

day, John McCain, a Republican, accepted the challenge. I just want the vice president to accept the challenge.

MR. RUSSERT: But the vice president's people went on to say this about your soft-money proposal, and they got rather specific: "In election after election, Bill Bradley took money from the Democratic Party. Now, he would leave the party and every Democratic candidate, from school board to U.S. senator, to fend off for themselves, while George W. Bush and the Republican money machine try to buy the election and take America backwards on issues like education, gun control, environment and Social Security."

If the Democrats said no soft money and the Republicans took it, they would outspend Democratic candidates across the country overwhelmingly. Would you unilaterally disarm?

MR. BRADLEY: No, I wouldn't unilaterally disarm. I think it takes two farsighted leaders. That's why I did this at this time. I laid this out now far before the soft money is being raised so that people could begin to focus on this and, hopefully, so that members of the press could begin to ask Republican or Democrat candidates, "Why not do this?" This is in the public's interest. Everybody knows it's in the public interest. We have been a country where we have one person, one vote, but everybody knows that the people with the big bucks, particularly in soft money, have a bigger cloud in the process. I think they're fed up, and I think that if I said, as John McCain, if we were the nominees of our party, there would be no more soft money.

MR. RUSSERT: You have talked repeatedly in the campaign about the issue of trust, and many of your critics have pointed to an issue called ethanol, a subsidy for ethanol production, which is hugely popular in Iowa. Let me show you what you said five years ago on the Senate floor about ethanol. "My attitude towards ethanol mandate is well-known. It does nothing positive for the environment. It's irrelevant with respect to energy security issues. It will cost taxpayers and the industry a fortune. The ethanol mandate is highway robbery."

Bill Bradley now goes to Iowa and says, "I'm all for ethanol."

MR. BRADLEY: Right. You know, when I was in the Senate, I represented my state, New Jersey. This was not good for New Jersey. It would have meant New Jersey taxpayers and consumers pay higher prices for their gasoline. It would've been more difficult for us to meet our clean air standards. And I also didn't like the fact that two-thirds of the subsidy went to one company.

But now I'm running for president. I have to see the whole country. I can't just see my state. And I've spent the last seven months on the road in America. I've spent a lot of that in Iowa. I've talked to lots of Iowa farmers, and these are people who work seven days a week. These are

people that are salt of the Earth. They're hard-working. They play by the rules. They look out for their neighbors.

And I've sat down with Iowa farmers who've shown me their balance sheets and shown me that in a world where corn prices are under \$2 a bushel, that the ethanol stream of revenue is one of the things that keeps them afloat. So I think that this was an occasion where I decided to listen to the people, but not the policy wonks. And I understand the sentiment behind this question and...

MR. RUSSERT: People would say, "If it's against the environment, Senator, and it's highway robbery and it's not good for the taxpayers, you're flipping because you're pandering to the farmers of Iowa."

MR. BRADLEY: Well, that's because I don't think that they have sat and talked to the farmers of Iowa. I don't think that they also understand the depth of the farm crisis out there in the Midwest. I didn't until I was out there. The farm crisis isn't in New Jersey, it's in the Midwest. But I understand the sentiment. And, you know, the sentiment makes me think of the Peanuts cartoon where Lucy says to Linus, "Do you think anyone ever changes?" And Linus says, "I changed a lot last year." And Lucy says, "No, I mean for the better."

MR. RUSSERT: The AFL-CIO is withholding its endorsement of Al Gore because they say they want to allow you an opportunity to continue to speak out. You have been a strong proponent of free trade, a strong proponent of NAFTA, North American Free Trade Agreement. Will you shave those positions at all in order to secure labor's endorsement?

MR. BRADLEY: No, I was a strong backer of NAFTA. I think it's created more positive results than negative. Some people have been hurt by it. Those people ought to be helped. But I think that, overall, it's a benefit to the country. I also was a major backer of the WTO. I worked on the program for 12, 13 years from the conceptual phase back in 1983 and '84 when I served on a panel worldwide of seven people to begin to conceptualize what the round is through the negotiating process over three administrations and through the passage of the negotiated agreement on the floor of the Senate. I think that the answer to a lot of our economic problems is more trade, more fairly shared worldwide.

MR. RUSSERT: Chinese espionage: How serious of a problem do you think it is? And do you believe the Clinton/Gore administration acted quickly and forcefully enough?

MR. BRADLEY: I think that the espionage at Los Alamos is serious. I think that the administration's admitted that it didn't act quickly enough. And I think that those who are guilty need to be punished. I think at the same time, we have to have a little perspective here and then we have to recognize that espionage takes place in the world. Even we, from time to time, commit espionage. So I think that the key thing here is the

security lapse, not the fact that espionage takes place.

MR. RUSSERT: Who should be punished? How high up?

MR. BRADLEY: Well, I think that ultimately that's got to be a judgment made by the commander in chief, because he's the one responsible for the security of the country. I've always thought that the key thing was to make changes that will make something that is not good better. If those changes are made, then it's up to the president to decide whose head rolls.

MR. RUSSERT: If the People's Republic of China invaded Taiwan, what would Bill Bradley do as president?

MR. BRADLEY: Well, Bill Bradley would have stepped back a few moves before that and been very clear that the United States should say to the Taiwanese government that if they take steps toward independence, that they cannot count on us for any help. At the same time, we should be clear to the People's Republic that if, in the absence of those steps toward independence, they take actions that would be in a military nature toward Taiwan, that we would be there. The one nation, one China is an important policy to be reaffirmed. It's a long—you have to have the long view here, and I think if we did, that we wouldn't have this problem. And I regret what President Lee said last...

MR. RUSSERT: Of Taiwan?

MR. BRADLEY: Of Taiwan—said short—last week, the week before. I think that we should have been clear in advance to make sure that he knows that this is a risk for him to take any step toward independence. At the same time, the People's Republic, the people there can't be surprised or outraged by talk in a democracy. So there's got to be a meeting of the minds on both sides there in order to preserve this situation from becoming highly volatile and perhaps inflammatory.

MR. RUSSERT: But if the Chinese invaded Taiwan, what would we do?

MR. BRADLEY: Well, I don't want to deal with a hypothetical, Tim, without all of the facts there. But as it stands now, if the Chinese invaded Taiwan, we are committed to help Taiwan.

MR. RUSSERT: What do you think is the biggest problem confronting American society as we grow into the next century?

MR. BRADLEY: I think that there are a number, Tim. I've always believed that the racial divide in America was our fundamental and deepest challenge. I mean, slavery was our original sin, race remains our unresolved dilemma. And the need to be able to see beneath skin color or eye shape to the individual is tremendously important, and I think that's a

challenge for all of us. I think, also, that there is something that's going on in the country that is widely felt, and that is people searching for some meaning in their life that is deeper than the material. And I think that that is a profound reaction to the materialism of our time and to the hollowness of life if you're only interested in material things, and I think that that is also a tremendous kind of compass that will guide us, if we do it the right way, into the 21st century.

MR. RUSSERT: People have watched Bill Bradley for a long time. Let me show you when you were on MEET THE PRESS 17 years ago.

MR. BRADLEY: Oh, no. I remember this.

MR. RUSSERT: And here is Tom Pettit of NBC asking you a question:

(Videotape, February 7, 1982):

MR. TOM PETTIT (NBC News): Is Bill Bradley on a timetable for seeking the presidency of the United States? Do you have a master plan.

MR. BRADLEY: I've said twice in my life I stood at courtside while the national anthem is being played before the world championship of basketball and thought to myself, "There's no place in the world I'd rather be and nothing else I'd rather be doing." That's exactly how I feel about being in the United States Senate.

(End videotape)

MR. RUSSERT: And now?

MR. BRADLEY: I had a lot of hair then, didn't I? And now I've decided that my ability matches the national moment. This is the time to put myself forward to be the leader of the country. I respect the people of this country deeply. That's how I'm running a campaign that pays that respect to them. They need to know what I'm going to do. I'm laying that out on a consistent basis. And if I'm elected, I'll do the best that I can for the American people and, I think, try to deal with the bigger questions rather than the smaller questions. And that's the real philosophy of government.

MR. RUSSERT: The last man from New Jersey to be president of the United States is Woodrow Wilson, and this is how he sized up the office, and I'll put it on the screen for you and our viewers: "Men of ordinary physique and discretion cannot be presidents and live if the strain be not somehow relieved. We shall be obliged always to be picking our chief magistrates from among wise and prudent athletes—a small class."

MR. BRADLEY: I thought Woodrow Wilson was a very wise man.

MR. RUSSERT: You always downplayed your basketball career when you first came to the Senate, as you made your transition. Now, you seem to embrace it much more and are rather open by saying to the American people, "Being a pro basketball player has helped me prepare for the presidency." Fair?

MR. BRADLEY: Absolutely, and the reason that's so is, I guess when I came to the Senate, I wanted to make it on the Senate's terms, I wanted to be a workhorse, not a show horse, so I moved away from that. But I did spend 10 years of my life playing professional basketball. As I said, I was on the road for 10 years with an extraordinary group of human beings. I saw the world through their eyes. It gave me a chance to see the country whole. And I made deep friendships in those years, and the friendships formed on a team are extremely deep because you share moments that are unlike any others. I mean, when you hear that a team has won the world championship, you never forget that team. And also, I think it made a big impression on me about how important teamwork is. And after I was in the Senate a number of years, I realized that legislating was not dissimilar. In fact, it was very similar to actually playing team basketball because you had to get different people from different backgrounds with different personal agendas to come together and work toward a common objective. And I think that's an aspect of leadership.

MR. RUSSERT: Part of the ritual or baptism of being a presidential candidate is stopping by to talk with my friend, Jay Leno, on "The Tonight Show," which you did and I want to share that with our viewers and you and get your last reaction:

(Videotape, July 9, 1999):

MR. JAY LENO: I've done a few Bill Bradley jokes.

MR. BRADLEY: Really? What kind?

MR. LENO: I did one about a week ago. Oh, I said, "Bill Bradley is so boring, his Secret Service code name is Al Gore." I think that was the—yeah, it didn't seem to get—yeah. Yeah that—yeah.

MR. BRADLEY: Is it really that bad?

MR. LENO: Well, probably not that bad. But you have taken speaking, sort of, lessons and haven't you worked with...

MR. BRADLEY: I sure have. Yeah, I went through that whole period in my life.

MR. LENO: Yeah.

MR. BRADLEY: And, you know, you take these coaches—they

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come to you and they say, you know, "When you go on the Jay Leno show, look at Jay. No, look at the camera. No, look at Jay. No, look at the camera. No, keep your chin up. Keep your chin down. Keep your face this way. Keep your face—and above all be natural."

(End videotape)

MR. RUSSERT: Bill Bradley, too wooden, too boring to be president.

MR. BRADLEY: Well, this program disproves that, doesn't it? I think...

MR. RUSSERT: But how do you deal with charisma and Jesse Jackson saying neither Gore or Bradley are electrifying personalities? How do you deal with that issue and put it to rest?

MR. BRADLEY: I think, Tim, you just don't worry about it. You be yourself. If you're comfortable with who you are, if you're at peace with yourself—what I found after going through all this manipulation of externals is the most important thing to communicate comes from inside. If you know what you believe, what you want to do, I think you can communicate. I think I can communicate.

MR. RUSSERT: Bill Bradley, we thank you for joining us. Be safe on the campaign trail. We look forward to having you back.

MR. BRADLEY: Thank you, Tim.

MR. RUSSERT: And our viewers should know we have offered the same opportunity to Al Gore to appear here on MEET THE PRESS. Thus far, the vice president has not accepted our invitation.

Coming next, do you want a tax cut, pay down the national debt, spend more money for education, health care, Medicare and more? We'll try to settle the issue right here on MEET THE PRESS, coming up.

(Announcements)

MR. RUSSERT: What to do with the budget surplus: We'll try to figure it out after this very brief station break.

(Announcements)

MR. RUSSERT: And we're back. Senator Moynihan, let me start with you. First, you just saw Bill Bradley. You'd like to see him as president?

SEN. MOYNIHAN: I'd like to see more of those statements he says he has coming, and I like the way he understands taxes. I worked with