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# Ford: Assassination attempts not

By Peter Lisagor  
Chicago Daily News

WASHINGTON — If President Ford harbors any deeply philosophical anxieties or doubts about the world he surveys from his Oval Office, he keeps them serenely guarded.

Contrary to a prevalent belief that the American people have a pessimistic, distrustful view of Washington and its works, the President finds "a real wholesome attitude" abroad in the land.

It is "not a hard anti-White House attitude," he says, and he

rarely encounters an unkind comment as he travels about the country.

The folks are uniformly friendly and say to him, "Keep up the good work and keep working at it, and we are for you."

They have faith in the coun-

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try, he says, a "belief that we can and should make progress."

In a 50-minute conversation with this reporter the other day, the President appeared enveloped in a nimbus of optimism as he sat beneath a Charles Peale portrait

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of George Washington over the mantle in his office, which itself seems walled away from the tumult, the negativism, the contention on the outside.

When asked if he had a theory on why two women tried to shoot him in recent weeks, he calmly recalled the Warren Commission inquiry into the assassination of President Kennedy. Ford was a member of the commission and later collaborated with John F. Stiles on a book, "Portrait of the Assassin."

"I think we have found a pattern — with one exception, and I have forgotten which one, that tried to or did shoot, and that was a disappointed office-seeker," Ford said.

The others, including Lee Harvey Oswald, Kennedy's assassin, were hostile toward their environment.

Theorizing now, the President said that the disappointed job-seeker "was the only one that was different as a group. You know, they protested everything else and now they have got to protest against the President."

the attempts against him to be personal. "I don't think they had anything personal against me or ever said anything individually. It is against the institution."

Ford was reminded that when he became President he talked of co-operation, communication, compromise and conciliation with the Congress but that his relations with the legislative branch appear to have deteriorated. He was asked why.

He cited the Pike Committee (the House Intelligence Committee headed by Rep. Otis Pike D-N.Y.) as an illustration of co-operation, of "not being adamant and condemning them," but rather of working out a solution to the problem of classified materials that the committee wanted from the Central Intelligence Agency.

His relations with Congress had to be seen on a case-by-case basis, he suggested.

"Probably the most frustrating one, where I have excoriated the Congress the most, is energy," he said, reiterating his familiar position that Congress has refused to compromise. "But, after you have tried to fit within those words and you get no co-operation, no conciliation, no

compromise," he said, "You just have to say, 'it won't work, and so you have to battle them head-on.'"

Ford, who has embraced orthodox conservative positions on a host of public issues, said he believes the country is more conservative today than it was a few years ago.

"There is a disillusionment, or growing disillusionment, with the thought that government can solve every problem," he said.

Asked directly if he was "in fear of Ronald Reagan," the former California governor who has made noises about challenging Ford in the GOP primaries next year the President said he was "never fearful of opposition" enjoyed competition, and thought "we can beat any Republican."

He added later, "... and I think that I can prevail against any of the known Democrats."

The President staunchly defended Sec. of State Kissinger, although he granted that Kissinger inspires distrust "among certain elements" in the Congress, which he said has not right or fair. "The public has great faith" in Kissinger, Ford said.

Ford was asked if he heard about "a scenario" circulating among Republican conservatives that, before next year's convention, he would replace Kissinger with Vice President Rockefeller and therefore open the way for a younger running mate, including such names as U.S. representative in China George Bush, presidential staff chief Donald Rumsfeld or Sen. Howard Baker (R-Tenn.).

Ford laughed, said he had heard it, but then reiterated his support of Rockefeller as one who has "exceeded my expectations, and I think he is doing a first class job." But he stopped short, as he has in the past, of foreclosing the spot for someone else.

Questioned about a remark attributed to Rockefeller to the effect that anyone in the administration who failed to support a \$100 billion energy authority proposed by the vice president and endorsed by the President ought to quit, Ford chuckled and said he thought people who "have had their day in court, to the extent that they can and could in good conscience, should support a piece of legislation or a decision."