Dr. Henry Kissinger
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Dear Dr. Kissinger,

On behalf of Daniel Schorr and Cable News Network, I would like to thank you for taking the time out of your busy schedule for an interview. The hour program turned out to be one of the best, and certainly one of the most informative in regards to foreign policy.

Enclosed you will find a transcript of the show for your records. Again, thank you very much, and hopefully the opportunity for a repeat performance will occur in the not too distant future.

Sincerely,

Randall Douthit
Executive Producer
CNN

Not hopefully, but definitely in December, no matter what Commission you may need.
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

A CNN SPECIAL REPORT:

AN HOUR WITH KISSINGER

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MR. SCHORR: Once every year we go over the world with Dr. Henry Kissinger. This time, later than usual because by the time we were hoping to do it, he was heading a Commission on Central America. Welcome late, but welcome, Dr. Kissinger.

DR. KISSINGER: It's always a pleasure to be here.

MR. SCHORR: I'd like to start first with what is timeliest, and that is the situation in the Persian Gulf. Let me ask the question this way. You have once expressed fear that the United States has become irrelevant to some of the world's great problems. Is the Iran-Iraq war and the Persian Gulf situation one of those situations?

DR. KISSINGER: Well, it is -- I can't accept the proposition that the United States and the industrial democracies have become irrelevant. They are in danger, however, of acting as if they were irrelevant. There is -- it is an amazing situation. The health of the industrial democracies depends on uninterrupted supply of oil from the Persian Gulf. Here two utterly irresponsible nations are fighting a war, a murderous war, with each other. Everybody agrees that the cutoff of oil would have disastrous consequences. It's nonsense to say that it affects primarily Europe, but we may want to get into that later. For everybody, everybody agrees that an Iranian victory would -- might unravel the whole Middle East. Yet I have heard nobody put forward a proposition of what might be done about it. Everybody stands there like a --

MR. SCHORR: But the Reagan Administration suffers now from what you might call a "Lebanon Syndrome," the fear of going in and then under Congressional or other domestic pressure being forced out and leaving the situation --

DR. KISSINGER: I'm not saying -- I'm not saying they should go in as a unilateral act and then have an endless debate domestically, and people will start. If, indeed, we should go in together with other nations, we'd better not
again undertake a military measure that does not succeed, and in which we cannot define the objective ahead of time and/or know how we are going to achieve it. There's no question about that.

MR. SCHORR: Well, define the objective and how do we get in?

DR. KISSINGER: Well, let me first define the problem. There are in the world today maybe three or four million barrels a day of excess oil capacity that are not being produced. The total production in the Persian Gulf is about 11 and a half million barrels. If the -- if the flow of oil from the Persian Gulf is reduced by, say, seven million barrels, that means there will be a global shortage, again, of three to four million barrels a day, and we will be back to the situations of 1973, 1979, rapid rise in oil prices, inflationary pressures, recessions that will affect the stability of all governments and the health of the democracies, of the industrial democracies.

MR. SCHORR: Okay. You've defined the problem. Solve it.

DR. KISSINGER: That is the problem.

MR. SCHORR: Solve it now.

DR. KISSINGER: With all respect, I'd like to make two propositions here. Whatever my solution may be and whatever my arrogance, I consider it conceivable that seven or eight big governments, putting all of the resources of the intellects they've assembled to work on this problem, might come up with a better solution than I can come up as an individual without access to intelligence information. So I would say the first thing that has to happen is the definition of objectives. What is it we're trying to achieve?

I think there are two things we ought to try to achieve. One is to prevent a gradual cutoff of the flow of oil. Second is to prevent an Iraqi defeat in the war, not to achieve an Iraqi victory, but to prevent the collapse of Iraq, murderous, repulsive regime as it is. Those are the two objectives. Now, I refuse to believe that the combined power of the United States and the other
industrial democracies cannot find a way of doing it. It cannot be beyond the will of man to arrange for air cover in the Persian Gulf when the Iranian air force is reliably reported to be down to 45 airplane and the Iraqi air force has its limitations.

MR. SCHORR: Would you do that even though it's not been requested by the Saudis or the other Gulf states?

DR. KISSINGER: I would -- you see, I don't know enough about all the maneuvers that are going on. I would consider it, yes, consider it.

MR. SCHORR: Just go in with our Air Force to provide air cover?

DR. KISSINGER: I'm not saying with the American Air Force. I would think the other industrial democracies have a big stake in this, too. I would consider providing air cover for the oil flow in the Persian Gulf, yes.

MR. SCHORR: One of the very great problems --

DR. KISSINGER: I would consider it.

MR. SCHORR: Consider it?

DR. KISSINGER: I mean then people have to study what Congressional support can we get; what is the technical feasibility of it; and similar measures. But the consequences of permitting the present situation to escalate are very serious, and maybe this is something that should be discussed at the Economic Summit that will meet soon of the industrial democracies, and hopefully they can come to some common view on the matter, since this is something that affects them all.

MR. SCHORR: President Reagan seems to be extremely cautious in this case, partly because in an election year he doesn't want to be viewed as flexing American muscle unnecessarily or incautiously. Would you advise him to be less cautious about this?

DR. KISSINGER: I'm not running for reelection. I don't have to
deal with the Congress. I'm an outsider that can state what the national interest is. I believe the national interest requires an uninterrupted flow of oil through the Persian Gulf. I believe also the national interest of the Europeans and the Japanese requires that, as well. So if we can ever achieve united action with our allies, that ought to be an area in which we do not have to act alone. So at what point the supply of oil is sufficiently threatened to take joint action is very difficult to judge, but if that point is reached, I would think that regardless of the election it must be considered.

MR. SCHORR: Do we have to worry about the Soviets who have already denounced our sending "Stingers," anti-aircraft missiles, to the Saudis and say anything we send, anything --

DR. KISSINGER: Well, I think the "Stingers" to the Saudis are basically a symbolic action that indicates we have a major interest in the area.

MR. SCHORR: The Soviets want to keep us out of there.

DR. KISSINGER: The Soviets would like to -- what is happening is great for the Soviets because what is happening, it's threatening the industrial democracies' economic, and therefore political, health. One interesting phenomenon is that no government that was in power when the Shah of Iran fell and the last big oil crisis occurred, no democratic government survived the subsequent series of events. If they were conservative governments, they were replaced by Socialist ones. If they were Socialist ones, they were replaced by conservative ones. In other words, a crisis had occurred in the Persian or Persian-Arabian Gulf -- I don't want to offend the Arabian listener -- a crisis occurring in that area had consequences lasting for five to six years that impoverished many of the industrial democracies, undermined their political stability, and the same could happen again. I'm not saying that point has yet been reached, but I'm saying that point must be considered.

MR. SCHORR: The Soviets seem to be sending a lot of aid to Iraq.
DR. KISSINGER: And the Soviets, of course, like this.

MR. SCHORR: The Soviets are sending apparently massive aid to Iraq, including apparently SS-21 missiles. Does that concern you?

DR. KISSINGER: That is an ironical situation. Apparently the Soviets have concluded that for their reasons, they do not want an Iranian victory. I believe for our reasons we also do not want an Iranian victory. When this war started, I was asked at a press conference what I thought of it, and I said my only regret is that only one of these countries can lose the war. So we have no interest to promote the victory of either side. We should do nothing to make Iraq win the war. Our limited objective should be to have enough of a balance on the battlefield so that Iran does not win the war because if Iran won the war and then if Iran took Basra, Kuwait would be wide open, and then Iran might be in a position to impose fundamentalist governments and restrictions in oil production on the whole Gulf area, with the consequences we discussed. That is the issue.

MR. SCHORR: Okay. We have to take a break here, and we'll be back with the Soviet-American relationship.

SEGMENT II

MR. SCHORR: Returning to our conversation with Henry Kissinger, Dr. Kissinger, at a recent news conference President Reagan appeared to be unconcerned about the freeze in relations with the Soviet Union. He didn't seem bothered by Soviet claims to have deployed nuclear submarines off the American coast; the fact that there are no productive nuclear arms negotiations going on; the Olympics, all of the rest of that, and the President indicated that "just wait until after the next election. The Soviets will have no recourse but to come back and talk to us." (a) Do you think that's likely to happen, and (b) what does it cost to have to wait?
DR. KISSINGER: Well, I think I substantially agree with the President on this point. I thought some of the early rhetoric of the administration was unnecessarily muscular and exuberant, but I believe in the last year the President has made very clear, and so has the Secretary of State, that we are prepared for a constructive dialogue on the basis of reciprocity, and the Soviets have rejected it partly, I think, because they have a very complicated domestic situation that makes it very difficult for them to come to the decisions needed to have a dialogue from their side; partly because they don't want to do anything that might look as if they are encouraging a reelection of the President; and partly because they don't want the President to be able to say that his policy worked.

On the other hand, I think that there are pressures within the Soviet system and on us to come to some understanding as early as possible, and as early as possible will be after the next Presidential election, though I do not exclude that if President Reagan should be substantially ahead in the polls in September and October, that we might begin to see a softening of the Soviet stance then. Nevertheless, there are some dangers in the current freeze. If some crisis were to develop, unsought by either of the powers, such as we discussed in the Persian Gulf, we would lack the ease of communications that existed in previous periods, and there would be the danger that an unwanted escalation of commitments that might be -- could occur that might be avoidable in a less frozen period, but I'm actually fundamentally optimistic that once the election is over, once the Soviets realize that they're not helping the President or supporting his philosophy by entering negotiations, that their own necessities combined with ours will produce a discussion by this time next year.

MR. SCHORR: But doesn't the downhill slide assume a momentum of its own?

DR. KISSINGER: That's the danger. The danger is -- but right now the downhill slide is really whatever mistakes were
made early in the Reagan Administration. I would say within the last year the downhill slide comes mostly from the Soviet Union, and I think it derives in part from the fact that they're in an almost permanent succession crisis and have been since 1978; that Andropov was ill for the greater part of his term; that Chernenko is by age alone an interim figure and, having been passed over at the Brezhnev succession, clearly is not a man who at this moment commands wide support, and by the time he commands it, he may be too old to exercise it in any prolonged fashion; and many members of the Politburo are in their late 70s. So that — that succession problem is built into the system.

MR. SCHORR: With the emphasis that you put on the age and domestic problems in the Soviet Union, you make the whole thing seem so fatalistic, as though there's nothing that the United States can do about it. Is there nothing for President Reagan to do except waiting for leftists, if I could put it that way, or is there a gesture he can still make between

DR. KISSINGER: No. I think — I think I would separate it into two parts: between now and November, and after November. I believe that any overture that we now make beyond what we have already made would not help the situation, would not lead to anything. I think the Soviets are rejecting our overtures not because they don't like our specific proposals, but because they've made a strategic decision to see whether the year 1984 can be used to separate the Europeans from the United States and to separate President Reagan from his constituency. After November, I believe we should move energetically to put forward first a philosophy of what it is we want from the Soviets. I think — and what we are willing to contribute to a relationship — I believe it is a mistake to keep making technical proposals in the arms control field. In every government these arms control proposals emerge from a very controversial debate within the bureaucracy. You then throw them into the other side's bureaucracy, and the same debate will start again
from the opposite end of the spectrum. So the heads of government are forced to make decisions on highly complicated, technical points that affect the fundamentals of their relationship. I think what we need is to have a discussion with the Soviets about where we want to be two, three, four years from now; what the responsibility of the nuclear super powers is; and then work back from there so that instructions can be given to the technical negotiators. Otherwise we're going to put a weight on arms control and on technical issues that those issues cannot -- cannot bear. So very soon after the election, I would hope to see a major statement from the President, the Secretary of State, and maybe that would also be the time for this emissary idea, which was tried out with General Scowcroft under not very auspicious circumstances.

MR. SCHORR: For those who don't know what you mean by that, let me just say that Brent Scowcroft went to Moscow with a group of arms control people and was not able to deliver to Chernenko a message from the President of the United States, something quite unprecedented.

DR. KISSINGER: That's correct, but still I believe perhaps something with a little less publicity --

MR. SCHORR: That had no publicity until after it happened.

DR. KISSINGER: Right, but I had no -- I think it took the Soviets somewhat by surprise. I believe that the Soviets would have rejected it no matter how well prepared it was because it does not fit into this year's strategy or in maybe this year's domestic necessities to appear to have a serious dialogue with the United States, and maybe they're too suspicious to think that a dialogue, once started, would survive our election. But after the election that suspicion would no longer exist.

MR. SCHORR: Okay. I want still to talk about Europe, and perhaps we even have time for Central America when we come back.
SEGMENT III

MR. SCHORR: We're returning to our around the world discussion, I guess we can call it, with Dr. Henry Kissinger. Now since we've touched on it already, let's move on to Europe. You stirred up things a little bit among our European allies by taking a view of the NATO Alliance that didn't sit well with some of the people over there. You talked about a fundamental review of the status of that alliance, of the Europeans taking a greater share of responsibility for their own defence, and that if that didn't work, to spur them on a little bit to efforts by reducing by, say, half the strength of American troops in Europe. Are you satisfied with the response you got?

DR. KISSINGER: Yes, I got the response that I expected. It was obvious that the governments concerned would not agree with a fundamental revision of both the NATO structure and allocation approach because if they did, they would have done it. I thought that I, born in Europe, a friend of the Atlantic Alliance, could put into the discourse ideas that I believe will inevitably have to be raised over the next four or five years and with the attitude of maintaining and strengthening the Atlantic Alliance rather than as an isolationist trend in the United States.

MR. SCHORR: Interesting you said that because this was going to be my next question. I've known you for a great many years as a person who tries to look at extremes and find out what is the middle position that can be defended against both extremes.

DR. KISSINGER: Correct.

MR. SCHORR: And it seemed to me when you said, "Okay, if we don't have them all, we'll have half," that you really are partly -- what you partly are doing is that you perceive a tendency in this country to pull away from Europe --
DR. KISSINGER: I perceive --

MR. SCHORR: -- and before that happens, you want to sort of reduce our position there to a more defensible point.

DR. KISSINGER: No, you're a very acute observer. I perceive the tendency both in Europe and in the United States to pull away from each other, and I tried to articulate a position in which the Atlantic relationship could be defended against both extremes by both sides of the Atlantic on the basis of premises that fit the new conditions. It isn't -- I think the Atlantic Alliance has been a great success, but it is still operating on the premises of the early '50s. Technology has changed, domestic politics have changed, the economy has changed, and therefore, the Atlantic Alliance has to be adjusted with these new --

MR. SCHORR: One thing hasn't changed. The NATO Alliance basically is under an American nuclear umbrella. That hasn't changed.

DR. KISSINGER: And that -- well, that hasn't changed, and that, however, is becoming a source of contention in all countries. I do not reject the idea of a nuclear umbrella, but the point at which we have to invoke this nuclear umbrella is clearly different today than it was in the early '50s. In the early '50s we had first an atomic monopoly, then an overwhelming nuclear superiority. Now everybody knows that a nuclear war would have tens of millions of casualties, at a minimum. Therefore, to use the nuclear umbrella against every provocation at the earliest stage is found to create the spirit of pessimism, defeatism and abdication that one sees in several European countries and in some smaller groups in this country. One, therefore, has to review NATO strategy.

Secondly, in the early '50s, the United States had 52 percent of the world's gross national product. Today we have something like 20 to 20 -- 22 to 25 percent of the world's gross national product. The Europeans in the early '50s were flat on their back. Now they are a substantial economic power. It does not make any sense
the major responsibility for the defense of the West fall primarily on the United States. It doesn't make any sense economically, but also not psychologically. I think the Europeans have to assume a greater intellectual and political responsibility.

MR. SCHORR: Even as you say that, the Germans are talking about cutting back. Their Defense Minister seems unable to convince their Finance Minister that they should go ahead with more conventional -- Holland is being torn apart on the question of Cruise missiles.

DR. KISSINGER: All of this is absolutely true. Then they have to pay the price for it, and the price for it is that if -- to the degree that they cut down their defense contribution, they become more dependent on the nuclear strategy. To the degree that they're more dependent on a purely nuclear strategy, pacifism in their countries is bound to grow, and resistance to all military efforts is bound to grow. To the extent that we rely exclusively on a nuclear strategy, the level of conventional forces in Europe is a totally arbitrary decision, and there's no inherent reason why there have to be five and a half American divisions if they're not going to be used in a conventional battle anyway, and if the war becomes nuclear very quickly. So if countries want to reduce their expenditure, they want to live dangerously, if they want to undermine their self-confidence, then the United States should still leave some forces in Europe as a deterrent to a Soviet attack, but whether we then have two divisions or five and a half divisions, since we cannot assign a conventional role to either of them, that becomes a matter of our overall strategy.

MR. SCHORR: Okay.

DR. KISSINGER: That was the point of my article.

MR. SCHORR: Beat Central America, we'll come back to that.

SEGMENT IV

MR. SCHORR: We are now on Central America. I must tell you
I was surprised when you became the head of the President's Commission on Central America.

DR. KISSINGER: So was I.

MR. SCHORR: So were you. Among other reasons, because from what I know of you, it was not really very -- one of your great central interests, Soviet-American, great things like Europe and all of the rest of it.

DR. KISSINGER: It is now, but it wasn't then.

MR. SCHORR: It is now, all right. Let me recall one of the points you made when you brought in the report of this Commission calling for $8 billion in aid of various kinds backing up the government of El Salvador. You made one point, and that was that you could think of arguments for doing nothing at all and you could think of arguments for doing sufficient things, but what you could not dream was that there was any argument that could be made for doing something halfway and not enough.

DR. KISSINGER: That's correct.

MR. SCHORR: Are you seeing that worst scenario now being enacted?

DR. KISSINGER: Well, I think -- I think the President has accepted the report of the Commission, and what I don't think is fully understood is that this was a bipartisan commission, including such well known admirers of President Reagan as Lane Kirkland, the President of the AF of L-CIO, Robert Strauss, the former Chairman of the Democratic National Committee, and there were other Democrats, which reported unanimously. So this was not a report to support any particular administration. It had parts in it that the administration did not at first embrace -- in fact, publicly rejected. It has now been accepted by the President. If that report is enacted, I believe we're doing -- we will be doing enough.

MR. SCHORR: Well, you're talking --
DR. KISSINGER: If the Congress keeps cutting it down --

MR. SCHORR: Then?

DR. KISSINGER: -- then I think we will be caught -- run the risk of being caught in the worst of all circumstances.

MR. SCHORR: So what are the consequences of the worst?

DR. KISSINGER: Well, the consequences of the worst will be that we will be doing just enough to be involved, not enough to achieve any objective. The risk will then be the Cubanization of Central America, which is bound to have major consequences on Panama, Mexico, Colombia, and in the absorption of American attention and resources in the Western Hemisphere.

MR. SCHORR: You know, this is another version of the domino theory.

DR. KISSINGER: Which happened to turn out to be correct in Vietnam.

MR. SCHORR: Well, did it turn out to be correct in Vietnam? The domino theory in Vietnam held that if we did not manage to hold the Vietnam government together, they would be taken over by China. So what happened? We didn't hold it --

DR. KISSINGER: No, no.

MR. SCHORR: -- and China is now fighting against North Vietnam.

DR. KISSINGER: No, the domino theory -- first of all, the domino theory was developed in a period in which I was not in office. The domino theory held that the consequences, as I understood it, that the consequences of a collapse of the American effort in Vietnam would have a ripple effect around the world and would affect our general capability of resisting Communist expansionism. Now, whether it was wise to intervene in Vietnam and put ourselves in that position where a defeat could have these consequences, that's a different matter, and I think in retrospect that we staked too much on Vietnam, and I repeat, I was not involved in
the decision that got us -- that got us involved there, nor did the administration with which I was associated. We inherited that situation.

Now, Central America is quite different. Central America is very close to America's border. Central America is in -- is close to countries in which we have truly vital interests, and therefore, the Cubanization of Central America, of a Cuba in its present form, would, in my view, deflect American attentions from both Europe and Asia, would absorb us in essentially defensive measures in the Western Hemisphere, and would cost us infinitely more than what our Commission recommended. What our Commission recommended was an economic reconstruction program for Central America, costing $8 billion over a period of five years, but we're already spending something like four to four and a half billion dollars over that five-year period. So the additional expense we're recommending is something like $3 billion over a five-year period, organized with a long-range objective and on the basis of the cooperation of these Central American countries with each other to achieve both democracy and progress.

MR. SCHORR: When you hear Jesse Jackson has gone down to Mexico City and there criticized the United States government as arrogant in its approach in Central America, does that irritate you?

DR. KISSINGER: I think it's irresponsible. It doesn't irritate me, but I think it's irresponsible.

MR. SCHORR: When you hear that there have been covert operations kind of a little secret war against Nicaragua with the mining of harbors, and that then this becomes thoroughly exposed, do you think it was worth the effort?

DR. KISSINGER: No, I think that was not worth the effort. I think when you -- I believe that something of the magnitude of interrupting shipping and mining harbors should either be done overtly or not at all. It cannot, in the nature of things, be done as a covert operation. On the other hand, when you have a government -- when you have an administration
who believes it has a constitutional -- a constitutional obligation to defend the national interest, which is squeezed and harassed on each individual item, you may find that it does something to achieve its objective. What that something is will never be enough. It will always look somewhat inadequate. It may be a little silly when it becomes public. So while I do not think that that was one of the more brilliant moves that were -- were made, I have sympathy for -- for the goal that was attempted to be achieved, and I think --

MR. SCHORR: When you hear that money has been put into the Salvadoran election and some of it used to try to get Duarte elected and that's exposed, do you think that's a mistake?

DR. KISSINGER: I think the exposure is a mistake. I'm not offended by the United States attempting to support the leader in Salvador who's been considered by every outside observer as the most democratic leader of the existing -- of the existing candidates and in a situation which the other side is putting vast resources behind his opponents. There are over 30 orders of the Salvadorian guerrilla groups around the world. They surely are not financed from inside Salvador.

MR. SCHORR: I understand that you think it's terribly important to sustain Salvador, especially now with the Duarte Regime. Is it equally important, do you think, to harass the Sandinista regime in Nicaragua?

DR. KISSINGER: I think -- let me state the objective that I believe should be achieved, which I think is more or less what our Commission recommended. We believed that conditions should be created in Salvador in which a reasonable person can be -- can be convinced that the guerrillas have a fair chance at the political process, and we proposed an electoral commission in which they participate, in which together with perhaps the Contadora countries, the Arista countries, the surrounding countries of the area, to assure security during the next elections
which will take place next year for local — for local government and, I think, for the parliament.

With respect to Nicaragua, I believe the principal objective should — must be or should be the reduction of the military capabilities to Central American proportion. The Nicaraguan army is approaching 100,000. Vast amounts of military supplies are shipped in there. I believe that the best solution would be a reduction of all armed forces, those on our side as well as the Nicaraguan, to something like 1979 levels, a low ceiling on the shipment of foreign arms, including ours, into the area, a withdrawal of all foreign advisors. There are 10,000 foreign advisors in Nicaragua. That's as much as Samosa.

MR. SCHORR: Do you achieve that by harassing Nicaragua —

DR. KISSINGER: No.

MR. SCHORR: — or by negotiating Nicaragua —

DR. KISSINGER: I'll tell you. Our Commission took the position by a vote of ten-to-two. That was the one point that was not unanimous, that we should not reduce existing pressures, except for a quid pro quo. We did not take a position on the issue of whether we should have started it or not because we didn't want to get into the whole area of covert operations in an open report.

MR. SCHORR: Do you think in his own country Duarte's going to make it with the pressures on him from Army and so on?

DR. KISSINGER: It's going to be very difficult. I believe that the democratic forces in all Central American countries are confronted by two great dangers: by the pressures from the right and by the pressures from the left. And whether it is possible to rescue a democratic middle ground from the authoritarianism and death squad tendencies of the right and the totalitarianism of the left, I don't know this, but this is what we
MR. SCHORR: We have to take a break here. When we come back, I would like to talk to you a little bit about America.

SEGMENT V

MR. SCHORR: We're back with Dr. Kissinger, and I said we were going to talk about America, which may seem a strange subject to a foreign policy expert, and yet foreign policy has to spring from a country somewhere.

DR. KISSINGER: Absolutely.

MR. SCHORR: There is -- there seems to be an American irresoluteness, an inability to grab hold of situations like the Persian Gulf, as we discussed before. Do you think is there a fundamental problem in this country as to make our way in the world?

DR. KISSINGER: I don't know. I don't think there's irresoluteness, as such. I think the American people is a rather strong and rather tough people. I think that our leadership groups are severely divided between different approaches to foreign policy, and that they break down on a sort of a 53-47 percent fluctuating back and forth so that among our leadership groups, there is lacking the consensus that existed in the post-war period. There are some people who believe that the United States should vindicate its vital interests by -- primarily by power or large or importantly by power. There are others who believe that the United States must, above all, be a moral example and that it will achieve its objectives by its domestic performance and by the purity of its morals or whatever. Now these are important -- it's an important philosophical distinction, and the two groups have the capacity to checkmate each other so that we have lacked a clearcut direction in a series of administrations now that have enabled us to pursue either one or the other course consistently. This is what I would say our problem is, but among
the mass of the population, I don't find that distinction.

MR. SCHORR: You were quoted at one point as comparing the United States as coming to be like Argentina, where somebody gets elected with a 53 majority, and then everybody sets about checkmating him. So you toss him out and get somebody else, and the result is paralysis.

DR. KISSINGER: In the field of foreign -- well, in the field of foreign policy, that is true. There is the danger that -- of divisions in which neither side is willing to make enough of an accommodation to pursue a particular course for long enough to give it a chance to succeed.

MR. SCHORR: But, you know, Americans are getting to a point where problems around the world seem to defy solution anyway. The attempts to inject American power turn out to go sour, as in Lebanon, and in the end you get a mood in the country if we could just be left alone, we'd be very happy. There's nothing we want to do.

DR. KISSINGER: Yeah, but that's impossible. That isn't possible because there is no such thing as a -- maybe there is such a thing as an insoluble problem, but a problem not solved leads to a worse problem later on, and the problem doesn't go away because you ignore it. I happen to be opposed to putting troops into Lebanon. I was also opposed to the manner in which they were withdrawn, which shows that it isn't easy to please me, but I think the consequences, you cannot undo the consequences of one act by doing the exact opposite of it four or six months later or a year later, and then gain the reputation of not knowing what you're doing or of not being resolute in the pursuit of your objectives. I'm not saying that we should throw our power around the world indiscriminately. I am saying that we are lacking a definition of our vital interest as a people. Therefore, we don't know where to throw our power, and therefore, when we do use our power, we do not pursue the objective sufficiently persistently to achieve what we are trying
to do. Those are the philosophical issues that remain -- have to be resolved. It is as wrong to say we must always use power as it is to say we must never use power. What we need above all is a definition of what it is that is worth defending, and alternatively also, what it is that is worth achieving.

MR. SCHORR: I think convincing Americans both that it is worth defending and, secondly, that it can be defended that way.

DR. KISSINGER: That's right. Now, I believe in an election year you can't solve that problem. It's unreasonable. Whoever is elected in November has no more important task than to try to reconstruct some kind of bipartisan consensus. He will not be able to govern unless he achieves this, and this requires a serious discussion, and I believe this bipartisan Commission on Central America in a way proves that even on a very controversial topic, it is possible to achieve unanimity if it is approached from a reasonably objective point of view, and after the election I hope very much that the newly elected President will do that as his priority objective.

MR. SCHORR: I want to put a proposition to you, and I may not have time before we break to let you give an answer to it, in which case we'll continue later. It's a broad proposition. It strikes me that in the post-war world, one President, one administration after another has seen the world in terms as two sided: Soviet-American confrontation, and tried to apply that to Cuba, Central America, Middle East or whatever. But that most of the real problems that happened to us have nothing to do with Soviet-American confrontation at all, which however threatening it may look basically remains stable for the moment, but that we still keep running into little people, be they fanatical Islamic types or radical secular types in Iraq. Most of the real flash points in the world that have really beset us are (a) not directly connected with the Soviet-American relationship, and (b) tend to be distorted if
one tries to see them in terms or solely in terms of the Soviet-American relationship.

Now, having put that whole question to you, I don't have time to get your answer before we break, but I will give you time to think about it and reply to it when we do return, as we will.

SEGMENT VI

MR. SCHORR: We're back to conclude our conversation with Dr. Kissinger. So are we too hung up on Soviet-American confrontation?

DR. KISSINGER: I think I agree with the analysis of your question. There are many problems in the world that are not caused by the Soviet Union, and that it would be a mistake to see as having been caused by the Soviet Union. Central America, for example, the fundamental roots of that crisis go back many decades and even centuries and are quite autonomous of Moscow and probably even of Havana. It is also true that a crisis that occurs spontaneously can be made intractable by Soviet and, in the case of Central America, Cuban intervention, by organizing the dissatisfied groups into a movement of a kind that makes compromise impossible and conciliation very hard to attend. So it would be a grave mistake to seek the solution of every North-South problem or even of the fundamentals of North-South problems in Moscow. But it would also be blind to reality to -- not to recognize that Moscow and in some situations Havana give it an urgency, a discipline and an organization that it would not have except -- except for their presence. And so for us, it -- for American foreign policy, it is an extremely complex task.

On the one hand, we have to generate objectives that can stand on their own and that are not simply defined by preventing an influence of Communism. At the same time, we have to be prepared to reduce or eliminate that part of the problem that is caused by Communism.

MR. SCHORR: There's time only for maybe one mandatory personal
question. Is it enough to be a super star and be rich being a super star, or do you want to go back into the government at some time?

DR. KISSINGER: I have given up my house in Washington, and I no longer have a domicile in Washington. I think that makes clear what my priorities are at this moment.

MR. SCHORR: Not at all, not at all. I mean I cannot believe that the influence that comes from private advising, speech making and all the rest in the end can ever fully satisfy you because you really love -- loved at least --

DR. KISSINGER: That may be true.

MR. SCHORR: -- being inside with all of the sources of intelligence.

DR. KISSINGER: That may or may not be the case. The fact is I have not volunteered advice to any administration since I left office, and I will maintain that position.

MR. SCHORR: But for a long time, you know, you were the "bête noire" of the right wing in the Republican Party. I remember four years ago there was a question of whether you'd be allowed to even speak to the Republican National Convention, whereupon you ended up being a mediator there towards the end of it, so that nothing is forever. And here you are. You've headed an important Commission for the President, a President who once campaigned against you.

DR. KISSINGER: Well --

MR. SCHORR: Aren't doors now opening up?

DR. KISSINGER: And I will support him for reelection, but that doesn't mean that I'm -- that I'm looking for a governmental position.

MR. SCHORR: No, not looking for. You cannot be in a position of looking for. You're too big and too famous
to look for. The question is: are you ready for the call when it comes?

DR. KISSINGER: I don't expect to be called. I am content with my present -- with my present life, and I think my most useful role now is that of an elder statesman who is available for emergency duty, but who is not looking for permanent position in the government.

MR. SCHORR: I have some suspicion that emergency duty may arise shortly after the next election, if President Reagan is reelected. Meanwhile, thanks. I hope next time we can talk again towards the end of the year and that there'll be no commission to stand in the way. Dr. Kissinger, thank you very much for appearing on this special mid-year broadcast of what should have been a year end roundup.

I'm Daniel Schorr, CNN, in New York.

[End of broadcast.]