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NATIONAL ARCHIVES AND RECORDS ADMINISTRATION NA FORM 1429 (6-85)

INTERVIEW V

DATE: April 7, 1983

INTERVIEWEE: ARTHUR KRIM

INTERVIEWER: Michael L. Gillette

PLACE: Mr. Krim's residence, New York City

Tape 1 of 1

K: Now you can start with the tax thing or--

G: Let's do. Let me ask you about the effort to enact a 10 per cent surtax.

K: Yes, well, I had a number of conversations with the President about that but didn't of course play any role in the dynamics of that situation. But I do know that getting a tax [increase] was one of his high priorities in the reasons that he gave me why he didn't run again. It was one of four or five things that he felt he could accomplish more easily if he were not a candidate and if it were not to be considered completely politically motivated. You will recall that I did refer to the meeting in 1966 of all the big business leaders in which he had said to them, "Should we have the tax increase or not?" and he said it in a way that indicated he felt he could manage the guns and butter thing without the tax. Whether this prestigious group was intimidated or not, the fact is that except for this one man, Sidney Weinberg, they all said no increase was necessary.

Now, of course as the years have gone on, this is one of the things that LBJ is most criticized for, as having planted the seeds for inflation by not getting a substantial tax increase in 1966. But by the time he had decided not to run again, he obviously had reached the conclusion that a tax increase was absolutely essential. And he had tried for

it before his announcement, unsuccessfully because of opposition I believe principally in the House committee headed by Wilbur Mills. After he made his announcement, he put a full court press on to get this done, and Mills insisted that it had to be coupled with a substantial cutback in the social programs. I don't know when the figure of six billion was first mentioned, but as the trade off developed it was "if you agree to six billion cuts in the social program, I won't stand in the way of a tax surcharge."

And the President talked about this a lot; it was on his mind, his frustrations with Wilbur Mills. I know that he tried to outmaneuver Mills in various ways, but when it came right down to it, Mills in that seat had the power and there was no way to circumvent it. And of course this kind of bill had to originate in the House, so ultimately he capitulated and agreed to the six billion dollar cut that got his tax surcharge passed. I don't remember the dates of all this, but it was some time after he had made his announcement I know.

G: Did he make any compensations, like padding the budget or taking on any extra personnel before the cut came?

K: He was accused of that, but whether he did it or not, I don't know.

G: Now let's talk about the primaries. Let me ask you about the primary elections that took place that year.

K: This ties in with the little history that I had prepared of the events leading up to his March 31 [1968] declaration. And by the tie-in, I mean that through the New Hampshire primary, he had kept his option completely open to run again, even though he had been talking to folks like [John] Connally and George Christian and myself to the effect that he

was not going to run again. In my notes I've indicated some of the difficulties of navigating between his giving me assignments as if he were going to run, and then saying that he wasn't going to run. So that the New Hampshire primary fell into that period, and he stayed away from it publicly.

G: Why wasn't his name on the ballot? Was that because of his own presumption?

K: He didn't want his name on the ballot, and he stayed away from it. He had a surrogate in that situation who worked with the Governor [John King]. I should remember his name, but I don't. He was an important man politically in New Hampshire who had been in the administration [Bernard Boutin]. And he was advising Marvin Watson and me of how he viewed the situation there. Now, for a couple of months before the New Hampshire primary there was this big campaign on behalf of [Eugene] McCarthy. It was the entire anti-establishment group, the youngsters fed up with Vietnam, and they had people from Massachusetts coming in and other states. It was really taken as the opportunity to have a massive show of protest against Vietnam. And there were organizations formed at that time, like by this chap here in New York who was subsequently assassinated--

G: [Allard] Lowenstein.

K: Lowenstein. Dump Johnson committees and other organizations of that sort. I never felt they were really going anywhere except as minority protest movements. The President felt that they were motivated more by Bobby Kennedy than by Gene McCarthy.

G: Really?

K: Yes. Particularly the Lowenstein one. He felt that was a Kennedy front. I had no evidence of that. Since it was New York, he used to talk to me a lot about it, "You'll see.

It's Bobby Kennedy," and so forth. But that also fed into the New Hampshire situation. There were people from New York, too, who went up there. They rang doorbells, they really worked the territory. And the reports we got through this surrogate, whose name I forget, were that it wasn't going any place, that the Governor was solidly behind LBJ and that everything would be all right, but he needed money to take care of supporting the write-in vote. Through Marvin Watson I was authorized to give him certain President's Club money for support, which I did.

Then of course came the day of the primary, and Johnson did win. I don't recall whether it was a plurality or a majority, but if it wasn't a majority, it was very close to 50 per cent. I believe it was 51 per cent or something. And McCarthy was like 35 or 36 per cent. But it was trumpeted as a tremendous McCarthy victory, not unlike what happened some years later in 1972 when [Edmund] Muskie won, but because he was thought to be the New England candidate and should win by a big amount, he didn't win by such a big amount, so the media had him losing. That had a big impact on his election, and in 1968 it began having a big impact on the anti-Johnson movements. It was quite clear they were going to ride this to the hilt. So much so, the optimism in the anti camp became so high, that Bobby decided to throw his hat in the ring. And of course that created a schism in the anti ranks.

G: Did LBJ think that Bobby was going to run eventually?

K: Yes, he was sure of it. He needled me because I didn't think he was going to. That schism was to the effect that the McCarthy people felt he had broken the ice and now Bobby wanted to ride on the basis of his having done so. And of course the Bobby

Kennedy people felt that McCarthy could never win, whereas Bobby could.

That was the situation as the Wisconsin primary approached. And it was during that period between New Hampshire and the Wisconsin primary that the double track in Johnson's mind was of such massive proportions, I mean not knowing which way he was going to go. Because he was, on the one hand, of the opinion that whoever had handled that thing in New Hampshire had bungled it, and on the other hand, he was thinking that it's going to be academic anyway, because he's not going to run. But on the first track, he called in a whole new team to prepare for the Wisconsin primary, the fellow from Texas.

G: Cecil Burney?

K: Well, he may have been one of them. There were five or six that came in. I went down to a meeting, and I saw a whole new cast of characters and I was absolutely certain that he was going to run. That was part of the confusion of the moment for me. I was the only one probably in that room who knew that he had told me he wasn't going to run. They were very pessimistic about what was going to happen in Wisconsin, and I think rightly so. Wisconsin was not LBJ's turf at that time. It really didn't mean anything. If he wanted the nomination, this was an episode along the way. There was no doubt of the fact he would get the nomination. This was before all the new changes which would have made it necessary for him to enter forty primaries. That wasn't the case at that time. And the solid base was there in the big states that would give him the nomination. But he was faced with another media blitz in Wisconsin and I think a certain amount of humiliation, personal humiliation. This I'm saying, not that he said it.

His speech preceded the Wisconsin primary by a few days, as I remember it. So

the Wisconsin primary went off without his being a candidate, and of course it was a massive repudiation. There was I think a modest amount of write-in vote, but just a handful.

G: Did you have any indication that had he not made the speech he would have done better in Wisconsin?

K: No. This group had alerted him to the fact that there was no doubt about it, that he was going to take a licking in the Wisconsin primary. But as I stated in my prior notes, I really do not feel that it was the New Hampshire primary or Bobby Kennedy's entrance into the race that caused him to withdraw on March 31. At least he gave no indication of that. He gave as his reasons all the things that I've mentioned in that report. And I, as I've mentioned in that same report, I was with him a good deal during that period, including the day Bobby announced and that weekend. I never got the feeling that that made the difference. If anything, I had the feeling that Bobby's entering was going to cause him to run. Because I felt he'd get his back up. And I think if he did go through a period of measuring pros and cons, that pro his running was the fact that Bobby had announced, not the contrary, which some people had tended to believe.

Now the other primaries, of course, were all academic as far as he was concerned. That goes for Oregon, which--did McCarthy win Oregon? I forget.

G: Yes.

K: And of course the Illinois one, which Bobby won. Which was the one where he was assassinated?

G: California.

K: He won California. That's the one that I mean. That was after his loss in Oregon.

G: He won in Nebraska also.

K: Yes. There again, there was never any doubt, not even the remotest doubt but that Hubert was going to have the nomination. Bobby was up against an impossible obstacle course there. And as I said in my other notes, even Larry O'Brien agreed with that years later.

G: Anything else on the primaries?

K: Well, what else would you have in mind?

G: Did he, for example, follow the returns with interest?

K: Not that I could testify to. I'm sure he had, but you know, he knew that if he stood with Hubert, Hubert had the nomination.

(Interruption)

You know, during this period, when you asked about the primaries, his preoccupation as far as Kennedy and McCarthy were concerned was that they not prevent him from doing what he felt had to be done in Vietnam. And of course they were stressing their differences with him in that area. So of course he had very little patience with them and was very disturbed by the things they said.

(Interruption)

G: Let me ask you. You have a situation in late summer of the President talking about a forthcoming offensive by the North Vietnamese. Do you remember that? Warning of a big build up?

K: Well, I remember more the Tet episode, if I can discuss that in this context.

G: Sure.

K: And that is, he told me quite often after the Tet offensive that he felt he had not prepared the public properly for it and that that had led to the misconception that this was a big victory for the North Vietnamese, when actually it was a massive defeat for them. His feeling was that the impression that had been created prior to the Tet offensive was that their power had been broken, that they were on the run, and that the war would be ending reasonably soon because of that. Tet was a last ditch attempt on their part to alter the course of the war dramatically, and that he had been advised by [William] Westmoreland and the others in Vietnam that this last minute attempt was going to be made. I don't know whether it got down to the point of knowing it would be made on the holiday. But I know he felt that the public was surprised that they had the strength to mount this attack, and that as a result, the fact that it was really a defeat never took hold. There is of course the considerable body of opinion that this defeat of the South Vietnamese and of our forces had played a part in his March 31 declaration, which of course he felt it had not.

Now, whatever you're referring to in August could very well have had some relationship to the lack of information pre-Tet. You're talking about public announcements he made that the Vietnamese were about to mount another offensive?

G: Yes.

K: In that connection I feel it may have been the result of what had happened pre-Tet that led him to do this at this time.

G: This was in the context of a lull in the fighting, and there seems to have been a division within the administration on whether this lull was actually a sign from the North

Vietnamese that they wanted us to stop the bombing, that they were ready for a serious de-escalation.

K: Yes, well now I understand the question better. It is true that during this period we were actually talking with them in Paris, and there was the constant flow of information and reaction from [Averell] Harriman and [Cyrus] Vance to the President to decide what should be done on the field to have best impact in the conversations. I guess the division you're talking about is the fact that there was probably advice being given to him by certain of his advisers that this lull was a signal and that he should reciprocate with a total bombing halt. Of course he got other advice from his field commanders. And I say this without knowing the fact, I would hazard the guess that Harriman and Cy Vance were asking him to consider this lull as a signal. Because he was constantly at odds with them on the approach to the substantive problems in the negotiation.

G: Do you recall Clifford's view during this period?

K: Yes. Clark Clifford started his tenure as secretary of defense as--for lack of a better way of saying--as a real hawk, and as time went on he moved more and more to the position of suggesting a complete halt in the bombing and negotiations. And the President watched this and commented on it.

G: Did he?

K: Yes. And when Clark went public with some of these views, it created a friction between them. I had very little to do with that, but I was present at Camp David with Clark and the President when a full scale report had come in from Harriman and Vance, and I watched this play between the two of them. And the President was very, very strong on

wanting the Vietnamese to do more than send indirect signals. He was much tougher in that than any of the people I saw around him.

G: Had Clifford taken a more conciliatory position on the bombing by this time?

K: Yes.

G: Okay. Was he, in effect, do you think going against the opinion of his military advisers, Clifford?

K: That I couldn't say.

G: The President didn't have information from the generals that seemed to refute what Clifford was suggesting?

K: Well, militarily the generals, I believe, were in favor of his continuing the bombing. But Clark tactically in the negotiation took this other view. So I guess it is true that he was taking a tack other than that of his military advisers. I don't know what the military advisers were saying to Clifford about the approach in Paris. I really don't know.

G: Did the President seek your opinion on the lull and the bombing halt, this whole issue?

K: Yes, but he didn't put much store by my opinion. (Laughter)

G: Really? Well, what did you tell him?

K: I was in favor of no bombing from the beginning. I had had debates with him in 1965, at the time of that first big bombing halt, where he had said that the only two people who really were strong were [Abe] Fortas and Clifford. That was the time when he had a lot of real pressure not to renew the bombing, but he did. He knew where I stood and he felt that my viewpoints in that field were--and it was so--not really matured by all the information from all sides.

G: But do you think the fact that your advice at least remained constant and Clifford seemed to be changing his mind, did that bother him?

K: He was bothered by Clifford's change of mind, yes. He wasn't bothered by my viewpoint here, because I was not a key player in that situation. Clark Clifford was. And as I've mentioned, again in those notes that I did on the period before his withdrawal, the only time he really got me into that situation in any depth was in early 1968 when he asked me to meet with Fortas and--it was before he had those Wise Men meetings--to tell everybody what the political impact of his not halting the bombing was likely to be. That's before his March 31 speech. And I, of course, can state without equivocation that in those conversations I felt it was political suicide for him to continue the bombing.

(Interruption)

G: Let me ask you about that visit to the LBJ Ranch in mid-August. I think that Monsignor [Paul] Marcinkus came secretly by helicopter. Do you recall that occasion?

K: Yes, I do. I was at the Ranch that day. I was not privy to the conversations between Marcinkus and the President. But I think it was a follow-up to the President's visit with the Pope in December, the preceding December, as I recall it. I would just surmise that it had to do with seeing whether there could be intervention on the part of the Pope at that time to help the Paris talks along.

But I did spend time with Marcinkus. We had a very amusing trip in a car with Father [Wunibald] Schneider and Archbishop [Robert] Lucey and Monsignor Marcinkus and the President and myself. The President was driving and he, as usual, treated everybody alike, and I think out of really a sense of humor, because of what had gone on

before that, he drove us past Father Schneider's church. Now, I found out later that Father Schneider had done a lot of repairs on the church and also had included a flower garden in front of the church with funds that the President had given him, which the President had always said to me, I had really given, because it was my domino losses to the President. That was a bit of an exaggeration. And I learned that Father Schneider had apparently asked for permission to do these renovations and had been turned down by his archbishop, who was then in the car with him. And the President just passed this church and said, "Look at the nice things that Father Schneider has done." I know Father Schneider was sweating profusely. (Laughter) But I don't think anything came of it. I know the President had a good chuckle over it. It was, you know, just a lot of fun all around, but nothing of substance.

G: Do you think that the Pope put pressure on LBJ to stop the bombing?

K: I would be guessing if I said yes. If I do guess, I would guess in the affirmative.

G: Okay. Now is there anything else that you recall of those [meetings]? You spent an awful lot of time in August before the convention down at the Ranch or at your ranch?

K: Yes, I spent practically every weekend I guess in July and August with the President. I tried to cover the things that I can recall about that period. We had some meetings of a lot of prominent people to help on the Library project. You have a list of all of those visits. The President would show them a model of the Library. We talked about the [LBJ] School [of Public Affairs] and the Library. There was no question of solicitation or support during that period; that came later. But we would go to Austin and look at the site where the Library was going to be, and there would be a lot of conversations about

that.

Then there was also the meeting with Howard Smith to help him write his article for the Encyclopedia Britannica and for Reader's Digest. There were other things which I think I've covered.

G: Okay. Now you also went down there right after the convention I believe, the weekend after that.

K: Oh, yes. That comes now.

G: Okay. Shall we go into that?

K: All right, yes. I think I ended my comments about the convention with reference to the fact that Muskie got the vice presidential nod from Hubert Humphrey, which had not met with the President's approval. But the day following that nomination of Humphrey and Muskie, there was a meeting in Chicago of the Democratic National Committee. That was handled very badly by Hubert Humphrey from the viewpoint of the President. The President had had an understanding with Hubert that the chairman of the national committee would be Terry Sanford and expected that that was what was going to be announced on Friday morning. Instead Hubert announced Larry O'Brien, and further than that, made a complete sweep of all of the national committee, including [John] Criswell, who didn't so much as get a thank you. Criswell had, in effect, run the convention and really had nothing to do with the disruptions downtown, you know, all the things that had caused so much trouble. Criswell had worked very hard, and Hubert just shoved him aside.

The whole spirit of this got back to the President. I know I never said anything to

the President, but I was personally very troubled by what had happened. I had worked several years on that committee and worked with these people starting with John Criswell and the others. It was quite a wrench to see a new group come in who were not doing it as in the spirit of continuity, but were doing it in the spirit of criticism of what had gone on and rejection and fresh start.

G: Do you think it was at all an effort to reach out to the McCarthy and Kennedy factions?

K: It was an effort to sever any umbilical cord with the President. That was it lock, stock and barrel. It was an ill-advised move, in my opinion, on Hubert's part. I remember I was very angry about it and so expressed myself to Hubert and to Larry O'Brien.

G: What did Humphrey say in reply?

K: I didn't accuse him of breaking any agreement, because I wasn't supposed to know about the agreement. But he said, "Oh, it will be corrected. This is just now." He invited me, he said, "Look, please come to Waverly"--in Minnesota--"on Tuesday. We want to talk about the campaign. I want your input. I want your help. I need your help," and so forth. I told him that I'd let him know, that I was going down to the Ranch to meet with the President. I made no commitment. But Hubert was his usual self of "don't take it seriously, you're misinterpreting it, we'll see that everything is done right," and "this is just that we're all working so fast" and so forth.

I did not convey my feelings to the President. My wife was with me and I let out my frustrations there. But I did not want to create a rupture between the new candidate and President Johnson. But that was of no consequence. The rupture started with that move in the Democratic committee, and it came on top of the President's reaction, which

frankly surprised me no end, that the speech was a repudiation of him, the speech that Hubert had made the night before. Now I've never reread that speech to this day, but I remember having the feeling that I thought Hubert had done right by the President. And I remember my surprise at the President having so strong a feeling that it was a repudiation. I left that Friday night to go to the Ranch. I don't know why, but I remember stopping in Dallas--I remember also having a bad cold and picking up my wife's sister.

G: Doris Mitchell?

K: That's not Doris Mitchell.

G: Was a friend. Okay.

K: Michelein Bettex from Switzerland. I remember getting to the Ranch either Saturday or Sunday--it could even be Monday--and running into this absolute angry man in the President. I remember sitting at the Ranch with my wife and with the President and with, of all things, my sister-in-law who was getting her first exposure to this, and she saw an angry president and one where we were engaged in a real difference of viewpoint. It was not a dialogue where I was yessing him, it was quite the contrary. He was angry about the speech, he was angry about the committee, he was anticipating that Hubert Humphrey was going to foul up his Vietnam negotiations, and he said to me directly, "I do not want you to work in the Humphrey campaign." And I told him how wrong I felt that was, that any lack of helping Hubert meant helping Nixon. And by the end of the conversation, the President had let out a lot of his frustrations, and he said, "Give it a little time. I want Hubert to really taste the fact that he needs our help."

Of course, I had helped Hubert with the President's knowledge during the pre-nominating period. You had asked me I think the question, or somebody had, or it came out some way in our notes, that Humphrey had not had access to the President's Club list, that money had been withheld from him, et cetera, et cetera. That just isn't so. I personally turned over a lot of names and money to Dick Maguire, who was handling that financial part for Humphrey in that period. By the time of the convention, Dick Maguire was out of it and it was being handled more by Bob Short and Pat O'Connor. And by Bill Connell.

But the President did not want me to go to Waverly to be at that meeting, and I did not go, and therefore did not become part of the inner circle, which didn't disturb me because I had had my share of raising money and I was not looking for another assignment. But that was a moment that troubled me. It did, however, pass.

The President, I must say, the President wanted Hubert to win the election. I have no qualification on that. But he wanted Hubert to be under his control until he was president, and he wanted that control to be on every level, financially, his own public endorsements, and for Hubert to need it enough so that he would not cross him on the big issues of the day, particularly Vietnam. He had no confidence in Hubert's ability to make a commitment to him and keep it. And he had no confidence in the people around Hubert in relation to himself and his policies.

All the things that happened in that two-month period, and it was a very difficult period, can be interpreted in the light of what I have just said, because on the one hand there are people who insist that he was out to scuttle Hubert's candidacy and secretly

wanted Nixon to win because Nixon would be tougher in Vietnam. On the other hand, there were the people in the Humphrey camp who wanted to go all the way in soliciting the atmosphere that Johnson wanted Hubert to lose. In other words, they felt that was a gain to Hubert's candidacy. They wanted it to appear that Hubert was not Johnson's candidate. If you think of that background you can make sense out of a lot of things that happened in the campaign.

Now, what the President wanted me to convey to Hubert and what he must have conveyed through other intermediaries, but all I can talk about is what I was to convey to him, was that there was only one president at a time and that the best way for Hubert to be elected was for him to say just that, "There is only one president and I'm not about to issue pronouncements of what I'm going to do when I'm president until I am president." And to stay out of anything that would dilute the President's negotiating postures. And Johnson had me convey to Hubert that if Hubert would conduct himself that way, he--Johnson--was convinced that he would have the Vietnamese make the right moves at the table before the election. That he could establish a peace, but only if Hubert didn't foul it up and cause a confusion in the minds both of the North and the South. He felt that this was the way for Hubert to be elected. I conveyed that, and I must say that I believed it then and I believe it now.

Hubert got the absolutely diametrically opposed view from the people around him. The [Ted] Van Dykes and the Dr. [Edgar] Bermans and some of the others, not so much Bill Connell, but most of the people around him wanted him to repudiate LBJ, to make his stand known on the Vietnam situation, and a few of them advised him to resign

from the vice presidency so he could be his own man. Johnson knew every facet of this.

G: Did he?

K: Oh, he--

(Interruption)

Johnson also knew where all of the players were. And he was very troubled by his feelings as to some of the principal players in the Vietnam situation.

G: Who do you mean in particular?

K: I'm going to tell you. He was very annoyed when [George] Ball resigned from the U.N. in order to work with Humphrey. He interpreted that as giving Ball the opportunity, not being in the government anymore under his supervision, to give Hubert more advice on breaking off with LBJ.

G: Why do you think he appointed Ball to begin with?

K: Well, I must say, since you mention it, he needled me on that although unfairly. I did not recommend Ball, but when he called me in San Francisco and said he had appointed Ball, I said he's great. Well, later that turned into I had recommended him, and I really hadn't. But Ball was a man who he really put in a special corner, and that is, "You're my adversary, but you're bringing a debate out and I'm not going to be angry with you for it." Ball was a hook on which he could say, "Not everybody is yessing me. Ball is noing me." And for people who said that he had only yes men around him, he always had Ball he could point to. And I was present when Ball left the administration and he praised him to the skies.

G: Is that right?

K: Yes. So when he called to say he was going to bring him back in this uniform, it was not that surprising to me. But as you know, Ball was a consummate dove on Vietnam, and when he went to work for Hubert LBJ read the signals, and he knew this is going to be more pressure on Hubert.

But what really bothered him, and I don't know whether this has ever come out fully, was that he had his own reasons to believe that Harriman certainly, and possibly Harriman and Cy Vance were advising Hubert to speak up on Vietnam. He told me that he knew for certain that Harriman--and I'm trying to recall whether he included Cy, that I'm not sure of--helped write the Salt Lake [City] speech.

G: Really?

K: Yes. With Ball. This after all was the man representing him in Paris. And so there were all those subterranean and--well, I don't know what the word is, but it was certainly not conducive to an all-out unqualified support of Hubert's candidacy.

G: Did he ever think of replacing Harriman in Paris?

K: I wouldn't think so. That would have been too traumatic. I don't even know whether he ever told Harriman his suspicion. I would rather doubt that he did. But I know it for a fact that he felt Harriman had helped write that speech.

G: That makes it all terribly complicated.

K: It is. But in all these things I really want you to see if you can get corroboration on the record in some other way.

G: Yes.

K: Now, Johnson did contrast Nixon's adroitness in this area with Hubert's. Nixon said,

"There's only one president. I'm not going to talk about my plan in Vietnam until I'm president." Exactly what Hubert could have said.

Now, the post-mortems on the election have been preponderantly on the side that Hubert lost because he was considered the President's puppet, and he hadn't spoken up sharply enough in repudiation of his policies. And that if he had only been stronger on the differences, he would have been president of the United States. That the Salt Lake City speech showed that. It was really a halfhearted attempt, because it applauded the President while subtly trying to separate him from the President. And after that, the polls showed Hubert had a massive jump, although still far behind Nixon. And this is used as evidence of the fact that if he had gone the whole way, he would be president.

My view, for what it's worth, is that he would have been president if he had held back entirely on a legitimate ground that there can only be one president and avoided an image of vacillation, which came out. Nobody thought of him as a strong man, because one minute he'd be promising one thing and the next minute another.

His listening to his people made him fall into some horrible traps. One of the biggest was that he would talk about Vietnam and be repudiated by the President. And this had a terrible public impact. He could have avoided it if he had taken the President's advice. But when he made an announcement that in January we were going to withdraw troops from Vietnam, he was saying something that he knew through classified channels that he should have known the President wouldn't have wanted mentioned in a million years because of the obvious impact it would have in strengthening the feelings of the North Vietnamese that they wouldn't have us to contend with on that level after January.

Nonetheless, the Bermans and the Van Dykes made him come out with this to show that we weren't going to be sending more of our boys over there to be killed and it would lessen the number of people we'd have to draft and so forth and so on. The fallout from that was devastating. Now as I've told you, if you will check your classified information you will see that he was saying something that Johnson had promised, but Johnson immediately repudiated it and I think you can understand why. There were other episodes of that sort. There is so much--I can't even begin to recall most of it right now--there is so much adverse fallout from his rejection of the advice not to get into the President's area while he was running for the presidency.

G: Did the President withdraw access to some of this classified material to Humphrey as a result of these indiscretions?

K: I do not know that as a fact but I would think the President would have been well advised to do so after this particular episode. You see, if Humphrey's advisers had had their full way, he would have announced the day after his nomination that the minute he was president he would halt the bombing entirely, call in the Vietnamese and make a peace with them. In other words, for whatever it was worth he would scuttle the South Vietnamese. And believe me, that was the advice he was getting.

Now the President at this time was trying to get the South Vietnamese to the table. And slowly but surely the South Vietnamese were getting the impression that they'd be better off if they waited for Nixon, and that Humphrey's election would be a disaster for them. And of course this is what caused all the flap. Johnson could taste the fact that he could bring them to peace if Humphrey would not speak up, and that Humphrey would be

elected by a vast majority if he could bring them to a peace and eliminate that whole thing. Now of course the war lasted a few years into Nixon's administration, and as we talk here today you could very well say that that was absolutely an impossible dream, that he could have actually had a peace. But I want to tell you, he believed he could have had peace if Humphrey wouldn't foul it up.

G: On the other hand, it seems that Humphrey was not the only one who was fouling it up, that Nixon was going through his own machinations with--

K: Well, Nixon, on the record, was saying, "I have a plan but I won't announce it until after I'm president." Now, as far as Nixon's connection with that is concerned, I do not know how far that went. LBJ, of course, suspected it and probably knew more about it than he would tell me, but I'm referring to those famous cables.

(Interruption)

Just before the weekend before the election, there was a lot of movement in Paris about their finally sitting down for serious negotiations with the South Vietnamese, at a time when the momentum was moving tremendously toward Hubert. The fact that they were going to have a real peace conference was a big factor in that momentum. The President told me very much off the record that **SANITIZED** they had this cable that Madame [Anna] Chennault had sent to I guess it was [Nguyen Van] Thieu or somebody in South Vietnam saying, "Don't cooperate in Paris. It will be helpful to Humphrey." I'm not giving you the words, but the gist was wait for Nixon. He said at that time that he had no evidence of how much Nixon had to do with this but rather suspected that he had. And he said he was going to call Hubert and at least give him the information, let him

decide what to do with it.

G: Did he notify Humphrey?

K: Yes.

G: He did tell Humphrey?

K: He notified Hubert, and as far as I know, Hubert did nothing with it, decided against going public that weekend with it.

G: Are you certain that Humphrey got the information?

K: Pretty certain.

G: Really? Because. . . . He must have been furious with that.

K: I'm pretty certain, and as a matter of fact I think in subsequent years Hubert wrote that he had that information and decided not to use it.

G: Maybe so. Did the President talk to the Nixon people about it also?

K: If he did, I don't know. I would doubt it, because at that time I don't think he would have wanted Nixon to know about **SANITIZED**

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G: **SANITIZED**

K: **SANITIZED**

G: You don't know anything about the President talking with [George] Smathers or Bebe Rebozo or someone who was situated between Johnson and Nixon, someone that had

good--?

K: No, I remember his telling me during the campaign that "you wait and see. The closest man to Nixon is Bebe Rebozo," and he knew Bebe from years past. In later years he of course saw that confirmed. I don't think he--well, I don't know whether he lived to see the embarrassments that Rebozo caused Nixon, but I know that was the kind of thing he had always been anxious to avoid in our case.

G: His efforts to achieve peace that summer and fall must have been tremendously frustrated by all of these--

K: Well, that's the point I'm making. You have no idea how frustrating it was. And knowing the stress he put on it, which was not only to help Hubert, although he knew it would, but for history. He wanted to be the peacemaker in that situation; he wanted it very much, just as he wanted to be the architect of de-escalation in strategic arms with the Soviet Union. He really wanted that, and that's why I always marveled and wondered about his strength in not giving any concessions, I mean to move the process along. I don't know whether he was right to this day. But as I said in that Camp David moment with Clark Clifford, when Harriman and Vance were recommending that he interpret certain events as a concession on the part of the North Vietnamese, he wouldn't accept it in order to move the process along. Of course, he felt that when it started to break just before the election, that it was because of the way he had handled everything, but then he knew he was up against a very short time frame. He worked desperately that last few days. In another couple of days I think Hubert would have been the president of the United States.

- G: Did he ever talk about going to Paris himself to participate in the negotiations?
- K: Not to me.
- G: Did he ever feel, I wonder, if he could confront the other side in person, directly, that he might have more--?
- K: He never expressed that to me.
- G: Did George Wallace have any role in all of this?
- K: I don't think so. Do you have any reason to believe he did?
- G: No. It seems like everyone else did, I'm just. . . .
- K: No.
- G: Now let me ask you about the bombing halt just before the election. I think it was in October.
- K: Well, that's what led to the sitting around the table. But what broke the back of that, I don't remember. This is what he had been working toward all that time.
- G: Do you think he was convinced though that there was a genuine difference in the military situation that would allow him this bombing halt in October that he hadn't been able to--or had not been willing to do in the spring and summer?
- K: I think at that time--and here again I'm guessing--his problem was not with the North Vietnamese but with the South Vietnamese. I think he had to convince them that a bombing halt didn't mean he was abandoning them and to get them to the table even with the bombing halt. I really feel that the dynamics at that time were more oriented toward the South Vietnamese than to the North Vietnamese. But others are so far more versed in this area that I think you've got to get that from them, Clark Clifford particularly and

certainly Cy Vance and Averell. But that's my feeling.

(Interruption)

Up to now we've talked about the complications caused by the Vietnam situation in the campaign, but I don't think we should lose sight of many other aspects of his relationship with Hubert during the campaign. You know, the first period after the nomination was the very low period for Hubert. That was the period when he made these gaffes on Vietnam and when there was some question in Hubert's mind about LBJ's all-out support for him with his financial helpers and so forth and so on.

Hubert himself personally, because of the kind of person he was, whenever he would see me he would acknowledge that he was where he was because of the President, and that he knew the President was behind him, and he knew that the President felt that he was doing some things not to his complete liking. But he said, "I know I have LBJ's support." I mean, it was that kind of thing. And my instructions were to help Hubert in every which way. I didn't want to be out front and I was not welcome really in the uppermost councils of Hubert's campaign cabinet, but I was close to his top financial man, Dwayne Andreas, and I did undertake to rally support in New York financially. But I did not want to do it as chairman the way I used to do it for the President, so I brought in a good friend, Arthur Cohen, who was chairman of a thousand dollar dinner for Hubert here. This was during the period when a lot of the folks in New York were saying Hubert is not really being supported by LBJ and also a lot of them saying that he's so wishy-washy that there's no point in supporting him and so forth and so on. Well, we had a reasonably successful fund-raiser here and Hubert made nice statements about the

President, and the fact that Arthur Cohen was chairman and I was on the committee was evidence that LBJ was supporting it.

LBJ, throughout the month of October wanted to come to Hubert's support publicly and asked me to be liaison for the method of doing it. And I ran into a very cold atmosphere. The powers that be at Hubert's campaign didn't really want LBJ to come out foursquare for him. I thought it was stupidity of the worst sort, but that's what I ran into. I had to negotiate through some pretty difficult negotiations to get the national committee to support two national broadcasts of LBJ in support of Hubert. Finally as things started to get a little better for Hubert, and the period of apparent repudiation of some things he had said by LBJ, and with the intervention of Hubert personally--and Larry used to say also that he wanted it--but against a lot of the advice of his people they did agree to support these two broadcasts. The broadcasts were made and they had a positive impact according to all of the polls. They contributed to the feeling in the last four or five weeks of the campaign that LBJ was for Hubert and that Hubert would be better off running as a Democrat in support of LBJ than as a kind of splinter representative of the party.

The ambiguity, however, continued to a certain extent right through to the last days of the campaign. I remember the President came up to this house about ten days before the election and said, "I'd like to meet all the top people that have been helpful to me in my campaigns. I'd like to talk with them." It was ambiguous enough even to me that I had to make sure that he wasn't going to talk about the Library but that he was going to talk to these people about Hubert and his desire to see him elected, so as once and for all to make it clear to this group where he stood. He had never had any other

intention. And we had a very large and prestigious group. I think the notes you sent me list all those people that were here. He came, he spent the day here, he rested here and then they all came and the press was outside. He made a wonderful speech on behalf of Hubert. But it's still a mark of the times that most of the people, when they came here, weren't quite sure he was going to say the right things about Hubert, and some of them didn't care about Hubert. They cared about--most of them maybe cared about LBJ. But it was a very, shall we say, troublesome two and a half months.

G: Do you know anything about a dinner in Houston where he used his influence to get some of the Texas leaders to even attend the [dinner]?

K: Yes. Of course, he made a big appearance there finally on behalf of Hubert. I was not involved with that, but that was toward the end of the campaign, and Hubert was being really boycotted in Texas. That Democratic establishment down there went out pretty much against him, kind of a forerunner of John [Connally] switching to the Republican Party shortly after that.

Now there was, as I mentioned before, this feeling that had no foundation that he was withholding funds from Hubert Humphrey. The day that I mentioned, when I was meeting with him and Clark Clifford in Camp David, he said to me, "What have you done about that trust fund of six hundred and fifty thousand dollars and getting it to Hubert?" This had been in the press. Maybe you don't know the background of it, but several years prior to that, while LBJ was president and before I became finance chairman--it must have been in 1964--Dick Maguire had put out a Democratic book and solicited ads for it from the leading corporations in America and had raised six hundred

and fifty thousand dollars. When I came in, I had to advise the President that he had no right to use those funds because they were corporate funds. Dick was way off base when he raised it that way. The only way it could be used would be for something like voter registration, the non-political thing that a corporation could contribute to. We never did anything with it. We put it in a trust fund and it was accumulating interest.

When it came Hubert's turn, that money was laying there and it was money that we would have loved to give to Hubert. [Rowland] Evans and [Robert] Novak and others said the evidence is there about Johnson not really supporting Hubert, he's hanging on to this six hundred and fifty thousand dollars. That was a most unfair accusation and Hubert knew it. And that day I was at Camp David, when I told him that we still hadn't been able to liberate it, he said, "Would you please see Hubert. If he has any ideas, let's put them to work. I want him to get that money." And he sent me down to see Hubert that day by chopper. I met Hubert in his apartment. I had called him and he had Larry there--O'Brien--and we tried to figure out the best way to use it. Voter registration was a little late and so forth. And we just couldn't figure it out and Larry issued a statement saying that we were trying our best.

I went back by chopper that day to Camp David. LBJ was that anxious to help Hubert get that money, and there was never any problem with Hubert about it. He knew that whatever money was around that the President could help him with, he knew it for a fact that I was helping. But the press made a point of it. So that was another [inaudible].

G: What ever happened to the six hundred and fifty?

K: I don't know, I think it was spent on voter registration or something and for the 1972

campaign. It was being held in trust, and the trustee was one of the AFL-CIO people, not in that capacity, but he came out of the--Al Barkan. Barkan may himself have been the trustee. You can track that down. It was spent after that election. But by that time it was a lot more than six fifty, because it was earning interest through the years.

(Interruption)

So, so much for the financial relationship between the two of them.

Meanwhile, as you know, this track was moving very fast, that is the negotiations were moving very fast. By the time of the Chennault wire and everything, it was very clear that Hubert was closing in on Nixon. What had been maybe a twenty to thirty point spread was now down to two or three points. We, all of us, including the President, began to have a certain optimism about the election on Tuesday.

I was with the President at the Ranch election eve. I'd been with him I guess most of the day. And the first returns, very early returns, seemed to be encouraging. Hubert called us from some place out west. I guess I was the only one with the President that evening, except Lady Bird and Mathilde joined us in and out. And we were both ebullient on the phone. LBJ: "You're going to make it" and so forth. And I said, "It looks great, Hubert." New York had just made some kind of an upbeat report. And so the evening started on a good note for all of us.

And then we had to sit through that evening on pins and needles. And I really do believe--you know, my memory could play tricks on this--I do believe I was the only one in the room with the President during this period. There might have been one of the secretaries or Jim Jones, I don't remember. I have that feeling of nobody else except

Lady Bird and Mathilde coming in periodically. And I watched him, and he would get up and leave for long spaces of time, but I sat there riveted. Along about four-thirty in the morning we knew it was going to be a losing fight. I was very depressed. I went upstairs to my room. It still wasn't over. You remember, it took a long time. But I knew it was going the wrong way. It was very close.

G: Was he getting calls from people around the country or getting--?

K: Yes. He would step out into the office. By office I mean you remember the TV was in the living room and his office was around the corner.

When I got up around seven or eight o'clock, it was all over. I went downstairs and there was LBJ and so many thoughts went through my mind about is he going to blame himself, how is he going to handle the Nixon thing? You know, here he was a key figure in all of this, and he didn't talk about it. He was, I would say, obviously deep into himself about the impact of it, and I have to say genuinely sorry that Hubert didn't make it. I just can't accept any conclusions to the contrary. And I think Mathilde, who was with me, would agree with that. But I also feel that he felt, and we both felt, that there may have been things he should have done differently to help the result. Basically, to accept Hubert for what he was on this Vietnam thing and ride a little more with it instead of slapping him down like a pupil or a secondary figure. But that's all hindsight.

G: Did he ever say anything to that effect?

K: No. Not to me, not then nor in future years. What he did say to me often in future years, and if I can use a harsh expression, because I think he used it, was that Hubert had been a goddamn fool during the campaign, and he blamed a lot of the people around him.

You know, as I've said before, and this I saw so often, I would talk to Hubert and get one impression, and then I'd know that that night he would be with his very close friend Dr. Berman, and the next day something would come up contrary to what he had told me. Now this is constant, I'm not talking about one time. You know, LBJ never respected that kind of vacillation. And I must say, when you come to LBJ, he was the same thing to everybody. If he said something to one man, he would stand by it with the next. But that was what Hubert didn't do.

G: When you were watching the elections come in, was there anything that convinced him that Humphrey was going to lose?

K: Not until the very tail end. And I wish I could remember it, but there were a couple of states that made the difference at the end, and he knew those states were going to go for Nixon. We started the evening on a high note and we talked less and less to each other as the results came in. At the end it was just "good night." The next morning I think I left rather soon. Then of course I saw a lot of him after that, but that was a tough time to be with him. I would have preferred to be with him in 1964 with the landslide. (Laughter) And it was a lonely thing to be with him and nobody else around at that time.

G: Did he make any analogies in his own races?

K: No.

G: He didn't?

K: No, I'm telling you, we talked so little that I can't even remember what we said other than long faces all around. I don't know where Lady Bird was most of the evening. I don't remember--I guess she must have--I know she was there the next morning and she must

have either been coming in periodically or looking at it in some other room or something.

There it is.

[End of Tape 1 of 1 and Interview V]