Ohio Public Policy Archives

Congressional Staff Oral History Project

Carl W. Ford, Jr.

March 19, 2025

Interviewed by Cory Ackerman

Transcribed by Teresa Bergen, History Associates, Inc.

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Abstract

Carl Ford discusses his career and experiences working with Senator John Glenn and later with Secretary of State, Colin Powell. Ford outlines his background, including his transition from the military to the CIA and his eventual assignment to Senator Glenn's office as a foreign affairs fellow, focusing on East Asian studies and military affairs.

Ford describes his role in Glenn's office, highlighting key projects such as the Taiwan Relations Act and SALT II. He provides insights into Glenn's working style and his approach to foreign policy, particularly his interest in China and Taiwan. Ford also touches on Glenn's relationship with President Jimmy Carter, noting areas of disagreement. The interview covers Ford's involvement in Glenn's 1984 presidential campaign, where he assisted with fundraising and debates. Ford reflects on the challenges and dynamics of the campaign, as well as Glenn's interactions with his staff and other political figures.

Ford reflects on his tenure as the Assistant Secretary of State for Intelligence and Research under Colin Powell during the George W. Bush administration. He recounts the difficulties surrounding the intelligence assessments of Iraq's weapons of mass destruction programs, emphasizing the lack of accurate research and the misleading information provided by the CIA and DIA. Ford describes his decision to leave his position to speak out against the intelligence failures that led to the Iraq War.

Biography

Carl W. Ford, Jr. was born in 1943 in Hot Springs, Arkansas. He graduated from Hot Springs High School in 1960 and attended Florida State University, earning a B.A. in Asian Studies in 1968 and an M.A. in East Asian Studies in 1969. Ford joined the U.S. Army, serving in Vietnam with the Military Assistance Command from 1965 to 1966 and later as a Military Intelligence Officer with the 525th MI Group from 1970 to 1971. He then worked as a China Strategic Intelligence Officer at the Defense Intelligence Agency.

In 1974, Ford joined the CIA as a China analyst and served as a Congressional Foreign Affairs Fellow in Senator John Glenn's office. He later became a professional staff member on the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations. Ford returned to the CIA as the National Intelligence Officer for East Asia in 1985. From 1989 to 1993, he held various roles at the Department of Defense, including Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary for International Security Affairs.

In 1993, Ford founded Ford and Associates, an international consulting firm. Appointed by President George W. Bush, he served as Assistant Secretary of State for Intelligence and Research from 2001 to 2003. Ford later joined Cassidy & Associates and taught at Georgetown University and George Mason University and then at National Park College in Hot Springs, Arkansas.

Editing Practices:

The first reference to a Member of Congress is underlined in the transcript. For more information about individuals who served in the House or Senate, please refer to the Biographical Directory of the United States Congress, http://bioguide.congress.gov.

In accord with oral history best practices, interviewees were allowed to review their transcripts and make additional notes, edits, or redactions to the transcript. Additional notes or clarifying comments are noted by [brackets].

Transcripts were edited with the goal of preserving the spoken word and the conversational tone. That said, changes were made to improve the accessibility of the transcript. Excessive false starts and filler words were removed where they did not affect the meaning of the ideas expressed by the interviewee.

Citation Information:

"Carl W. Ford, Jr. Oral History Interview," Ohio Public Policy Archives, The Ohio State University (19 March 2025).

CORY ACKERMAN: It would help if my mic was hot. Hi, Carl. Can you hear me? (laughs)

CARL FORD: Can you hear me?

ACKERMAN: I can hear you just fine. You can hear me?

FORD: Yes.

ACKERMAN: All right. Let me launch into my spiel real quick, and then we'll talk for a moment. Just give me one moment. My name is Cory Ackerman and I am an oral historian at History Associates, Incorporated. Today's date is March 19, 2025. And I'm speaking with Carl Ford. This oral history interview is in support of an oral history initiative to explore what it was like to work with Senator John [Herschel, Jr.] Glenn from the perspective of his staffers. We were going to record today's interview via Zoom. First question, do I have your permission to record this interview?

FORD: Yes, you do.

ACKERMAN: Second question. Can you please state and spell your name for the record?

FORD: It's Carl, C-A-R-L. Middle initial, W. Ford, F-O-R-D. And I'm a junior.

ACKERMAN: Excellent. All right. So, you situated? You got what you need in terms of being settled in?

FORD: Yes.

ACKERMAN: Excellent. Just mechanically, so you know, after about an hour, I'm keeping an eye on the clock, if you need a break we can take some time and then resume after that. I'll check in with you. And if you want to keep going, we can just keep going.

FORD: Okay.

ACKERMAN: At the moment, we're booked for two hours. It's not a hard stop. So if you have time extra or if there's another story you want to tell, we can continue on for a little bit into the third hour. But I don't want to keep you too long. I really do appreciate how generous you're being with your time. And I want to be respectful of that.

FORD: Thank you.

ACKERMAN: All right, so. Are you ready to get started?

FORD: Sure.

ACKERMAN: All right. So my first question is when and where were you born?

FORD: I was born in Hot Springs, Arkansas, 28 January 1943.

ACKERMAN: And what was your childhood like?

FORD: I grew up in the, of course in the ‘50s. And it was, I had a pleasant childhood. A lot of high school friends, mostly on, I was in a lot of athletics. So I had a lot of friends from sports teams. And I only ran into a problem when it got time to get ready to go to the university. I cracked my vertebrae in my neck and my back when I was a junior. And so, I couldn’t play football anymore. (laughs) And I said well why do I want to stay around in high school if I can’t play football. So, I started looking at colleges and universities in the state of Arkansas. And I realized that I couldn’t afford to go. (laughs) My parents were working-class people. I had several odd jobs, but I hadn’t been able to save any money to go to college.

Fortunately, I had a great-aunt and uncle that lived in Tallahassee, Florida. And they went through the formal process of adopting me so that if I came to live with them and went to Florida State, I wouldn’t have to pay out-of-state tuition. (laughs) And so I went to college for a couple of years and realized I didn’t know what I wanted to do. And the people on, I had a small fellowship, were saying, “You must be doing better than this or we’re going to have to drop you.

So, I joined the army and went into the army as an enlisted man. And then went to officer candidate school. During that process I reunited with one the persons I dated when I was in college. She was actually in the sorority that I was a dishwasher at. And so, we got married. She went back to school. I was at Fort Benning in Georgia. And then when I went to Vietnam, she graduated and became a teacher. So, I came back and finished my BA in Asian studies and my MA in East Asian studies with the GI Bill and with her being a teacher. We were reasonably well off for most married couples at the college. Probably more than you wanted, but that's sort of where I come from.

ACKERMAN: No, that's perfect. It's actually a funny coincidence. Because I also have a master's in East Asian studies. And maybe we'll talk about that in a bit. Because I want to talk about your background as well and how it influenced your thinking in terms of dealing with the senator and the staff. Did you have an interest in politics or policy as a young man?

FORD: I followed the news and was interested in current affairs. But I wasn't particularly focused on politics. I was really focused on East Asian studies particularly. My real emphasis and specialty was the Chinese military, particularly the Chinese Army. And I had been at DIA [Defense Intelligence Agency] for about four years. And CIA [Central Intelligence Agency] called and said, "Would you like to leave the army and join us at CIA?" I always thought it was because I was such a burr under their saddle. And, I talked to my wife. And she was a teacher/principal in DC. And said, she loved her job. And said, "You know, if you're in the army and we're going to have to move around a

lot, why don't we do this?" So, I left the army, which I really had enjoyed, after about nine or ten years. And became a member of the CIA. And I had gone from China ground forces to China's military more broadly. And so, at one point after three or four years, I'm not sure what it was, I got a notation from human resources at CIA that I had been selected to be a foreign affairs fellow on Capitol Hill. I hadn't applied for it. I'm not sure who recommended me for it. But all of a sudden, I was leaving CIA and going up on the hill and this foreign affairs program. There was a few months of instruction at Johns Hopkins in Washington, and there was a professor there who knew everything about the Congress. We had lectures and he provided all kinds of insights into who the people were and how congressional people thought. We had textbooks that we read about the Congress.

And then we were given the opportunity to go out and look for a job. Supposedly it would be three months on the Senate and three months on the House, or vice versa. Well, I focused on the Senate. And I came up with a very short list. I decided because of my experience in Asia, and particular East Asian studies, that maybe the East Asian Subcommittee of Foreign Relations would be a good place to land. And there were two people there that I thought that I would very much like to work for. One was Senator John Glenn, who I had no connection with at all, (laughs) other than to know he was a world hero and famous astronaut. The other was Senator [Richard Bernard] Stone from Florida. And I thought he's on that same committee. He's not the chairman, like Glenn is. But he must be interested in East Asia, and I have the connection with Florida.

So, I applied to both. And I went up and talked to Glenn's person first, a gentleman named Roy Werner. And he had worked for Glenn for a number of years on foreign policy and particular on the East Asia Subcommittee. And he interviewed me. And he said, "Well, we'll have to see. We'll have to talk to the senator."

Well meanwhile, I went to a meeting with Senator Stone's staffer, administrative assistant, and talked to him. And he said, "Well, let's go in and talk to the senator." (laughs) And so I walked into Senator Stone's office, and we talked a few minutes. And he said, "You know, I'd love for you to be a foreign affairs fellow on my staff." And I said, "Okay, I'll do that." Because I hadn't heard anything from Senator Glenn.

Well,-the next day, I got a frantic call from Roy Werner saying, "You can't work for Senator Stone. You have to come see Senator Glenn. He wants to talk to you." And so, I came back, and I went in to see Senator Glenn. And he said, "Listen, I've talked to Senator Stone, and he understands that you're going to work for me. And I want you to be on my staff." And so I almost didn't make it to Senator Glenn's office, and I always felt bad about having told Senator Stone yes and then having to tell him no. But as you'll find out, there's nothing bad that I can say about Senator Glenn. He made, he did everything that he could to help me and has made it possible for me to follow—he opened doors for me in the rest of my career. And I greatly appreciated my relationship with him over the six years that we were together.

ACKERMAN: Okay. I'm trying to keep my thoughts ordered because I have about three questions based on what you just told me. First questions, is around what time period are we talking? I mean, what years was this going on?

FORD: Oh. It was the [James Earl "Jimmy"] Carter administration. And one of the, the two major issues that the Senator was involved in during that period was Carter's opening up to China and the Taiwan Relations Act. And also, SALT II. And I can't remember what the years were. You'll have to—

ACKERMAN: If I remember correctly, we're talking probably about circa 1978. Late '70s.

FORD: That's right. Yeah. Yes.

ACKERMAN: Okay. I just want to make sure we have that on for the record. Second question is, why the interest in Chinese military or China, period, for your academic pursuits?

FORD: Well, I had been trained both as an infantry officer, and then later, when I came back to intelligence after getting my master's degree, they said you could come back as an intelligence officer. And I said well, what would I be doing? And they said, well, we're not quite sure what you'd be doing. So, I looked up all the different opportunities for intelligence officers. And I was looking to be an analyst. After having

my academic background, I said, I want to be an analyst and think about East Asia, particularly the Chinese military. And there was a position called area intelligence officer. And I assumed (laughs) that that meant that I was being trained to be an analyst. Well, the first day I realized that, area intelligence officers were case officers recruiting spies. (laughs)

ACKERMAN: Ah.

FORD: And so, I first started off in intelligence as a HUMINT [human intelligence] case officer. And my first assignment after going to Fort Holabird for training was to go to Vietnam. And I recruited Montagnards to go into Cambodia for me and recruit people along the Ho Chi Minh Trail so we could keep a more accurate account of what was happening along the trail. Well, when I left Vietnam, I was given an assignment. And it was to the China ground forces unit at DIA. I didn't ask for it. I didn't know about it. It just simply, that's where they put me. And so, I first learned how to be an analyst of any sort by being mentored by the people at DIA ground forces. There was, Eva Watkins was the sort of the lead mentor. She was in charge of the order of battle. But there were several of my colleagues that also had been there, done that, and I would learn from them. But I learned how to do basic research from that experience.

Well, that's when, after four years, I think it was, CIA called and said, we want you to come and work CIA military and do directed research. Now the difference being that directed research starts with a question. It's, you know, what would the Chinese military

do if X happened? And then you'd have to go into the data, build a research design and fill it up with data, make a database and then come up with some conclusions. So, I just happened into this based off my assignment out of Vietnam.

ACKERMAN: All right. And then the third question is, so you said to me that you did not seek out this Senate opportunity, or the opportunity to transition from CIA to Senate. Were you double billed? Like were you still working for CIA when you were transitioning to Senate? Or were you just exclusively working for the Senate at the time?

FORD: No, I worked, at least initially, I worked for CIA. I was paid by them. And I was known as a CIA officer that had been assigned to Senator Glenn's office. About nine or ten months into my assignment, I'm sorry, four or five months into my assignment with Senator Glenn, he asked me one day, he said, "Carl, when are you supposed to go to the House?" And I said, "Well, I'm already thinking about people and coming up with ideas, because it's going to be in a month or so." And he said, "Well, hold that. That's not going to happen." And so, the next day, he said, "I just talked to the Director of Central Intelligence and he said it's okay if you spend the next period of time with me." Well, at the end of that period of time, Senator Glenn, Roy Werner, who I've been working very closely with and learning from, he got an appointment from the Carter administration. And when he left, Glenn said, "Well, Carl, I want you to stay with me. I don't want you to go back to CIA at all." And so, after having been there for a couple of years, I resigned my appointment to CIA and became a member of the professional staff

of the Foreign Relations Committee assigned to Senator Glenn on the East Asia Subcommittee.

ACKERMAN: Okay, taking a step back for a moment, so when you are choosing between, was it Senator Stone and Senator Glenn, right, what was the call you received from Senator Glenn like? Or you went to see him? Like how did that process work?

FORD: I got this frantic call from Werner saying, "Forget about Stone. You're going to work for Glenn. Come talk to him." So, I went to Senator Glenn's office for the first time and we had a conversation. And he said, "Carl, don't worry about it. You're going to work for me on the Foreign Relations Committee. Senator Stone, I talked to him. I now owe him a favor. But you're working for me." So, it was really very much Glenn's initiative to have someone, a foreign affairs fellow, that could work on East Asia.

ACKERMAN: Did you ever find out why Glenn was so intent on you coming to work for him? Was there anything particular about you, about your area focus?

FORD: Well, one, I think Glenn depended for policy work, he liked foreign affairs fellows. Because they came, they were midcareer people. They came with a certain level of knowledge. They weren't beginners. They knew something about, for example, in my case, East Asia. He also was interested in proliferation. And he had picked another person from another fellowship program to head that. So that the two key policy people for

Glenn on proliferation and foreign policy were foreign affairs fellows of one sort or another. And so I was, he just liked the fact that he wanted people with more experience.

ACKERMAN: Alright. So, you start working for Senator Glenn. We're in the late '70s. What would you say it was like working with, on the issue profiles that you had, during the, what we now know to be towards the end of the Carter administration? What was that like?

FORD: Well it was great to work for Glenn.

ACKERMAN: Right.

FORD: He was, I always tell people, he was more like an uncle to me than he was like an employer. Indeed, I had an arrangement with the person who was the doorkeeper for Glenn, his secretary, that I wouldn't spend too much time with him (laughs) and that I would give other people opportunities to be in his office. Because Glenn loved to talk about foreign policy, and military and SALT and various things. And so, if I wanted to, I could have just been there almost all the time. But I knew that the political people and the other people in the office would hate me if I didn't restrict at least in part the time I spent with him. He was just so, well, one, he had a mind like a xerox machine. You could tell him something that was a very detailed thing, like foreign aid or something. And six months later, there would be a debate in foreign policy, in the Foreign Relations Committee with somebody from state. And Glenn was the only one who knew what we

were talking about. And he would come back with arguments and come back with points. And I went oh my God, that's what we talked about six months ago. So, he really was a very smart guy. I mean, he was not just a hero and an astronaut. He really was a very smart guy.

ACKERMAN: Well, what I'm trying to get at is, and I want to talk about the differences between Carter and [Ronald Wilson] Reagan coming up next. But were there any, I'm trying to think of how to phrase this, challenges for working on foreign policy and arms control for Senator Glenn and his relationship with the Carter administration?

FORD: Yes.

ACKERMAN: Okay.

FORD: Glenn was not a big fan of Carter.

ACKERMAN: Okay.

FORD: And that had to do with a lot of different things, I think. But one of the facts was, he told me this story once. He said that Senator [Samuel Augustus] Nunn from Georgia, who was the chairman of the Armed Services Committee, had gone over to see Carter about the Korean withdrawal. And he was concerned about what Carter had said on the campaign about pulling out of Korea. Well, Senator Nunn said, "I mentioned this

to the president, and he said, 'Don't worry about it, Sam. I understand where you're coming from. Don't worry about it.'" Well on the way back, Nunn says, on the way back in his car, the radio was on and there was an announcement that we were going to withdraw from Korea. (laughs) And so that there was a lack of trust on the part of Nunn and others like Glenn, who weren't quite sure that they could accept what Carter said as, you know, a commitment, or an answer to a question. And indeed, when Carter normalized relations with China, they sent the Taiwan Relations Act up to the committee, Foreign Relations Committee. Normally the process as you probably know is that the executive branch sends a bill up to the House and the Senate. And they then use that as the basis for making changes or additions or whatever. Well in this case, both the Senate Foreign Relations Committee and the House Foreign Relations Committee said this is so bad, they threw it out. They said, we're not even going to start with this. We're going to build our own. And so, from the very beginning, there was a tension between Glenn and Senator [Frank Forrester] Church from Idaho and other Democrats with -Carter not being upfront with them about China. And having a much different approach to China than they did. And as it turned out, the Taiwan Relations Act was actually a repudiation of Carter's approach. They just threw it out and came up with something different.

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So, there was also, of course, there was tension and friction between Glenn and Carter over SALT II. Let me go back. Glenn was for normalization with China. He simply didn't like the way that Carter did it, the way it impacted Taiwan. He thought there should, Roy and I wrote, for example, the military section of the Taiwan Relations Act and basically said that their arm sales will continue and that the view of the PRC

[People's Republic of China] shouldn't be involved in that decision-making process. It would be based on the needs of Taiwan and the balance of forces.

Then on SALT II, (laughs) there was a case, there was, Glenn's view of SALT II was it was fine to have arms control with the Soviet Union. But that whatever you agree to, you need to be able to verify it. And after he looked at some of the details, he had real questions of whether it could be verified or not. And it just so happened that there was an opportunity for him, he was invited to go to the christening of the USS *Ohio* nuclear submarine. And so, he was going to make a presentation there. And from knowing what his views were, I drafted up a speech. He looked at it, made changes. And we finalized it. And I said to him, I said, "Boss, you might want to show this to the president. Because his wife is going to be there. And just make sure."

And so, he sent it up to the White House. (laughs) And the White House came back with saying, "You can't say this. You can't say that you're not sure about SALT II. You've got to be for it. My wife is going to be there and she's going to say things about SALT II that's good." (laughs) And Glenn said, "Well, I'm sorry, Mr. President, but these are my views."

So, we went up to wherever the USS *Ohio* was being christened, I can't remember now. And Carter's wife was there. And she did the christening. And then Glenn did his speech. And it contradicted what Carter's wife had said. Well, after this had occurred, I wasn't present, but Glenn said to me, "I just had a call from the president of the United States."

He said, “I’ve never been talked to like that by anybody. Certainly not a president.” And he paused and he said, “But you know, Carl, I’ve never talked to a president like I did today.” (laughs) So that will give you some sort of, Glenn and Carter were not the best of buddies. They had real strong differences of agreement.

ACKERMAN: When you all were working on the Taiwan Relations Act and SALT II, were there ever times when you disagreed with the senator about approaches to legislation or positions?

FORD: No. First of all, my job was not to disagree with the senator. My job was to learn what his views were and try to come up with ideas, questions, speeches, that fit his view of the way the world worked and what he wanted to do about Russia and China and various other parts of the world. I mean, I wasn’t a senator. He was. So, it was my job was to know exactly what he was thinking and what his views were, and then trying to take the sort of scut work out of it. Rather than him having to dig and do research on certain things, once I knew he liked something, I would give him briefings on, oh, by the way, did you know? But those were things that he had already mentioned to me that were important to him.

ACKERMAN: Okay. So how would you go about doing those things?

FORD: Well, part of it was that Glenn was often calling me up to his office. And so, during those opportunities, he would ask questions, and I would answer. And I would

say, “Oh, by the way, we talked about X. I just did some research and here’s what I found out. You might want to check with so and so.” So, it just simply was targets of opportunity. I normally didn’t, I can’t remember ever asking to come see him. It was always him coming and telling me, or his secretary telling me, “Listen, Carl, the senator wants to see you.” And we would spend an hour or so talking about the subject and then I would go back to my office.

ACKERMAN: What was it like being in the hot seat?

FORD: Well, I never felt like it was a hot seat. I felt like I was doing something that was very important. Here was this very important person. And I had the opportunity to help him accomplish what he wanted to accomplish. So, for me it was always a matter of service. Oh, I loved it. I just, it was something that, here was this person that wanted to get things done and needed ideas and help in putting his ideas into practice.

ACKERMAN: What was it like working for the senator during the transition between Carter and Reagan?

FORD: Things didn’t really change very much. In fact, one of the interesting things about that transition was that I was approached by Jesse Helms’ foreign policy person. And he was head of a group of Republicans, mostly (laughs) that were putting together the military and foreign policy part of the Reagan platform. And I had been sort of the go between of Jesse Helms and the rest of the committee. Jesse wouldn’t talk to

any liberal Democrats. (laughs) But he respected Glenn because of his service in the military and being an astronaut. And so, he would at least listen to what Glenn had to say. And so, I would go and talk to Senator Helms or most often with his staff and say, "Here's what we're trying to do. Can you help us?" (laughs) So Glenn would sometimes get Helms over on the majority. And so that's why I had this relationship.

Well, because it was a Republican thing, and Glenn was a Democrat, I said, I went to the senator and I said, "Listen, I've been invited to be a part of this group and help write the platform for Reagan. Do you object or would you like me not to do that?" And he said, "Carl, go ahead and do that. I think that would be good experience for you." (laughs) And so here was a Democratic senator from Ohio who was saying, "Go help Reagan in his election schemes."

So, I worked on that group. And there was another person from Glenn's office that did military. And he was also invited. But he didn't tell Glenn. And so, during the runup to the election, there was a Washington Post article about the Madison Group, all these people that met at the Madison Hotel and were doing Reagan's military and foreign policy platform. And it listed all our names. (laughs) And of course Glenn knew I was on the group. But he went, "Well, Bob's on there? What's Bob Andrews doing there?" And Bob had forgot to, he didn't check with him. And that didn't help Bob at all.

ACKERMAN: I'm sorry, what was Bob's last name?

FORD: Bob Andrews. He was from, had been I think a lieutenant colonel in the military and came on to Glenn's staff and was running the military part of it.

ACKERMAN: Would you say that that was—not just Bob, but you and Bob's involvement, kind of an outgrowth from Glenn's ambivalence? Or, I don't want to call it disdain, but dispute with the Carter administration, that he would lend you at least, knowingly, to the opposition election?

FORD: Yes. I think that's a very good way to say it. I mean, there was no love lost between Carter and Glenn. And they had this sharp conversation which I thought the senator was very upset that one, he had been yelled and screamed at, and secondly, he'd screamed back. But that there were so many differences between Glenn and Carter. And Carter was so unwilling to bring in Democrats on the Senate or the House side. He just wanted to do everything himself. So, I'm not sure what Glenn's feelings were about me working with Jesse. But I think that he thought that it would help him to sometimes get Jesse to come over and support Democratic initiatives on the committee. And so, he thought he might get something out of it.

ACKERMAN: What was it like working for the Madison Group?

FORD: It was fun. (laughs) I mean, the first day or so, people were saying, "Well, if Ford is going to be on this committee, or this group, we're leaving."

ACKERMAN: Ford, I'm sorry, could you—

FORD: They were saying that if I stayed on the group—

ACKERMAN: Oh, you specifically Ford. Sorry. For some reason I'm thinking of Gerald Ford.

FORD: Because I was working for a Democrat, and they were all Republicans.

ACKERMAN: Right. (laughs)

FORD: And so, Jesse Helms' guy said to them, "Well, leave then. Because Carl's going to be here." And they finally quieted down and finally accepted the fact that there was going to be a Democrat. I was sort of unpolitical most of my life. And so, I worked for a Democrat and they saw me as a Democrat. But they finally said, okay, well, we'll accept you.

ACKERMAN: Were they worried you were going to mole back to Senator Glenn what the platform was?

FORD: I don't think so. That may have been their thought. But I don't remember, no one, after Jesse Helms' guy gave them the word that I was staying, they really didn't bring it up anymore. And we found general agreement on what should go into the policy

issues to go into the platform. So, it turned out that after we worked together, there weren't that many disagreements. So, I didn't have any problems after the first initial day or so.

ACKERMAN: So, I mean, based on what you've spoken about here, it sounds like it was pretty straightforward. Senator Glenn thought this would be a good opportunity for you. He wanted you to take it. It wasn't as though he expected you to keep him apprised of what was going on. There wasn't really any, I guess I would say subterfuge involved in your working on it? It was just straightforward good opportunity for Carl, he should do it.

FORD: Yeah. And in fact, I don't remember him ever asking me, how's it going on that, in terms of the Madison Group. As you said, I think he saw it as an opportunity for me to grow and do different things. And he liked that.

ACKERMAN: Would you say that was kind of a consistent thing with Glenn?

FORD: Oh, yeah.

ACKERMAN: In terms of how he treated the staff?

FORD: Yeah. Yeah. Very much so. I mean, one example of, a story that I think says a lot about Glenn and his relationship to the staff, is that I was getting a call from a very high-profile CEO type person saying to me that, listen, "Carl, there's an astronaut of

the year award" or something like that that's coming up. "And I have a candidate that I'd like Glenn to support. Would you pass that on to him?" Well, there was a very strict distinction in most cases between policy and politics. I didn't do politics. Normally if I'd gotten that sort of question for most people, I just passed it on to the political people and they would talk to the senator about it. In this case, the guy was so important I mentioned to the senator. I said, "You know, there's this guy that's pressing me to talk to you about this competition or this award that's going to be made of an astronaut." He said, "Oh, Carl, I've already made my mind up on that. I know who it's going to be. What did this guy want?" And I said, "Well, he wants so and so." He said, "Well, that's the guy I'm going to vote for no matter what." And then he said, "Go back to this guy and tell him that you had to push and pull in order to get me to agree to accept this person." And he said, "The reason is because I want for people to think and know that you have my ear. And that they can go to you rather than directly to me." (laughs) And so I'm sure that he did that with other staff members, not just me. But it was this notion that his staff that he trusted, there were so many pressures on him. So many people wanted to see him and talk to him that he wanted his staff as much as possible to keep that off his back. And so, this was a way of sort of promoting my importance to Glenn. And obviously appreciated it. But it was unusual, I thought, for him to do it.

ACKERMAN: Well, sort of on that note, a little bit related but a little bit different, what was it like navigating the Cold War? The end of the Cold War, as a part of Senator Glenn's staff.

FORD: That's a difficult question for me. Because other than SALT II and arms control in general, it wasn't my area of concentration. It wasn't my area of knowledge. Plus, Glenn focused mostly on Asia. He had views about the way the world works and whatever. But he was really interested in Asia and China in particular, so that he would go to, for example, the Munich Defense Conference every year that's held. And we would travel to the Middle East. There was a lot of stuff that we did in the Middle East. But most of his effort and most of his time was spent on thinking about Asia. And of course, he was skeptical of promises by the Soviet Union and was certainly very much in support of having a strong defense in order to counter anything that the Soviet Union might come up with.

ACKERMAN: From your perspective, why do you think he was so skeptical of the Soviet Union?

FORD: Well, I can't speak for him in that case. He never really told me. But it was very much my own view that the Soviets had to be, NATO was important. That if left to their own devices, the Soviet Union would move into Eastern Europe, take over countries, and that it was important to stop that. And that the Cold War, our defense and our actions were important. Now it also was clear to me that we were, the Soviet Union couldn't keep up with us. They were having to spend billions of dollars and were always a day late and a dollar short in terms of capabilities compared to the United States. And so at least in general terms, it wasn't an issue that was paramount. That all of a sudden the Soviet Union was going to do something. It was under control, and we were having

arms control talks. All that was positive. And as long as the Soviet Union remained inside its borders, then Glenn wasn't concerned.

ACKERMAN: Well, right. I'm not asking you to, I guess I would say I'm not asking you to speak for the senator. But you spent a fair amount of time with him and you spoke to him. What would be your impression for why he was skeptical? And I know it mirrors your own views. If you don't, I'm just curious if you have a general thought about it.

FORD: I don't. Only because it was not something that he talked about a lot. He wasn't, he was focused on other things. And it wasn't until he decided to move to the Armed Services Committee that he began to focus more on military and strategic issues of that sort.

ACKERMAN: I understand. Thank you. And even knowing that he didn't really talk about it all that much is useful about getting an idea of the man. Because you know, he worked on a lot of issues. He was a senator for a long time. Like what was top of mind for him is good to know. On that note, Senator Glenn had a deep interest in China and Taiwan. What can you tell me about that?

FORD: Well, he, based on, I came along, just before the Taiwan Relations Act, I was coming over as a fellow into his office. And he walked in one day and said to Roy Werner, he said, "We're going to China." And I just assumed that Roy and the senator were going to China. And then all of a sudden he turned to me and he said, "Oh, Carl,

you're going, too." And so, in January of 1979 the Armed Services Committee, Sam Nunn, invited Glenn to go along with him and some of the other members of the Armed Services Committee on a trip to China and Korea in particular. And so, all of a sudden this guy that studied China for all these years and the Chinese military was going to get an opportunity to go to China. I was, you know, excited.

And I remember on the plane was getting close to the border, Glenn went up to the pilot. And he came back to me, he said, "Carl, come on up here." And he took me up in front of the plane. And he said, "We're going over the coast now." And so, he showed me, you know, I'd been looking at satellite photography and U-2 photography, but this was the first time actually seeing China from an airplane.

And so, we had a series of meetings in China. One of them was with a group of what I called the PLA [People's Liberation Army] guys that are American handlers. They're usually overweight, haven't been with a tactical unit for years. (laughs) But they are the ones that, they're the only ones allowed that Americans could talk to at the time. And we went to this meeting and there were these admirals and generals, and everybody was talking. And all of a sudden this one guy, he hit the table, and he said, "They have to be punished." (laughs) We go whoa, what's all this about? And it finally turned out he was talking about Vietnam.

Well, a few weeks later, Deng Xiaoping was in Washington and told President Carter that they were going to punish Vietnam. And so, not only did we come back and have the

work on the Taiwan Relations Act, but of course we also saw then that in fact there was going to be a war between China and Taiwan. He--

ACKERMAN: I'm sorry, you meant China and Vietnam.

FORD: China and Vietnam. I'm sorry. He came to me at one point and said, "Carl, I want you to work with others on the staff and put up, prepare a one-year report on implementation of the Taiwan Relations Act." And so, I worked with the Republicans interested in East Asia. And three staff members, we went to Taiwan and talked to the people and wrote a report about the first year of the implementation of the China-Taiwan Relations Act. And then Glenn said to me, he said, "I want to go to China." Well, okay. (laughs) So we took another trip to China. And this time, it was very quick. But it was a second visit. And he talked to them about the problems that he was having with the way they were dealing with Taiwan.

Some months later, he came back to me. He said, "Listen, we're going to go back to China." I said, "Okay, boss. Where do you want to go?" He said, "Well, listen. I've got two business partners. And their wives. And Annie. And we're going to make this a business trip, but we're going to take them with us." (laughs)

And so, I worked with the military and got a train and I made all the arrangements. We went and had a bunch of meetings in China. And I remember we were going from Beijing to I think it was Wuhan and there was no air conditioning. And all of these people were

millionaires, of course, his business partners. One was the person who ran all of his Holiday Inns, and the other was a banker. And so, they were used to flying first class.

Well, they got on this train. And I was the last one on. And I looked down and Glenn had already taken off his shirt, was in his T-shirt. And they were assuming that all the men would go in one room and all the women would go in another room. And as I came up to Glenn, he said, “Carl. You’ve got to fix this.” And I said, “Oh, yes sir. Yes, sir.”

So, I found the Chinese guy who was traveling with us and he’d already gone to sleep. And I woke him up. And I said, “Listen. We’ve got to have more cars, more rooms than you’re giving us. There are room for the senator and his wife, business partner and his wife, business partner and his wife, and for myself and for one of his assistants.” And the guy said, “Whoa, whoa, whoa, whoa. I can’t do that.” I said, “We’re going home then.” That’s what he told me. He said, “If you can’t fix it, we’re going home.”

So, the Chinese guy got off somewhere in the night at some place. And so, from that point on, we had enough places for all of these people to put their luggage. And it was no longer a problem. Although we’d gone in August. It was terribly hot. The worst time to go to China. And we took a trip down the Yangtze and saw all of the various sites along the way. And after we got through with the Yangtze trip, the two business partners split off and went to, we all went to Hong Kong. But they split off and decided to go someplace else. And Glenn and his wife and myself and one of his assistants were in Hong Kong. And I had arranged visits in Japan. And so, we flew up to Tokyo. And

unbeknownst to me, because I usually made all the arrangements for the travel through the military and the State Department, he had made arrangements to take Annie to a traditional Chinese [Japanese] inn somewhere south of Tokyo.

ACKERMAN: You mean, I'm sorry, Japanese inn.

FORD: Japanese inn. One of those, you know, it was very much, he had heard from Senator [Michael Joseph "Mike"] Mansfield, who had formerly been the chairman of the East Asia Committee, about how important it was to see these cultural things. So, Glenn had put up a thousand dollars or so to take Annie down to the hotel. And again, like I did when he said he was going to China with Senator Nunn, I assumed that I was going to go on home. And he said, "Oh, no, Carl. You're going to go with us." So, he had made arrangements for four people to go to this traditional inn. And I got a call from my sister. And she said, "Mama died." I said, "Oh my God. I'll get on the next plane out of here."

So, I told the senator and Annie, I said, "Listen, I'm sorry. I've got to go back home. So, you guys are going to go on to your trip at the inn. I'm going to get the next plane back to the States." And they said, "We understand, Carl. Please, go ahead." So, I made arrangements for me to go back to the States. And the next day I was in the waiting room, I'd already gone through customs, and I was sitting there. And all of a sudden I noticed the senator. And I thought well maybe the Japanese would let him in through customs. But then I saw Annie. And then I saw his other assistant. And I said, I went up and Annie

said, “Carl, we didn’t want you to go back home by yourself. We want to be with you.” And so, they cancelled, lost a thousand dollars or so, and they went back with me so I wouldn’t have to travel back to the States by myself. Now that was something that would tell you a lot about who Glenn and Annie were, and why I call him more like an uncle than an employer. He really did think about and support the people who worked for him.

ACKERMAN: What was Annie like on all of these trips?

FORD: Oh, Annie was, Annie was his high school sweetheart. She had a problem stuttering, as you probably know. But she was always kind and gentle, and he would invite the staff out to his house in Potomac and we would go and he would barbecue. His staff was really almost like an extended family. And I got to know Annie better than most. One, because, and this has to do with the time period when he decided he wanted to run for president. And Annie had said, listen, if you’re going to run for president, I’m going to have to get out there and campaign for you. So, I’m going to have to give the speech. And she had been taking special stuttering lessons to help her improve her stuttering. And I’m not sure why I was, it must have had something to do with foreign policy other than why we were going to Ohio, but Glenn, Annie and I flew back in his plane to Columbus. And on the way to the venue, he would, he’d say, “Okay, let’s practice one more time.” And she would go through the speech that he had obviously written for her. And she would make a mistake. And he’d say, “Oh, that’s okay. Keep doing it. Let’s do it again.” They must have done it ten times on the way (laughs) to the venue. And I was in the backseat.

And when we got to the venue, Glenn and I were sort of in the wings. And we could see Annie. And I was standing so I could see Annie and Glenn. Well, she made her presentation for the first time in her life she'd given a speech. And every word, you could see the senator's lips reading for him what he had written for her. I mean, he was going (imitates) and you could see his mouth moving. And this big smile on his face. And she got through and made no mistakes. And he was, wow! I've never seen his smile so large. It was, again, a sign of how he and Annie were still very much in love after all those years, and how close that relationship was.

ACKERMAN: I definitely want to talk more about '84. We're at an hour. So, I want to make sure if you need like ten minutes to take a break, or if you're good to keep going.

FORD: I'm fine. Let's keep going.

ACKERMAN: All right. Let's keep going. Let's roll right into '84. You're anticipating me, and that's great. So, what was it like when Senator Glenn ran for president?

FORD: Well, as I said earlier, there was a clear distinction in his office between the political people and the policy people. There was really no mixture between it. So, anything having to do with politics, other people were supposed to handle. It just so happened that when Glenn went, they put together a thing up on the Hill with a lot of traditional Democratic supporters. And it was sort of a kickoff thing of getting money

from people. (laughs) And so we got there and I'm not sure why I was there. But at this point, I went with him. Although it was political. And all of a sudden, they started asking questions about Israel. And he had two strikes against him. He had voted for F15s for Saudi Arabia, and he had supported AWACS [Airborne Warning and Control System] for Saudi Arabia. Both of which Israel was totally opposed to. And so, these questions were coming, "Why did you do that?" And so, Glenn's reaction was to give them the reasons why it was important for Saudi Arabia to have the F15s and the AWACS. And he was sort of reporting it in a sort of a technical way. It was a good decision. Oh, no, no. (laughs) That's not what the audience—it was almost like they were going to throw chairs at him over this issue, it got so loud.

And so afterwards I said to him, I said, "Boss, you know, it doesn't have to be that way." And he said, "Well, I'm not going to change my mind. The F15s was the right decision. AWACS was the right decision. And I'm not, just for political reasons, I'm not going to change my views." And I said, "Well, you don't have to change your views." I said, "Do you support Israel as the only democratic country in the region?" He said, "Of course! Of course I'm supportive of Israel. I'm a big supporter of Israel." And I said, "Isn't one of your business partners a Holocaust survivor?" And he said, "Yes." I said, "Well, why don't you mention those things first before you mention the fact that you thought the decision about the F15s was right?" And he said, "Well, okay." He tried it. And it worked. I mean, I told him, speak first from your heart, and then from your head.

Well, although I wasn't supposed to, because I was policy guy, as soon as the fundraising people found out that I had worked wonders with this issue on Israel, they insisted that I go with him everywhere that he went. So, I went to all the debates. And there was this occasion where oh, what was I going to mention, what we worked out was that before he would go out in front of a group to raise money or on a debate or anything like anything, I would actually sort of lightly pinch him on the arms, on his suitcoat. And I said, "Remember, heart first. Head second." And he would go out and do his thing. And it seemed to be, they liked it. I mean, all of a sudden they said well, okay, we don't agree with some of this views. But he does like Israel, and he does have this friend who's a Holocaust survivor. He's one of us.

But the money people were so insistent that on one occasion I had duties back in Washington and he was going to be in New York. And so, they arranged a helicopter to fly me from DC to New York, land on the hotel roof, and go down and go, "Remember, from your heart first, and your head second." (laughs)

And so, I got to see a lot of what it's like to be in a presidential campaign because I went to all of the debates and fund raisers. And one of the debates that I remember most clearly was in Boston. And they said, "Okay, here are the names of people that you're going to have to ask a question of." And they gave a name to Senator Glenn. And it happened to be Jesse, oh God. Can't remember. Jesse [Jackson]—African American, ran for president.

ACKERMAN: Oh, now I'm blanking on the name, but I know exactly what you're talking about.

FORD: Jesse, okay. And so, I said, "Boss, you may want to tell Jesse that you've got his name." Well, he not only did that, but he did me one better. He said, "Jesse, and here's the question I'm going to ask you." So, it was about five minutes before they were supposed to go onstage. And it had been about 30 or 40 minutes since Glenn had told Jesse the question that he was going to ask. And all of a sudden one of Jesse's people came up to me and said, "Carl, Jesse's going to ask Senator Glenn a question." And I said, "Well, what's the question?" He said, "I don't know." (laughs) And so I told the senator. I said, "Well, Jesse's going to ask you a question. But he didn't tell me what it was going to be." Well, of course, he fielded it well.

I think that my own view of sort of observing the election and campaign process was that they decided to hire a bunch of high-profile, big-name consultants to run the campaign. And Glenn never trusted them. He didn't know them, and he didn't know whether he could take their advice or not. So, there was always this tension between the campaign and Glenn. And I think that they should have let Glenn be Glenn. And they didn't. So, he borrowed a lot of money. At one point, the whole staff went down to Alabama. And I was in the Wiregrass part of Alabama. And going out and trying to generate support from people to support Glenn in the primary. And this one gentleman was supposedly the top dog in this particular county. And I went out and had a meeting with him. And I walked out and had a meeting with him. And I walked in, and I said, you know, "I'm here

representing Senator John Glenn. He's running for president and would like your support in the campaign." He said, "How many votes do you need?" (laughs) I said, "Oh, whoa, whoa. We just need your support. Make sure you get as many votes as you can." He said, "Oh, don't worry about it. Glenn's going to win in this county." Well, it turns out he was about the only county that he did win.

And he kept putting more money, and he borrowed a lot of money. And at the end it was really sad that this great man was, had this huge amount of money that he was in debt, owing to banks and various other things, that I know was something that he, that worried him, bothered him and was something that was very, very unfortunate. So. That's what I think about the campaign.

ACKERMAN: No, that was great! I've two things I want to confirm. One is, you were talking about Jesse Jackson, right? For the record. I believe you were talking about Jesse Jackson.

FORD: Yeah, Jesse Jackson. Yeah, I'm sorry.

ACKERMAN: No worries. As soon as you said it, I was reaching. Because I kept wanting to say Helms, because we were talking about Jesse Helms earlier. I was like, that's not right. Jesse Helms wouldn't be at a Democratic debate. And then the second question I had is was there ever a time when you were paid by the campaign? Like working for the

campaign? Or were you always working out of the Senate staff, even when you were attached to Glenn on these trips?

FORD: Always attached to the Foreign Relations Committee. I was not part of the campaign. And as I said, there weren't any other policy people that ever went with him on the campaigns. I went because the fundraiser people (laughs) were insistent that I do my little trick of touching his arm and saying, "Heart first, head second." And so, unlike most of the, the rest of the staff, policy staff, I was the only one that ever went with him on any of these campaign things.

ACKERMAN: All right. What was it like to do your job, I mean, I'm assuming you continued to do your job during these events. Like what was it like trying to do your job on the road while he was campaigning? Was it any different?

FORD: No, no. I mean, I only went, you know, he would go to a fundraiser, and okay, I'd go with him. But that would only be a couple of hours or a day. The committee never really said anything to me. As long as I was supporting my senator who had recommended me and sponsored me on the committee, it was fine with them.

ACKERMAN: All right. What would you say that, from your perspective, Senator Glenn's views on national defense were?

FORD: Well, he believed in a strong national defense. And was very knowledgeable of military affairs. I mean, he'd been a fighter pilot in World War Two. And interestingly, I was always interested in getting to go to Japan. And he said, "Carl, oh, I still can see those red meatballs." You know, the Japanese aircraft had these red symbols on their wings. He said, "I don't want to go there." And he said, "Also, I've got labor unions in Ohio. Car people. I don't know. I don't want to go to—" And I said, "Well, what if we went to Japan and you were shaking your finger at one of the auto people and telling them that they ought to do it differently?" No. (laughs) So it was very difficult to get him to go to Japan.

He also had, after World War Two, he had been a pilot in Korea for the Marshall Mission. And he had flew a P51 and was providing support for the Marshall Mission. So, he understood military affairs. He'd been a military guy his whole career except being an astronaut. And he enjoyed talking about military affairs. In fact, eventually that's why he moved to the Armed Services Committee, because that was really his favorite topic.

I went to him, it was about six years in, and I had been approached to be the national intelligence officer for East Asia, and go back to the CIA. And I went to him, and I said, "Boss," by the way, Roy Werner had taken the job in the Carter administration over Glenn's objections. And he said, "That's not the right job for you. I will tell you when it's a good job. Don't take that one. I don't want you to leave." Well, Roy left. And in fact, Roy told me that the reason he'd been insistent on having me as a foreign affairs fellow, because he was tired, he said, of carrying Glenn's briefcase. And he wanted somebody

that the senator trusted to be able to take his place. And so that's why I eventually became, I was Roy's replacement.

And so, when I had an opportunity to leave, I went to him and I said, "Boss, this is the opportunity." And he said, "Carl, that's a great idea." He said, "I think that's perfect for you." And he said, "Oh, by the way, I've decided that I'm going to move from foreign affairs to armed services." And it was clear that that meant that I was going to be going back somewhere, because I wasn't going to be working for him anymore.

And so, I went from Glenn's office to CIA. And instead of being just a consultant, I wanted a formal reuniting with my CIA career. And they allowed that. So, I went back.

ACKERMAN: You say he was for a strong national defense. How did he conceive of strength? Can you speak to that?

FORD: Well, I think that he saw that we needed, I know that he believed that the US had a special role in the world. And after World War Two, like many people, he believed that it was America's role to keep order in the international system. And a part of that was keeping a strong defense so that people like the Soviet Union or China would not take advantage of any opportunity to expand their power or influence. And so, he also understood the technical parts of it. I mean, we would fly to Ohio in his plane, and it was like he was still a fighter pilot. Because he would check out that plane before we got in it. Everything had to be on, he would go around the wings and look at everything and do all

these checks and various things. And occasionally he would let me fly the plane when we actually got up in the air. So that he was very much focused on technical issues and capabilities of militaries. And that was something that was just part of him.

ACKERMAN: So, I suppose what I'm trying to say, in sum you would say that Glenn's view on a strong national defense is one that is technically proficient, technologically superior. One that the United States plays a large role in the world, right? It's not just US alone. Like that's what I'm trying to get at. How he sees American hegemony, right?

FORD: I would say that it's exactly the opposite of what we're seeing today with our president [Donald J. Trump]. I mean, he was a strong believer in alliances and understood that alliances were actually more important than our own defense budget. That friends in Europe and Asia were as important to our national security as the size of the defense budget. And beyond that, I'm not sure exactly what I can say.

ACKERMAN: All useful. We're trying to get an idea of how you saw him, and also how he thought about things, from your perspective. If that makes sense, right. What he might talk about or think about in terms of strength or power projection. How he views the world, right? And how that view got translated to the people who worked with him.

FORD: Well, part of the problem was that my views and his views were so close that I didn't really notice. He as interested in the areas that I was interested in. His views about the role of the US in the world was so similar that, I mean, it was easy to work for

him and easy to provide him with information. Because it was things I was interested in. And so that there was never, I can't recall anything that position that he would take on world affairs that I would go ooh, I have to do something that I don't really believe in. No. No, he was very much a World War Two internationalist. And believed that there was an important role for the US in the world and that he was trying to help in any way he could to ensure the success of our policies abroad.

ACKERMAN: I want to go back for a moment because I just realized something I'd forgotten to ask. Which is, what was Senator Glenn's interest in Taiwan specifically?

FORD: Well, Taiwan was, as you know, the history of it is that in 1949, when the Chinese communists took over the mainland, there were a group of mainlanders under Chiang Kai Shek that came to Taiwan. And they, the mainlanders, ruled under martial law. And were very, and the native Taiwanese, the people that was there before 1949, were very much mistreated. And so that Taiwan was not a place that everybody thought was a good place. Glenn certainly didn't like the way that the mainlanders ran the country. But he didn't want China to dictate what Taiwan's future was. He believed that the people on Taiwan should decide. If they wanted to reunite with China, okay. He thought that would be a mistake. But he certainly was supportive of them staying apart from Taiwan. One of my favorite stories of Glenn is about Taiwan.

1:21:32

ACKERMAN: Please.

FORD: We were planning a trip to Taiwan. And it just happened as a coincidence that there was a Chinese American, a Taiwanese American professor from somewhere up in a Northeast college, I can't remember which one, he had gone back to visit Taiwan, visit his family, and had been arrested by mainlander police. Put in jail. And then the story was that he had jumped out of a window and killed himself. He had been at the university that he had gone to and went up and got in the window and jumped out. Well, nobody believed that. And certainly not in the US. That there had to be more to the story than that.

So, in preparations for the trip, I said, "Senator, would you like to meet with the Presbyterians?" He was a Presbyterian himself. And he said, "Yeah, yeah." I said, "You know, they're very much opposed to martial law. And many or most are native Taiwanese." He said, "Yeah, let's set that up."

Well, when I talked to the people in Taiwan, they go, "Whoa, no, we're not—" I said, "Well, listen, the senator isn't coming unless he can also meet with the Presbyterians." And they said, "Oh, okay."

So, we arrived in Taiwan. We had several meetings. Then we went to see the Presbyterians. Our next meeting was to be with the premier of Taiwan. And so, Glenn went in and he started talking to the Presbyterians. The escort officer, who normally just stood right by my side all the time disappeared. He didn't want to be in part of this meeting with the Presbyterians. And so, Glenn talked to them and he talked to them and

he talked to them and he talked to them. And the escort officer came to me, and he said, "We're going to be late to see the premier. Talk to the senator." So, I sent him a note saying, you know, the escort officer is saying we need to move on to the next meeting. He said, okay. He kept talking. (laughs) And the escort officer came in a second time. He said, "We're late. The premier's waiting for the senator. We've got to go." And so, I talked to the senator. And he said, "Carl, you go in my place and tell the premiere that I'll be there shortly."

Well, the idea of a staffer going to see the premier of a country was unusual, to say the least. And I told the staff officer, I said, "This is what the senator said. He wants me to go ahead and meet with the premier."

And so, we got there. And the premiere was very kind, very nice. Met him. And he started telling me how this guy had jumped out of the window. And he would get in this window himself. Big window in his room, in his office, and say, "He jumped out of it like this." It was strange to see the head of a country in a window pretending to jump out.

Well, finally the senator shows up. And they have their meeting. And the premier gets back up in the window and shows how he could have jumped out. And Glenn said to him, and the basic answer, he says, "Listen, Sir. Unless you become more democratic, you're going to lose support of the United States. This martial law and this treatment you're giving Taiwanese is not something that Americans can stomach." And of course, the premier was (grunts).

Well, they had their meeting. And Glenn left. And on the way out, he said, "Carl, do you think they got the message?" (laughs) And this whole, I wondered, he had done it purposefully. To see the Presbyterians first and be late to show how strongly he felt about the issue. And of course, then he said, "You need to become more democratic." And I thought, wow. I didn't realize what he was doing. And it was a masterful way of dealing with that particular country and that particular issue. And I was always, wow. I wish I could have thought of that. I wish I knew what was going on when I was involved in it.

But we, he had traveled all around Taiwan over various visits and was very supportive of there being more democracy in Taiwan. And I think that was what kept his attention was following developments that showed that Taiwan was moving from an authoritarian, autocratic system to a more democratic one.

And of course, because he was interested, I made a number of trips by myself to Taiwan. And I remember in one case I went in to see a mainlander. Very senior person. And I noticed on his coffee table there were native Taiwanese opposition publications. And I said to him, "Do you read these?" And he said, "No, those are my son's." (laughs) So there was a real change in Taiwan over time, where even the mainlander children began to realize that there needed to be more open society. And so, in fact, if you look at the records today on the level of democracy of various countries around the world, there's a greater degree of democracy in Taiwan than the United States. And I think that Glenn and

others who worked on Taiwan when it was in a martial law country really did a great service to Taiwan and also to the United States.

ACKERMAN: Yeah, I had the opportunity to live in Taiwan from 2013 to 2015. So, I'm very personally curious as well about the senator's involvements. It's a great place. It is. I love returning when I can. Have you been recently?

FORD: No, unfortunately not. I keep up with events there. But I have not been able to travel. In fact, as I tell people, I've coauthored a book with a professor at Arizona State University on intelligence. And there was a conference last week. And I did like a Zoom recording that was part of my partner's PowerPoint. And I had to say to them as I, I apologize for not being able to be there in person. But I've been told by people that I can no longer put travel in my to-do book. (laughs) At this point, going to the grocery store is a major deal for me. Let alone traveling someplace.

ACKERMAN: No, I'm sure those flights when you were taking them were even more brutal than they are now in terms of time and length.

FORD: Yeah. Yeah. Well fortunately, after I left, when I first retired, I started a consulting firm. And I had been at the Pentagon. And I had been the principal deputy assistant secretary of defense at ISA. But I concurrently was at first, the first two years I was the deputy assistant for East Asia, and the second two years I was deputy assistant for the Middle East South Asia. So, I got to travel a lot to East Asia and to Taiwan. And

we were, Pentagon, very much pushing for arms sales to Taiwan. And the State Department was, you know, trying to oppose everything. No, no, you can't do that. You can't sell them this, you can't sell them that. So, we had, I left the East Asia part and went to Middle East. And the guy that was in charge of all arms sales worldwide came to me. And he said, "Carl, as you know, the president at Fort Worth has announced that he's going to sell the F16 to Taiwan." And of course, the State Department's just going batshit. And they're saying that it's got to be the basic F16. And he said, "The Taiwanese don't want to buy the basic. They want, not the A and B, they want the C version." Which was the latest version at the time for the US Air Force. And he said, "I've got an idea." He said, "We can sell them the basic F16. And at the same time, have them buy an upgrade package." And the State Department won't understand what we're doing. They'll assume, okay, they just got the basic F16. They won't understand how they're also getting the upgrade. The upgrade was what was taking US Air Force F16s and making them into Cs and Ds. So, he said, "Would you go see Jim Lilley and talk to him? I don't know him. You know him well." Jim had been at CIA, and I'd written an estimate for him. And so, we'd had a relationship over time.

And so, I went down with the guy from arms sales. And I said to Jim, "Listen, this is an idea that's come up. And I think you might want to consider it." And so, he gave him the idea. And the president was pushing for the sale. And this was the sort of greased the skids. And the F16 was eventually approved.

And even ten years after, the State Department was saying, "Well, we just gave them the basic. They don't have the C or D." Well, yes they did. Because they had the Taiwan mid-life upgrade.

ACKERMAN: That's amazing.

FORD: And one of the things that was most interesting to me when I was at CIA, I had started doing, using war game methodology, you know, board games, to look at questions about China. And it was based on first there was a guy from the Soviet branch that was sent to the China branch. And his recommendation was, he doesn't write well. Well, come to find out, may he not write well, but he was the most knowledgeable person in the world about Soviet logistics. He probably knew more than most military officers in the Russian military.

And so, we put together this board game using, there were a lot of statistics on the weapons that the Russians had in China. And so, we put together what the Russian forces would have and then developed numbers for the Chinese. And we ran this war game on, first one was just a very simple one. He picked out a place along the Chinese border that the Soviets might attack. And so, he attacked. And as expected in the first few hours, the border defense forces were just pushed to the side and the Russians kept pushing forward.

Well, they then began to hit reserve forces but deployed in the next defensive terrain. And it got a little bit more difficult. But they pushed through them as well. But then they

met the main force units of the Chinese military. And China had been moving forces from the south up to the north very quickly. And so that while the Soviets were very successful, my partner came to me and said, “Listen, Carl. My guys are running out of oil and gasoline and water. And ammunition. This is so much different than the war they would fight in NATO that they’re fighting just like they did there. They’re hoping to break through and then envelop on the forces.” They didn’t plan on a traditional defense in depth, so that each level they were coming to, there was more force, more effort having to be made. And he said, “My guess is that at this point, because they’re so low on ammunition and other logistics, they are likely to think about nuclear weapons.” He said, “Let’s stop the game.” And I said, okay, fine. (laughs)

Well, that same methodology of using a board game, I came up with the idea, said well let’s do it against, what would the Chinese military think about an attack on Taiwan? Not who would win or lose, but what would the joint staff looking at Taiwan, how they would visualize that particular problem. And I went to my boss, and I said, “This is what I’d like to do.” He said, “Yeah, it sounds like a great idea.” I said, “But I’m going to need more people than myself. I need some of my fellow analysts to help me.”

And so, there were three or four of us that eventually worked on the project. And the first thing we did, we went out to Taiwan and talked to all the leaders, saw the beaches, looked at their defenses and their plans. And then we came back. And we ran the board game. And the board game came to the conclusion that our judgment was that the Chinese could take Taiwan by force. But the casualties and impact on their military

would be so great that the military in Beijing would probably be saying to their political colleagues, oh, it's going to be hard. We might not be able to do it. Let's be very careful about this.

We wrote it up in a report. It actually got briefed to the Congress just before I arrived. But they took the part that China could take Taiwan by force. And they didn't emphasize the part that we had emphasized. But it's very expensive and the forces can be very harmed. And I'm not sure why I even ventured into this. This is more about me than about Senator Glenn. But anyway.

ACKERMAN: It's fascinating.

FORD: And that's also, I think, why Glenn was very much supportive of Roy and I working on the defense part of the Taiwan Relations Act.

ACKERMAN: Great color to know, because why Glenn wanted you on the foreign relations staff, it's important to know, right, that you were involved in this game before you get to the Senate. On that note, though, about stories, I hear tell there's a story about a time Glenn was in Jordan. And you know it.

FORD: Yes.

ACKERMAN: And I really want to hear it. So, please.

FORD: Well, sometime during the Carter administration, King Hussein had come to Washington at the president's request. And the president had talked to Glenn about escorting him around town. Take him to the museum, particularly the one where his capsule was, you know. And it turns out that King Hussein was a pilot, just like Glenn. And you could see them sort of using their arms and hands like flying. So, then there was immediate personal reaction between the two men. And Hussein, before he left, he said, "Senator," or he said, "John, next time you're in the Middle East, please come and visit Jordan and have lunch with me." And Glenn said, "Fine. We'll do that."

Well, a year or so later, we happened to have a trip that we were going to Israel. And I said, "Well, this would, what about Jordan? You'll want to go to Jordan while you're there." He said, "Yeah, that's a good idea." So, we arranged that we would take a car from Israel up to Amman. And so, we arrive at what was called the Summer Palace. And it was sort of like a very nice place in Fort Worth or Dallas. I mean, it wasn't one of Saddam Hussein's palaces. It was a very nice, modern-looking house. And we got out of the car. And there were some steps from upstairs. And all of a sudden Queen Noor, who was an American, came running downstairs and grabbed Glenn and hugged him, and said, "Oh, I wanted to say hello to you." Apparently they had, Glenn's children and her had been friends when they would visit and vacation in Colorado, where they both had condos. So, she said, "But you know, this is the Middle East. I can't be there at lunch. But I wanted to tell you how much I'm glad you're here."

ACKERMAN: What was she wearing? Do you remember what the queen was wearing during this brief interlude?

FORD: It was typical Arabic dress. Wasn't American. But she ran back upstairs. And just as she did, the front door opened, and the king came out. And there were at least 15 or 20 people with him. And I couldn't get over it. He would take one step to the left and everybody else would move with him. And I kept thinking, it's like bees. These people were just constantly around him, and very much in sort of step with him. It looked very odd. I'd never seen anything like it.

And so, we moved into the house and we could see that there was a lunch for a king set up in a room on our left. And before we sat down, the king, someone came up and handed him a telephone. And he said, "John, this is an important call. I've got to take this. But you go ahead and sit down. I'll be there shortly." Well, normally the practice would be, and we assumed that there would be somebody sitting down with us. But when he left, all the bees left with him. So, we're there by ourselves. And I looked down in front of me and there is this solid gold goblet. And this poor guy from Arkansas was going I wonder if I could get that in my luggage. And just as I was thinking that I hear this, "Carl! Carl!" And I turned and the U.S. senator from Ohio, astronaut, national hero, had taken a solid gold plate and put it down his pants. (laughs) And I said, "Oh my God, get that out of there!" And he laughed and he pulled it out. And just as he put it on the table, the king came back in with all of his bees. But we were within two or three seconds of a national incident. U.S. senator steals golden plate from Jordan. It was really, but it

shows a lot, one, he was a, his sense of humor was so good. And he was just a really regular guy. (laughs) As much as he has fame as he'd had and as much attention given to him, he was just still the guy from a small town in Ohio. And had the same sort of views and thoughts as all of us do. You know, ordinary guys. But it was, it's my favorite story about Glenn. Because I think it tells a lot about him.

ACKERMAN: Between you, me and the recorder, did you end up taking a goblet?

FORD: No. (laughter)

ACKERMAN: I'm sure you didn't. (laughs)

FORD: I would have liked to, but no. No. My briefcase wasn't big enough.

ACKERMAN: Fair enough. Fair enough. I understand the temptation, though. So, when you were, when Glenn was transitioning, as we get towards the end of this, when Glenn was transitioning away from foreign relations to armed services, was there any doubt in your mind about where you'd end up? Or did you know you were going back to CIA?

FORD: I didn't know that he was moving until I told him that I had this opportunity to go back to CIA. Which he very much supported. And indeed, Glenn opened all kinds of doors for me for the rest of my career. He had given me, as a mentor, I'd seen how policy was made. I'd seen how the interaction between the executive branch

and the Congress. I'd met more people than you could imagine: Republicans, Democrats, whatever. And so that in fact, the reason I became the NIO [National Intelligence Officer] for East Asia was that the people that came in with Reagan had got together. There were three of them. Paul Wolfowitz at State, and I've got to remember his name, the guy from the NSC, and the guy from the Defense, Richard Armitage. And they said, "Carl, we're being asked to advise on who to have as NIO. And if you have no objection, we're going to use your name." So that when they call from say NSA, they're going to say, "Well, who do you think should be the NIO?" They would say Carl Ford. When they got a call from Defense, they went, "Oh, of course, Carl Ford." They call the State Department, "Yes, Carl Ford."

So, during that first four years of the administration, I'm not sure which it was, I was working very closely with Republicans in the Reagan administration. And all of them got promoted up. And when they got promoted up, I got promoted up. I got to hook my wagon to their star. And whenever they got a new job, they'd say, "Well, Carl, do you want to do this? Do you want to do that?" So, from Glenn's office to the NIO, everything else was based on the connections that I'd had with Glenn.

ACKERMAN: Did you stay in touch with the senator after you stopped working for him?

FORD: I did. Probably not as much as I should have. I mean, one, I have a very strong sense that he has a lot to do and a lot of things to think about. And he's got more calls than he can answer. And I don't want to bother the man. I adore him. He is my idol.

But I'm not going to just call up all the time and take his time away. So, I would meet him. I would see him. We would talk. When I went from NIO to the Defense Department, in working for [George Herbert Walker] Bush I, and [Richard Bruce] Dick Cheney, I kept him, he was very much involved. And say, "Oh, yeah, this is a great deal" and keep me informed about what's going on and etcetera.

ACKERMAN: What was he like as a mentor?

FORD: Well, everything I know about the way government works, it started from learning from him. I mean, he let me be the fly on the wall in all of his meetings. And with all these kings and presidents. I remember, for example, we went to the Middle East, and we went to [Menachem] Begin's home. And it was very narrow stairs. And we went up and talked to Begin. We then got a briefing. And oh, what was his name, that later became prime minister. Oh, I can't think of it. It was Prime Minister Begin. Anyway, here was this general that later became prime minister that was giving this briefing. (laughs) And Begin got so upset because he couldn't get the slides going right and he was sort of screaming at him, you know. And later he became the prime minister of Israel. But no. I got to visit and see how international relations operate. Not by being that part of it myself, but by watching him. And learning from him how to go about doing things. And I couldn't have learned that from any better mentor than him.

ACKERMAN: What would you say his—so, his mentorship style was including you, just making sure that you were given opportunities? Like how would you describe his style of mentorship to his staff?

FORD: Well, he just simply included me. In all of his meetings having to do with foreign policy. And it usually consisted of a brief discussion of what was going to happen during the meeting, the meeting, and then his reaction to the meeting afterwards, after the person had left. So, that it was learning by following his example and seeing how he operated and how he dealt with foreign leaders and people in the executive branch, etcetera.

ACKERMAN: Would you say there were any personality traits, style of management, you know, things that you took from him that you used in your career?

FORD: Well, I think so. I mean, I had, when I went to the Defense Department as a deputy assistant, and the principal deputy for ISA [International Security Affairs], I'd always been an analyst. I'd never been a manager. And so, all of a sudden I was a manager at the Defense Department responsible for East Asia and then for Middle East. And I simply tried to apply what I'd learned from him in dealing with my staff and how I operated overseas when I would visit foreign officials, or they would come and visit me. (laughs) There was one famous case for me was that after Tiananmen in China, I told my staff, I said, "Listen, I don't want to see the Chinese. I don't want to talk to them until they straighten this out." And so, a year or so after Tiananmen, my China guy said,

"Listen, Boss, the Chinese attaché would like to come in and see you." And I said, "Well, only if he comes in and kneels down and begs for forgiveness." (laughs) And so, it turns out that the meeting wasn't set up. They'd taken me seriously about this. And several months later I said, "Well, listen, why am I not seeing the Chinese guy?" He said, "Well, because he won't come in (trails off)." I said, "Well, listen. Let's talk to him." So, he came in. But more than anything, it was keeping my staff informed, letting them know what I was thinking and letting them express their views. And doing what I thought Glenn would do in any circumstance. I mean, working for a guy like that, you learn a lot. And at each level that I achieved, particularly when I got into management, when I was at I&R, I tried to run I&R like I think Glenn would have run I&R.

ACKERMAN: I'm sorry, what's I&R? The full name of it?

FORD: I was the assistant secretary at State for Intelligence & Research.

ACKERMAN: Thank you.

FORD: And this was in [George W.] Bush II [Administration]. And I'd gotten a call from Colin Powell, who I knew briefly from the Pentagon. And he said, "Carl, I want you to come work for me." And he said, "But you can't have East Asia." And I said, "Well, I wasn't thinking about that. But boss could I have I&R?" He said, "Hmm. I hadn't thought of that. Yes." (laughs) So I got back into intelligence, but at the State Department.

ACKERMAN: Oh, that's cool. Just receiving a call from Colin Powell. As one does. (laughter)

FORD: Well, Colin Powell was very much like Glenn. He was just a regular guy that was someone you could really look up to. I mean, he was another mentor for me of seeing how somebody at that high level operated. And so that was an interesting period of time. I enjoyed my, probably the best job I'd ever had was being the assistant secretary. But unfortunately, it was at a time when there was a problem with the weapons of mass destruction in Iraq. And my very small staff, but very expert staff, had taken exception to CIA and DIA's position that Iraq had restarted their nuclear weapons program. And they had a whole list of reasons why that wasn't the case. But they, DIA and CIA simply ignored the information that was available and were convinced, and of course the policy makers loved it. That's exactly what they wanted. They didn't have to tell the intelligence community to do X, Y and Z; the intelligence community was going overboard to say, "Listen, what are you going to do, Boss? They've restarted their nuclear weapons program." And they went to such a length that the big issue was centrifuges. And they had captured some tubes that they said were for centrifuges. Well, my guy said yeah, okay. Those tubes have already been, the inspectors have already seen this kind of tube, and they're for rocket launchers. Well, CIA and DIA: "no they're for nuclear." Well, the National Lab, who does our centrifuges and does our nuclear weapons program, said okay, they could if, they could with a lot of effort make centrifuges out of this, these tubes. But they wouldn't work for more than a few days. They would break down. And if

you have a thousand centrifuges running, you want them 24/7. You don't want to have them breaking down every two or three days.

CIA and DIA didn't buy that. Instead, they hired a contractor, CIA did. And I give them five stars for having the initiative to hire this contractor. And they said, "Build us a centrifuge from these tubes." Well, the report that they gave to the president and to the rest of us in the intelligence community was that they'd hired this contractor, they built this centrifuge, and it worked. We didn't find out until the war was already on that the real story was that they built the centrifuge, and it worked for three or four hours and broke down. If they had known that, if I'd known that, I don't think there would have been enough votes in the Congress to declare war. I don't think, Powell was always asking me, he said, "Carl, if they don't have these weapons, why don't they tell us?" And I said, "Sir, I don't know. But my guys tell me that it's Israel. It's Iran. And it's their own military. If he admits he doesn't have their weapons program, then he might be in trouble." But Powell didn't really, he really was, (indecisive sound) the president wants to believe this, CIA, what the big guys, say—

And he went out to CIA for two or three days and would say, with a list of questions that we said [to] add. And he said, "Answer this question. Answer this question. Answer this question." So, he really did work the problem. CIA simply wasn't honest with him. So that he never, he waited until August before the war started to even say anything. It was the Pottery Barn speech that he gave that if you break it, you own it.

So that period of time was difficult for me. And after the war, I was so upset that the intelligence community had not done its job. It had the information, but it had misled the president and the other officials. And that that war was a war that shouldn't have happened. And I didn't want, I wanted to speak out about it. I wanted to say to people, "Listen, you were wrong. This shouldn't have happened." But I didn't want to do it from within, because it would say this is what Powell is saying. And I respected that he had his own view. I didn't want my view to be seen as something Powell was saying.

So, I went to him. I said, "Boss, I really believe that I need to leave and speak out." And he said, (grumbling). I said, "Well, I really do." He said, "Okay, you can go. But not right now." (laughs) And so about six months later, he called me, and he said, "Okay, Carl. Now you can go."

And so, I did. I went out and I spoke to all the various commissions and talked to people. But I left the best job I ever had over that particular issue.

ACKERMAN: Did you ever talk to Glenn at any point during any of this? Like get his advice, ask for his input?

FORD: Not directly. I mean, I think that I knew him well enough to know that this, you know, the whole SALT II thing, a verification of that. If he knew, for example, what I knew, that he would have certainly supported my position of saying that the

intelligence community should be telling the executive branch all the truth nothing but the truth. And not to misinform people.

In fact, it was so bad the son-in-law of Saddam Hussein had been in charge of all the weapons of mass destruction programs. And at some point, he defected and was in Jordan. And he brought with him what we all in intelligence community called the chicken coop documents. He had taken documents when he had, from the weapons of mass destruction program, and hid them. Instead of destroying them, he hid them in a farm, a chicken farm. And it was like, for me it was like his ticket when he defected, it gave him a bigger chalet in Colorado that CIA would give him for his defection.

But he brought all these documents with him. And the CIA talked to him in Jordan, and he said, you know, after the war, Saddam Hussein had told me that these inspectors are all over us. We're going to have to shut down these programs for now. At some point in the future, we're going to start them back up. But for now, we're going to shut them down. Shut them down. So, he did. (laughs) And he brought these documents out to show that he had done it. Because he said that they had shut down their program. CIA said, well, we don't believe you. And they were so negative that he went back to Iraq. And Saddam killed him the next day. So, there was plenty of information out there that simply was ignored by the intelligence community.

Now, part of the book that I co-authored is about the problem with intelligence analysis. And that we stopped doing research in 1981. Up to that point, about three-fourths of the

directorate of intelligence was focused on very narrowly research projects like I did, like on tackling Taiwan or whatever. And when they did this, they decided to organize in a regional way. And they shut down the Office of Political Research, the Office of Economic Research, the Office of Strategic Research, which is military, which I was in, and some others for this regional approach that was very much like the way the director of operations was organized. Well, if you don't do research, you can't do intelligence very well. They have this obsession from then and certainly till now about current reporting. Well, current reporting is basically opinions. Something happened in Ukraine last night. And this is what the smart people in the intelligence community think it means. Well, last thing, having worked with policy makers like Glenn and with Cheney and others, the last thing policy makers want are opinions. (laughs) They want evidence. They want facts. What they're interested in, they will read books on. The intelligence community has this view that policy makers don't have the time or inclination to plow through detailed research reports. Well, that's not true. If it's one of their priorities, you can't give them enough. And the intelligence community keeps giving them current reporting. So is the situation in which the intelligence community has by the time, even by the time of the Iraq War, were essentially giving opinions rather than doing research. I did a study later for the DNI on reporting during the Iraq War and before. And I looked at every research paper. Not a single one, from the Gulf War until the war with Iraq, not a single paper had been written, research paper, had been prepared and submitted on Iraq WMD [weapons of mass destruction]. It was all current reporting. They might call it research, but it simply was five or six intelligence reports that they summarized. So, the biggest problem was already beginning to impact our ability to deal with foreign affairs

because the intelligence community wasn't doing its job. It wasn't providing, the policy makers don't have the time to do the digging into problems and finding, giving them possible solutions and giving them facts. What's the leadership view in Israel of various, who does this, who does that? Those sorts of papers, they could read forever (laughs) if you gave them to them. But instead, we gave them what we thought things were happening. Current reporting is something based on something happening. There's an incident. And we go oh, that's important. And we put it together and we say, okay, this is what it probably means, and we'll write that up. Put it in the President's Daily Brief. Well, the problem is, is that the only way that you can have better improved analysis is have a basic research effort, a directed research effort, that helps understand what's happening currently. And when you cut that out, when you cut research out, you have sort of made it impossible to improve the quality of the reporting that goes to the president and other senior officials. Well, I'm on my soapbox. I apologize for getting off this.

ACKERMAN: No, no, no. This is fine. I mean, we want to talk to you, you mentioned Glenn. We're a little bit over two hours. So, I just want to know, first of all, thank you for your time. I want to make sure I did that. But do you have any parting thoughts about the senator and your time with him?

FORD: Well, it was one of the most formative periods in my career. I couldn't have done the things I eventually did without having had my experience with Glenn. And having, meeting people and all of a sudden having friends or acquaintances that were

working in various parts of the government. And so it was, he was an essential part of what Carl Ford became after he left Glenn. I just wouldn't have been able to do that. I'd have gone back to CIA and probably been an analyst my entire career, rather than moving to different parts of the government and doing other things.

ACKERMAN: Well, thank you very much. This was informative. I've got to stop because I could talk to you about intelligence and East Asia generally all day long. It's not what the Ohio State University is looking for. (laughs) But this was excellent. Thank you. I hope you have a very good rest of your week. And just, this is incredible. I really appreciate it. And I'm sure they really appreciate it as well.

FORD: Well, talking about Glenn is something I find very rewarding. He did so much for me. Anybody asks me around Glenn, I'll end their arm for an hour, you know. (laughs)

ACKERMAN: There are some excellent stories. I really appreciate, that's exactly what we were looking for. So, thank you.

FORD: Well, this has been a pleasure. I appreciate it.

ACKERMAN: Have a good one.

FORD: Same to you.

[End Interview.]