

**The original documents are located in Box 2, folder “Schweiker, Richard - Interview, 1/17/78” of the A. James Reichley Interview Transcripts at the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library.**

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Interview with Senator Richard Schweiker, Jan 17, 1978.



Schweiker says that President Nixon had some able people around him and that his initial perceptions of the Nixon administration were pretty good. Schweiker says that Nixon appointed some able people to middle-management positions. He thinks that where the Nixon group went ~~astray~~ astray was in developing the enemies syndrome. They felt that if you did not vote with them on a particular issue, then you were their enemy. ~~and~~ They could not see the ~~pp~~ point of staying ~~xx~~ close to people who might ~~xxx~~ oppose them on one issue but then would be able to support them on another issue. The administration seemed to develop a kind of paranoia, Schweiker says. They developed a system of retribution against all ~~of~~ ~~who~~ they felt were not their total supporters, toward all those who could not go with them ~~7~~ 100 percent of the time. At ~~xx~~ the beginning of the administration, the Nixon people did try to ~~develop~~ some ties to the progressive and moderate Republicans, Schweiker said. It looked as though there was going to be an effort to work together, ~~but~~ The vote on the ABM was what tore the relationship initially. ~~and~~ Schweiker thinks that it may never have recovered from that. He recalls that ~~if~~ he and Senator Cook, Senator Saxbe, and Senator Mathias ~~was~~ went against the administration on the ABM, and the White House never seemed to forgive them for that. This same group was not able to support Nixon on the Vietnam War, on the Cambodia incursion, and each time ~~w~~ one of these problems came up, they were driven further and further apart, ~~and~~ The White House's attitude seemed to be designed to push them further to the other side.

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Schweiker recalled at the beginning of the administration, Haldeman and ~~xxxx~~ Ehrlichman came to ~~me~~ meet with the so called Wednesday Group of progressive Republican senators, but there was no real communication ~~between~~ with them. Schweiker had the feeling that this group was not given a high priority in the concerns of the White House leaders. Haldeman and Ehrlichman were very bitter with the group when they were not able to support the administration on ABM. The White House kept a scorecard on how senators voted, ~~xxx~~ with or against the



administration, Schweiker said. ~~And~~ those that did not have a high score were regarded as persona non grata in the White House. Schweiker says that, ~~he~~ in retrospect, <sup>he</sup> does not feel that his position against the ABM was mistaken, ~~that~~ after all, this was the first thing they gave away in the course of the SALT negotiations, <sup>so</sup> Schweiker's view <sup>(is that it)</sup> could not have been so valuable in the first place. ~~Now~~ Schweiker realizes that Nixon treated the ABM as a bargaining chip, but he says that he does not see developoing a weapon system on that basis. The failure of the progressives to support the nominations of <sup>(Hainsworth)</sup> ~~Hainsworth~~ and Carswell to the Supreme Court was another source of bitter division between the White House and the moderate Republicans and progressive Republicans. After the fight ~~of~~ over the Supreme Court nominations, Schweiker says it really did not seem possible to put back together the relationship. The situation, ~~as~~ Schweiker feels, ~~it~~ was still retrievable at that time, but the White House made no real effort to rebuild the relationship.

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Ford

Pardon

Schweiker <sup>(says)</sup> that when Ford first came in as President, he felt that it was a great breath of fresh air that he was almost euphoric in his attitude toward the new administration. But then Ford pardoned Nixon and that <sup>(hit)</sup> ~~hit~~ him like a ton of bricks. Up to the pardon he felt that Ford was being positive and constructive, but when he heard <sup>(news)</sup> of the pardon, while he was out on the campaign trail in West ~~moreland~~ <sup>(moreland)</sup> County in Pennsylvania he couldn't believe ~~it~~ <sup>(it)</sup> the news of the pardon when he heard, ~~he~~ <sup>(he)</sup> was upset. It was a body blow to him. After that, he always <sup>(doubted)</sup> ~~thought~~ that Ford would be able to be elected as President. He thought the pardon had done terrible damage to Ford's candidacy, ~~and~~ <sup>(also)</sup> ~~also~~ it made him question Ford's judgment.

Schweiker's decision to join with Ronald Reagan <sup>(?)</sup> against Ford was not based so much on <sup>(differences)</sup> ~~diferences~~ of philosophy, but more out of belief that Ford could not win. Schweiker said that he thought that Ford's ultimate defeat in the general election was based on the pardon more than on anything else. Ford's blunder about Eastern Europe ~~and~~ in the foreign policy debate was also damaging to him, but that this was retrievable, whereas the pardon stuck with him.



Schweiker said that from the time of the pardon on, he had serious doubts about Ford's electability, but people did not notice that very much. He recalled in the early part of 1976 that Hugh Scott had circulated a petition among the Republican senators to support Ford ~~and~~ and Schweiker had not signed it. Schweiker said that he began to develop concern that Ford lacked political sensitivity. Schweiker said that his alliance with Reagan was more complicated simply than his concern about Ford, ~~that~~ he also thought it was necessary for the future of the Republican party to unite the Eastern and the Western wings. He said there has always been a double standard in American politics, by which the Democrats are not judged badly for uniting their northern and southern wings, bringing together such apparently incompatible as Roosevelt and John Garner, or Kennedy and Johnson. No one condemns them for putting the party together, even bringing together people as different as Senator Eastland and Senator Kennedy. ~~And~~ Schweiker said that he felt ~~it~~ it was necessary for the Republicans to begin doing the same thing, to form a new coalition, although he did not ~~think~~ think that he and Reagan were nearly as far apart as the different sides of the ~~the~~ Democratic party. If the Republican party is going to win, Schweiker says, he thinks it is necessary to bring together the west and the northeast. Ford, on the other hand, once he had got the nomination for president, picked Senator Dole who comes from essentially the same part of the country that ~~comes~~ comes from.

Reagan

figure

Ford

Looking toward 1980, Schweiker says that he stills feels ~~that~~ that the key is to bring the east and the west together. Reagan, Schweiker regards as a pragmatic conservative, and he feels at home with that approach himself. Schweiker said that as early as February of 1976, he had pointed out that the federal budget was getting out of hand, ~~that~~ many of the Great Society programs for which he had voted were no longer working, ~~they~~ they were not solving problems, ~~these~~ these programs were flops in many cases, Schweiker said. It is for this reason that he has taken ~~up~~ <sup>104</sup> some of the sacred cows of the liberal establishment. Schweiker said that it took guts for him to take on Nixon, and it also takes guts for him to take on the liberal establishment. For instance, he has come out in favor of the youth deferential on

the minimum wage, which is one of the liberal sacred cows, Schweiker says. Schweiker says on one hand he rejects the ~~xxx~~ totally federalized approach to all the nation's problems, but at the same time he rejects the total laissez-faire approach. ~~That~~ Where the liberals are right, in such areas as education and health, ~~that~~ he continues to support them, but in areas such as the creation of public service jobs, he takes the approach that it would be better to ~~xxx~~ develop more jobs in the private sector. Schweiker feels there is a new conservatism growing within the ~~xxxx~~ country, and he identifies with that. ~~He thinks~~ its program <sup>calls for</sup> ~~recommends~~ revitalization of the private sector. As far as federal programs go, Schweiker says, he gives two tests to any federal program; first, will it work? and second, if it is effective, is it ~~wxx~~ worth the price of contributing further to inflation?

