refuse to buy the Chinese toys?

**ELLEN FITZPATRICK:** Okay, Ray you want to elaborate a little bit on your comment about civilization and its discontents?

**RAY PRICE:** Yeah, in comparing the 1960s to the 1860s, basically because the 1960s were the nearest thing to an actual civil war since the 1860s. And I think a lot of people either weren't around or have forgotten how bad it was then. And that's what we inherited when we came in. The cities around the country have been just mass-- some were race riots, some were just plain left wing riots. There was one bomb factory in New York's Greenwich Village. When that was seized, they found it really was a whole bomb factory.

Just for example, one of the many marches on Washington, the mobs were storming, they were smashing windows, dragging cars out on the street, throwing bedsprings from overpasses into the path of traffic. We had to ring the entire White House complex with busses to keep the mobs from storming the White House. This was the kind of stuff we had to deal with, and when I say getting back to civilization, I mean getting away from this and getting back to where people talk with one another. They didn't throw rocks at one another.

**ELLEN FITZPATRICK:** David Eisenhower, would you like to comment on the question about how President Nixon might see China?

**DAVID EISENHOWER:** Yeah, China in America was not a zero-sum game, it's a positive-sum game in Nixon's mind. And rising China, which is a phenomenon that we face today, is something that he anticipated and would have encouraged. And the idea that the Chinese economy, a billion gross terms, be the same size as the American economy in what, 20 years? 15 years? so forth-- that's something that would not have shaken him up.

In fact, my wife and I have been to China together twice. We went in 1975 during the dying embers of the Cold War or the Cultural Revolution. We went back in 2002 as guests of the government because they wanted to commemorate the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Shanghai Communiqué. And our second night there, you know, you go to these banquets and you're always giving toasts, and at the second banquet, our hosts, many of whom were involved in the 1972 Nixon-Mao meetings, rose and said, "To the Shanghai Communiqué, the beginning of the best 30 years of China's 4,000 year history." And a night later, it occurred to us, to the Shanghai Communiqué, the beginning of the best 30 years of American history.

1973 forward, if you look at the enormous growth, the retooling, the complete transformation of the 80s and then again in the 90s with the Bill Clinton economy. And after all in candor, except in a political sense, the times that we've enjoyed in this country since Vietnam, essentially free from the balance of terror, free from conscription armies, free from limited wars raging all over the world, free from fear of depression and so forth. These have been great years.

President Clinton himself, when he was acquitted of the impeachment charges, made a comment that I've always been interested by and I felt was very telling. He says, "Historians will someday be interested in these times, and they will ask the question, how is it we Americans can get along so well and do so well, and our politicians argue and be so divided? How can our political system be so divided and our people so united?" I think that's a curious fact about our times. I think that is a cultural argument that we are still

involved in today, because as we look back, if you're our age or whatever, if you look back on the 1960s, there are still sort of unanswered questions, and they still matter to Americans today. And the question as succinctly as I can put it, in the late 60s was, were we at war or weren't we? And what were our obligations as Americans in that period? How did we line up on it? What do we see as coming of it? Was it worth it?

**ELLEN FITZPATRICK:** Okay, this gentleman here.

**AUDIENCE MEMBER:** Thank you all for your presentation. I have a brief comment and then a question. I think Mr. Price's characterization of the sixties as the closest thing to a civil war since the Civil War is probably the central prism through which we should be looking at the era. I just would disagree with the term "civil war." I think what was happening was some of the fundamental contradictions of society were coming up, and people were trying to wake up. So I think the term "revolution" might have been more appropriate.

**ELLEN FITZPATRICK:** Your question?

**AUDIENCE MEMBER:** There's a complaint that there's too much focus on Watergate. I wonder if the panelists could speak to Mr. Nixon's role during his vice presidency, and specifically with regard to Jacobo Arbenz Guzman and Guatemala, and the overturning of the coup that removed this man and set in place decades of horror for the people of Guatemala? Thank you.

**ELLEN FITZPATRICK:** Would anyone like to speak to this? David?

**DAVID GREENBERG:** Yeah, I have to say, I don't know much about Nixon's own role in that coup. Obviously that coup was, and remains, greatly controversial. It was done with CIA assistance, and for that reason, many historians have seen it as a blot on

the Eisenhower administration's record. But I actually don't know about Nixon's involvement in it. I don't know if either of you do.

**DAVID EISENHOWER:** I don't.

**ELLEN FITZPATRICK:** Okay. Sir?

**AUDIENCE MEMBER:** Hi, my name is Bob Cattigan. To Mr. Price, probably, it's regarding the relationship with China and Vietnam and us. And as David said about cutting corners to reach a goal. And I think perhaps corners were cut with the bombing in Cambodia, which is really a small area of Parrot's Peak, where I don't think it was sold very well by you people as far as how dangerous that area was, how many NVA would be built up there and coming across killing our people, but he did something perhaps he shouldn't have and he got caught. Then he had the massive bombing on North Vietnam, for which he didn't get caught. That was somewhat accepted. But was there somewhat a motivation to get us out of there? Not just to appease the American people, but to appease the Chinese, because they didn't want us to have a foothold there, so that he could then do economic negotiations with China? Was China involved with his military thinking?

**RAY PRICE:** Not that I'm aware of. The Cambodia bombing. This was not a bombing of Cambodia. It was an attack on the North Vietnamese troops who had invaded Cambodia, and it was an attack specifically on those North Vietnamese troops who were in Cambodia, and it was done with the full concurrence of the Chief of State of Cambodia. He couldn't say publicly that he was, but he was privately, he wanted us to do it. And then we just went in, we hit them, and we came out. It was not an invasion of Cambodia.

**DAVID GREENBERG:** Although later we did send in troops to Cambodia. A year later. No? [Simultaneous conversation]

**ELLEN FITZPATRICK:** May of 1970, there was an invasion of Cambodia.

**RAY PRICE:** Yeah, but again, that was to go after the North Vietnamese. It was not going after the Cambodians. It was the North Vietnamese who invaded Cambodia, and then we tried to help the Cambodians by going after the North Vietnamese who had invaded Cambodia.

**ELLEN FITZPATRICK:** Sir?

**AUDIENCE MEMBER:** My name is Bob O'Connell, and my question has to do with the President's cutting corners. Sort of a follow up. I get a little worried when one man or one woman in the Oval Office thinks he or she can cut corners. Mr. Eisenhower, you said it I believe, and it's not the first time I've heard it, and that's what worries me. Everybody wants to cut corners.

**DAVID EISENHOWER:** Who wants to do that? You're saying we want to cut corners? Who?

**AUDIENCE MEMBER:** No. That's what you said. You said it was all right for presidents to cut corners in order to get things done.

**DAVID EISENHOWER:** No I said-- No, in fact, I was saying the opposite. That if cutting corners becomes evident to everybody, and we're asked to approve or disapprove, we have to disapprove.

**AUDIENCE MEMBER:** My point is though before we approve or disapprove, why is it being done in the first place?

**DAVID EISENHOWER:** Well, I don't know. One of the great historic achievements of all, I teach it at Penn, is a proud achievement, a vital one, for the success of our civilization, as Ray put it. And that is Franklin Roosevelt's success in connecting or intervening in war in Europe in 1941. That is something that required him to shade the truth. It is something that required him to walk with the devil. It required him to do a lot of things that would be seen in some sense as cutting corners. I would think that we applaud that because we applaud the achievement and we see now in hindsight how important that achievement was.

Ray, in your book, with Nixon, you talk about cutting corners in various chapters. I'm not going to stand here and say, gee, I think we should cut corners. I'm saying that Watergate is an important part of the Nixon presidency. It really is. And it is what it is. This situation came to light and once it was out there, in his own mind, he had to be perceived more or less as not involved, or he could not continue to serve. He was not going to ask the American people to say these practices are all right. At every stage in that process, he acquiesced in a process which confined this inquiry to his actions. The Senate resolution in 1973 passed to investigate Watergate was confined entirely to the 1972 campaign. They would not look at any other campaign. Am I wrong about that?

**RAY PRICE:** No, that's true. And they had good reason for not wanting to look at any other campaign, because they new perfectly well that the same sort of thing had been done in lots of other campaigns.

**ELLEN FITZPATRICK:** I think what the cutting corners is-- I'm going to move on to the next questioner, but I think the point you raised is an important one. I know this wasn't what David Eisenhower was saying, but it comes to mind that is the phrase "cutting corners" what we're using to refer to an abuse of the President's Constitutional powers? And what we have seen really in the last 50 years plus of American history is increasing power centered in the presidency, and certainly greater secrecy, a lack of access to information, the use of national security and the National Security Doctrine as a

way of justifying the ignorance with which the public seems to exist with many important matters of state, and even the Congress for that matter. So I take your point sir and we move on this gentleman.

**AUDIENCE MEMBER:** Mr. Price, what do you think is the most important thing for high school students to know about Nixon's legacy?

**ELLEN FITZPATRICK:** Mr. Price, he would like to know what you think is most important for high school students to know about the President's legacy.

**RAY PRICE:** Well, I don't know if there's any one thing. I think I would just ask you to try to understand him in its entirety. Not let your perception be based just on one aspect. A very complex man and a very complex set of circumstances. And you have to take the whole together. You can't just take any of the parts. And that's why I wouldn't say any one thing. To me, I guess, his greatest strength was his strategic vision combined with the courage to take the unpopular means necessary to bring it about.

**ELLEN FITZPATRICK:** Sir?

**AUDIENCE MEMBER:** My name is Robert Greenberg. This is directed to both Mr. Eisenhower and Mr. Price. As I was listening to both of you talk about both Vietnam and Watergate, your attitude toward it didn't jive with my own attitude and my memories. I wasn't just a kid at that time. And my feeling when President Johnson betrayed his promise to us in '64 and led us into war in Vietnam was that we needed to correct the situation and change it because it was damaging to society.

And when President Nixon became President, I believe the country hoped that he really would change it fast and get us out of there. But instead, he prolonged it for five unnecessary years. And I consider that, in my memory, an assault on our society. Now with regard to Watergate, I consider that also an assault, but an assault on our

Constitution, because there were broadsides against our Constitutional powers and liberties that President Nixon pursued while he was in office.

I think if you take those two things, both his dereliction of what we expected from him, and not carrying out a rapid retreat from Vietnam, and in his pursuing of the powers of the presidency and the way that he did contrary to the way I understand the Constitution. I felt those are two momentous events in American society at that time that we're still recovering from. And yet when I listen to both of you, I thought you underplayed both. Would you comment please?

**DAVID EISENHOWER:** We didn't underplay. This is what the whole story is. And I respect your point of view because lots and lots of Americans held that point of view at the time, which is why our time of troubles in the 1960s reached the proportions that it did. I hear you and this is what the argument was in that period. And all I can say is that the reason for the intensity of this argument and the reason for the durability of this question in American culture is that, in many ways, both sides are right. Vietnam was worth defending. I don't understand why we would place value or privilege Europe or special places in the world. Everywhere ought to be free. And critics were also right. That Vietnam was carried off in a terrible way, in a feudal way. We were involved in a war that was certainly by 1968 doing more harm than it was doing good. And the politics of that era were difficult.

Your statement of the problem as I see it is something that-- the question about high schoolers. High schoolers should recognize, it seems to me, the controversies that we faced in the 1960s. I would say more important than understanding anything about Richard Nixon. I'm not really drawn to the facts in the story, the history, and the debates of that era which you've summarized.

**ELLEN FITZPATRICK:** Yes?

**AUDIENCE MEMBER:** Hi, I also wanted to thank the panelists for their presentations and honesty. I wanted to comment first about the co-question of the architect versus kind of being the victim of circumstances, and that in specifically, I wanted to ask the panelists to address the role that Nixon had in terms of being an architect along with Kissinger in the assassination of President Allende in Chile in 1974, leading to years of dictatorship under Pinochet. So it seems that it's important to recognize-- especially for young people to recognize-- there are many histories, there's many points of view. But certainly presidents do have decisions to make. Those decisions have incredibly powerful consequences. So specifically, I wanted panelists to address that point.

**ELLEN FITZPATRICK:** Okay, David? Do you want to speak to it?

**DAVID GREENBERG:** Sure, just quickly. I certainly, I can't quote you chapter and verse, but as evidence continues to emerge, Nixon and Kissinger were very knee deep in the deposing of Allende. His murder was not expected by them or intended by them, but there was every effort to change the regime in Chile. And that was controversial then and is one of the many legacies of the Nixon-Kissinger foreign policy that remains deeply controversial today.

**ELLEN FITZPATRICK:** Yes?

**AUDIENCE MEMBER:** This is also directed to Mr. Greenberg. You seem to, and please correct me if I'm wrong, emphasize Watergate as this unique manifestation of Nixon's character. Was Nixon really the worst or the first to perpetrate these crimes against our Constitution or was he merely the first to be caught?

**DAVID GREENBERG:** If my choice is between those, I would say he's the worst and the first. I think it's actually a little more complicated than that. I wouldn't reduce it entirely by any means to his personality, although I think his personality and his particular obsessions, the way he viewed his enemies, his sense of entitlement with

executive power, all allowed Watergate to happen. Of a magnitude in scope, there I think was categorically different, even from the abuses of power that we saw under FDR, that we saw under John F. Kennedy and Lyndon Johnson. They certainly did abuse their presidential power, but I think probably not in ways that warranted their removal from office. So I do think there's a categorical difference. I respect my colleagues here on the panel who have a different view of the matter.

But again, if you wanted a counter-weight to the anecdote of Jimmy Roosevelt as a Democrat saying, "My dad did worse," is to think about who was it who really called in the end for Richard Nixon's removal from the office? What made the difference was Republicans. It was liberal Republicans, like Lowell Weicker of Connecticut. It was the most conservative of Republicans, like Barry Goldwater. So there was a kind of across the board agreement that this went beyond partisan politics in Nixon's case. That he had transgressed some fundamental norms of political behavior in ways that he had outstripped those of his-- it's not to exonerate Kennedy or Johnson or Eisenhower, Truman, or anyone else from their own wrongdoings. But it is to try to understand what was distinctive about what remains, I think, a unique moment in our history.

**ELLEN FITZPATRICK:** We have only a few more minutes. So I'll take a question from this gentlemen, and then you, and then, if we have time, we'll go to you, and then we'll wrap it up. So briefly, sir?

**AUDIENCE MEMBER:** My name is Drew Horn and I'll try to ask a question. There's been a lot of discussion about Watergate and China and Indonesia, et cetera. Frankly, I lived through all of that. And sitting here listening to you, I was having great difficulty trying to understand, or trying to recall, what effect President Nixon had on our domestic agenda. What did he do or didn't do having to do with us as people, as opposed to the Chinese and the Vietnamese and the prosecutors, et cetera? What did he do for us?

**RAY PRICE:** Can I take a crack at that?

**ELLEN FITZPATRICK:** Sure.

**RAY PRICE:** This is something we'd get into too. We didn't. I spoke before about what he was trying to do in the world. But also he came through on the domestic side, determined to reverse the flow of power, which has been consistently torn away from the states and localities and toward the federal government. And basic to a lot of his domestic agenda was turning that direction back and shifting power and decision back to the states and localities. But sending money along with it.

As Pat Moynihan, who was on our, of course, White House staff, used to say, the federal government is very good at collecting revenues, but very bad at giving services. And so those closest to the people should be the ones making the choices. We could help provide the resources. So that was basically the revenue sharing we set up. Categorical in the number categories, and then general revenue sharing exists just to provide more resources to states and localities. That was sort of typical of the kind of approach that we took.

But also one very important thing. When we came in, the Southern schools were still segregated. People said they could not be peacefully integrated. He got them peacefully integrated. George Shultz was key in working out the way this was done, but it was done. People talked of a Southern strategy as if this were something evil. His Southern strategy was treating the states and people, especially the people of the South, as citizens of the United States. By dealing with them with respect, he was able to get them to cooperate in the peaceful desegregation of their schools, which people said could not be done, and was done. George Shultz, again, played a key role in a very complex way, but it was successfully done about 16 years after the Supreme Court had declared that it must be done.

**AUDIENCE MEMBER:** An interesting type. Thank you very much.

**ELLEN FITZPATRICK:** Thank you. Sir?

**AUDIENCE MEMBER:** Hi, my name is Carl Newman and this is addressed to Mr. Eisenhower. When North Vietnam took over the South, there was a period of chaos in which intellectuals were killed, the government was overthrown, and thousands were forced to flee the country. How did a gradual withdrawal prevent this situation from becoming worse?

**DAVID EISENHOWER:** How did what?

**AUDIENCE MEMBER:** How did a gradual withdrawal from Vietnam with U.S. troops prevent this situation from being worse?

**DAVID EISENHOWER:** Well, it didn't prevent the fall of Vietnam. But there was a really interesting document in the Eisenhower papers. It is a request from George Marshall to Dwight Eisenhower in March of 1942 asking him-- in fact, Eisenhower is now coming into contact with Franklin Roosevelt as a case officer in the managing of Douglas MacArthur, who was conducting the rear guard retreat in the Philippines. This has to be handled with care, because MacArthur's dramatic stand at Bataan and Corregidor could distort priorities, and Roosevelt's priorities were fixed on Europe. So, what to do?

What Dwight Eisenhower says in a memo to Marshall is, "The eyes of Asia are upon us. The Asians will forgive a failure, but they will not forgive a failure to try." And what happened between 1965 and '67 was a failure to try in a lot of ways. If you look at the way the war was managed in '65, '66, and '67, that same Dwight Eisenhower advising Lyndon Johnson on where to place troops in Vietnam, summoned in February of '65 for a conference, summoned frequently-- in fact the phone conversations are being opened at the Johnson Library between the two. An attempt to win the war in Vietnam would have put the security of North Vietnam in doubt. We would've challenged the North

Vietnamese. We would've basically invaded that country at the waist and put the survival of Hanoi in doubt, as we did in Korea at Incheon.

Lyndon Johnson, instead, took 550,000 troops and stationed them in passive defensive roles in the South. Actually, not passive. We adopted a search and destroy. But essentially garrison roles in the South. Not for the purpose of winning the war, but for placing counters on the ground that would enable him to negotiate a peace.

There was an elaborate sort of series of understandings and so forth that constrained the conduct of that war. But he tried. And that was recognized in Asia, and it was certainly recognized. It was certainly a very strong signal to allies and adversaries alike in Asia that the United States took the future of that region seriously. And Richard Nixon certainly did, and you have to say that in hindsight, 30, 40 years, this is something that in the thicket of that era, that he did perceive and perceive accurately. And that is the Asian century that is rising.

**ELLEN FITZPATRICK:** Final question, thanks.

**AUDIENCE MEMBER:** Hi. I'm a high school student. And our history textbook characterizes Nixon as paranoid. And I mean it's kind of based on his actions. He spied, he felt the need to cheat at an election that he won handily. And we listened to the tapes in class and sometimes he seems very preoccupied with his public opinion. But on the other hand, maybe all presidents are sort of like that. So to those who knew Mr. Nixon personally, Mr. Price and Mr. Eisenhower, I was wondering if you thought that characterization of paranoid was at all accurate, or whether it was unfair? And if it is accurate, did it undermine his presidency?

**RAY PRICE:** It was a characterization commonly made, especially by the kind of people who might write textbooks. But not accurate.

**ELLEN FITZPATRICK:** David, do you want to speak to that?

**DAVID EISENHOWER:** I don't know what the word paranoid really means. I'm not a psychiatrist or psychologist. It's a loaded word in a lot of ways. It means he has a sort of undue concern about political election and so forth. This was a puzzling thing about him when I got to know him. I got to know him when I was 18, not when I was 9 or 10 as some people think. But my future wife and I wound up, by total coincidence, within seven miles of each other in school, and I got to know him in this period.

And as far as the politics goes, the political side of it. Something that I became very interested in right away, because I'd experienced nothing like it at home. Dwight Eisenhower ran for office twice in his life. Presidency twice, won twice. So he was serene about politics. Politics was not a problem for him. At least he didn't think of it that way, though his papers revealed that he was very attentive of the political fears.

But what I noticed with great interest, and found myself drawn into, is the legacy of 1960. This very close race. His defeat for that office, which caused me to sort of formulate an axiom that I've always thought of in politics, and that is, "It's better to lose by a lot than a little." I think that the statesmanship that he was required to show in 1960, I think the substantial questions that he had about that election, caused him to be a different-- My feeling was that this was very important to the Nixons when I ran into them in '67 and '68. It's what made them attractive, in a strange sort of way, to me, because I felt that they had endured something together. And I think one unfortunate manifestation of it is that he took no chances in politics from that period on.

But as I say, it is part of a larger story that I find really, really interesting, and I'm not the only one. We've just had a special *Newsweek* cover on the year 1968. This is the year that Richard Nixon is elected. We all recognize it as a watershed. We also recognize 40 years later that we have not resolved all the questions about 1968, and so it endures as a cultural and a sort of political debate. Again, I would recommend to high school students

or anybody else interested in the year, the year itself is a fantastic story. And I think in the final analysis, all the players considered, if you see where America was by 1985, '86, where America is today, and you can use your imagination and ask yourself where we might have been facing a dilemma like that. As General Westmoreland said, "It must be old Yankee luck." We came through a very difficult situation. Our nation is strong, and our nation is resilient. And I think that is the ultimate lesson that we derived from this era known as the '60s.

**DAVID GREENBERG:** One quick comment. It's interesting that Nixon, in one of his books, I was trying to find the footnote here, did refer to himself as having paranoiac tendencies. So he clearly recognized in himself some of these qualities. I think to reduce it to a simple label, "oh, he was paranoid, that explains him, that explains Watergate," is obviously superficial. But I think it is useful to look at. I think particularly what David just said, the sense that he wanted to take no chances, to control things, especially after the 1960 loss and then the 1962 loss. Those were deep character traits in him. The label can be glib but the qualities are interesting to look at.

**ELLEN FITZPATRICK:** It's ironic that the installation of the taping system in the White House was in part because of the consciousness about how future historians would think about the Nixon administration, which I suppose, I hate to admit, is an argument against having a consciousness of history. Too great a consciousness of history can be dangerous to a president. But as you've seen tonight, the adage about paranoid people having real enemies proves out. That is, it has proven very difficult to arrive at, I think, a full understanding of the Nixon presidency. It's a process that will go on and on and on. In a way it's a kind of Rorschach test for the nation itself as we revisit it, and the conversation will continue. So thank you for coming tonight on behalf of the Kennedy Library. [applause]

**DAVID EISENHOWER:** And I'd like to add a word of thanks to Ellen. Thank you Ellen.