

# Carter Press Conference: Mr. Waffle

*Reporters from national media asking politically pointed questions on Gen. Singlaub, the Mideast, SALT and his deteriorating relationship with Congress thoroughly grilled President Carter at his press conference on May 26. In all cases, Carter either evaded the questions or lied outright.*

*From the transcript of the press conference:*

## *From Opening Statement*

“...I respect the Congress; I’ll work day and night to reach an agreeable solution to these potential threats to harmony, but I have to reserve the right and the duty to say no when spending is excessive.”

## *General Singlaub*

*Q:* Mr. President, why did you fire General Singlaub? He claims that the officers there (in Korea — ed.) have never been given a rationale on withdrawal...

*A:* In the first place, General Singlaub was not fired. General Singlaub was informed that he was not being fired, he was not being chastised or punished. He is being transferred to a new position at an equivalent degree of responsibility and stature...

Many leaders in our country and in the Republic of Korea have advocated complete removal of ground troops from Korea. Melvin Laird, the former Republican Secretary of Defense, is one of those, President Park himself, the President of the Republic of Korea, has called for the removal completely of American troops....

*Q:* Mr. President, I’d like to go back to General Singlaub. In your transfer of him, how do you square that with the claims of your Administration that it’s an open Administration where dissent is encouraged? Isn’t there a double standard between your treatment of him and your treatment of Andrew Young, the United Nations Ambassador who has dissented several times from American policy and yet has not been transferred from his job?

*A:* Well, I know of no instance when Andy Young has violated the policy that I described....

A member of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Bernie Rogers, went to South Korea to meet with our own military leaders and some of the South Korean military leaders as well. Our policy was explained. General Singlaub was one of those....

## *Middle East*

*Q:* Mr. President, last March 9 you talked about the idea of Israel withdrawing to the 1967 borders with only minor adjustments. Is that still your position? And is there any way that Israel could retain the West Bank of the Jordan and make that fit in the definition of “minor adjustments”?

*A:* That is still my position, although I might add again that the United States, including myself as President, we do not have a Middle Eastern settlement plan....

## *Provoking War*

*Q:* Mr. President, your SALT II proposals calling for deeper cuts than the Vladivostok Agreement were rejected by the Soviet Union after you had enunciated them publicly. And your public statements with respect to a Palestinian homeland are being credited with a factor — as being a factor in the election of a conservative hard-line political group in Israel. Do you think that you’re going to be able to continue your policy of open discussion of foreign policy issues and at the same time achieve agreements? In other words, do you think you’re going to be able to have your cake and eat it, too?

*A:* Well, I don’t agree with the premise of your question....

## *Threatening Veto and Impoundment*

*Q:* Mr. President, to follow up your opening statement does that mean that you’re putting Congress on notice that if they pass the appropriations bills with the water projects and with the impact aid, and if they pass the higher farm price supports, that you will veto those measures?

*A:* Well, I would rather wait until I see the final form of those bills.... But I certainly reserve the right to veto bills if I think they are excessive....

*Q:* I’d like to follow that up on another prerogative that you have. If it gets to the point that a bill is vetoed and overridden, would you consider using the procedures that you have to rescind appropriations that have been voted...

*A:* Yes, I would certainly have to reserve the right to use any proper and legal prerogatives to pursue my position.