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HARRY MCPHERSON ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW II

PREFERRED CITATION

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Transcript, Harry McPherson Oral History Interview II,
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Transcript, Harry McPherson Oral History Interview II,
12/19/68, by T. H. Baker , Electronic Copy, LBJ Library.

The following is the text of a letter written by Harry McPherson in 1979, authorizing the LBJ Library Director to make his oral history interview available to researchers:

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May 22, 1979

Mr. Harry J. Middleton
Executive Director
The Lyndon Baines Johnson
Foundation
2313 Red River
Austin, Texas 78705

Dear Harry:

For some reason I can't remember what limitation I put on my oral history. I think it was 10 years, which would make it about due for expiration. In any case, there seems to be no good reason for further restricting access to the history. So you may take this letter as authorization to make it available to interested persons.

I hope all goes well with you. What's the story on our LBJ debates?

Best,

Signed: Harry

Harry McPherson

GENERAL SERVICES ADMINISTRATION

NATIONAL ARCHIVES AND RECORDS SERVICE

Gift of Personal Statement

By Harry McPherson

to the

Lyndon Baines Johnson Library

In accordance with Sec. 507 of the Federal Property and Administrative Services Act of 1949, as amended (44 U.S.C. 397) and regulations issued thereunder (41 CFR 101-10), I, Harry McPherson, hereinafter referred to as the donor, hereby give, donate, and convey to the United States of America for eventual deposit in the proposed Lyndon Baines Johnson Library, and for administration therein by the authorities thereof, a tape and transcript of a personal statement approved by me and prepared for the purpose of deposit in the Lyndon Baines Johnson Library. The gift of this material is made subject to the following terms and conditions:

1. Title to the material transferred hereunder, and all literary property rights, will pass to the United States as of the date of the delivery of this material into the physical custody of the Archivist of the United States.

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3. A revision of this stipulation governing access to the material for research may be entered into between the donor and the Archivist of the United States, or his designee, if it appears desirable.

4. The material donated to the United States pursuant to the foregoing shall be kept intact permanently in the Lyndon Baines Johnson Library.

Signed by Harry McPherson on October 28, 1970

Accepted by Harry J. Middleton for the Archivist of the United States on March 3, 1975

Original Deed of Gift on File at the Lyndon B. Johnson Library, 2313 Red River, Austin, TX 78705

ACCESSION NUMBER 74-210

BIOGRAPHIC INFORMATION: HARRY MCPHERSON

Lawyer; b. Tyler, Tex., Aug. 22, 1929; B.A., U. South, 1949; D.C.I. (hon), 1965; student Columbia, 1949-50; LL.B., U. Tex., 1956; admitted to Texas bar, 1955; asst. gen. counsel Democratic policy com., U.S. Senate, 1956-59; asso. counsel, 1959-61; gen. counsel, 1961-63; dep. under sec. internat. affairs Dept. Army, 1963-64; asst. sec. state ednl. and cultural affairs, 1964-65; spl. asst. and counsel to Pres. Johnson, 1965-66; spl. counsel to Pres. Johnson, 1966-69; private practice law, Washington, 1969-.

INTERVIEW II

DATE: December 19, 1968

INTERVIEWEE: HARRY MCPHERSON

INTERVIEWER: T. H. BAKER

PLACE: Mr. McPherson's office, Washington, D.C.

Tape 1 of 1

B: This is the second interview [third tape] with Harry McPherson, White House Special Assistant.

Mr. McPherson, we ended the last series of these with your taking over the job as Assistant Secretary of State for Educational and Cultural Affairs, and you had briefly described what that job involved. A couple of questions arise. One of them--you've already established that Senator Fulbright takes a direct interest in who has that position, presumably because of the Fulbright Exchange Program. Is that interest a continuing interest?

M: No. He has a kind of a symbolic importance for the program; that is, one in that job should go around and see him from time to time, and he does make some avuncular comments about it, but he's not really engaged in the day-to-day operations of it. One of the reasons, I think, is because of Congressman [John S.] Rooney [D.-N.Y.], the Congressman from New York--Brooklyn, who is the chairman of the Subcommittee of the House Appropriations Committee that deals with State Department appropriations, and consequently has to do with this program.

Rooney calls Fulbright "half-bright" just as [Joseph] McCarthy used to call him "half-bright," and he has great contempt for him and believes he's a woolly headed kind of man. Fulbright does not respond in kind; he just, with elaborate implications, he just shrugs his shoulders when the name Rooney is mentioned.

Also, on the Senate side, the responsible Subcommittee chairman in the Appropriations Committee is Senator [John L.] McClellan [D.-Ark.]; and McClellan and Fulbright, being the junior and senior Senators from the same state, have a curious relationship--one in which, I believe, neither beards the other. I don't think they give a damn for each other at all, but neither invades the province of the other.

So McClellan is not particularly rough on the program, but he's also no special friend of it, and Fulbright doesn't waste his capital with McClellan by going to ask him for additional funds for this program.

B: Is the implication of this that if Fulbright were involved in it day-to-day he would get more static from both Rooney and McClellan--the program would?

M: The program would? Yes, the static from the program comes at just about one time of the year. There's a great explosion to which everything builds, and that's the fateful meeting with Rooney's subcommittee when the appropriation bill goes up.

I was asked to come to the White House, I guess it was in late December or early January of 1965, and I asked for time to stay in the State Department until the hearings because I was preparing myself for this fateful encounter. It seemed to me to be in the State Department in this job and not to confront Chairman Rooney would have been like going to the Vatican and not seeing the Pope. I won approval for staying there and came over here the day after the hearings.

I must say it was the damndest experience I've ever had. I worked day and night for about six weeks; I was a very new man--I had been in the job about four months--and I'd tried to learn about it, but I really did learn as I prepared for those hearings. It's like studying for an exam, for the exam of your life, you know, and I felt terrific pressure on me to perform well. I mastered an awful lot of figures and a lot of programs and a lot of ins-and-outs of the exchange operation before appearing in Mr. Rooney's committee room on about February 25, I think it was of 1965--and even then wasn't prepared for what I got.

B: I was just going to ask you if you had managed to prepare for everything. Is Rooney's opposition just for the record; does he just create a show in the hearings or is it serious opposition?

M: Well, he took pride up to the time when I talked to him about the program in always having increased funds for it in each year of its existence, in each year which he had responsibility for appropriating for it. Indeed he did in my year he did. I used every stop I had with Rooney. I tried with some degree of subtlety to remind him that I was a friend of President Johnson's, whom Rooney admires immensely. But I even did such things as get Father Gilbert

Hartke of the Catholic University School of Drama, who was an old friend of my wife's and was a very close friend of John Rooney's, to intervene with him. And so by the time I got there, my way was fairly well prepared. I'll never forget, as I walked into that committee room followed by a squad of supporters from my bureau--accountants and the heads of various geographical areas and so on--Mr. Rooney says, "Is this one of the ones that's going to be cut?" And I said, "Sir?" And he says, "Is this one of the ones that you're going to cut back?" And I said, "I don't understand."

And he impetuously looked to the back of the room to a State Department budget officer and said, "Mr. So-and-so, is this one of the ones the Secretary said he was going to cut?"

I hadn't realized that the day before, when Secretary Rusk testified before Mr. Rooney, he voluntarily at the beginning of his testimony said, "We're going to cut a number of bureaus, are going to cut our asking for a number of bureaus," I didn't know that.

The budget officer said, "No, sir, it's not." And then he said, "Uhhhh! Well, the hearings will come to order." It was very much like being a prize fighter, sitting on your stool, waiting for the gong to sound and the other guy runs across the room and belts you one before you begin. But he was very genial after that.

B: And you got an increase?

M: Got an increase. Had two days before him and got an increase up to about forty-nine million dollars, which was the largest that it had ever been at that time.

Interestingly, just as a footnote, I was succeeded after several months by Charles Frankel of Columbia University, a very thoughtful man, a scholar--as a matter of fact, probably the outstanding ideologue of this program, a man who understood its foreign policy implications and potential better than anyone probably in the country. And Frankel did not do well with Mr. Rooney, even though he was prepared intellectually to deal with him. He was simply not a politician and was not able to bring him around.

His successor--Charlie Frankel left after about two years, he said essentially over Viet Nam--. His successor was Dr. Edward Re, who was the head of the Foreign Claims

Settlement Commission, a Brookline-Italian, who happened to come from Rooney's district. And I never figured out what went wrong, but apparently he was appointed--the President had been looking for a job for Re for a long time. He had wanted to make him a judge, but Bob Kennedy had always prevented that when he was a Senator from New York. For some reason he and Re were at odds. So the President, on the urging of his Italian Mafia, Joe Califano and Jack Valenti, made him Assistant Secretary of State for Educational and Cultural Affairs, apparently without telling Rooney. And Rooney got furious, and with, I believe, the tacit consent of the Department of State and conceivably even the White House, blitzed the appropriation and cut it from about forty-six million dollars to which it had fallen under Frankel back to thirty-one million dollars.

- B: From whom did the initiative for cutting the appropriation come?
- M: I believe it came from Rooney, but I don't believe--as a matter of fact I'm rather certain--that there wasn't any major effort to save the appropriation. I think it had to do with the general unrest in the colleges and the feeling that, "Oh hell, why in a year of very tight budgets when the competition is really between poverty money and Viet Nam money, why should we be spending on frills like this, especially when they just contribute to more unrest in the colleges?" It was just a general feeling about that, not a very hopeful sign, but in any event I think the program has been almost decimated. I hope it can soon be revived.
- B: It's slightly off the point, but it's a question relative to White House staff work. Is that circumstance you just described, in which Congressman Rooney was not informed of Re's appointment, a failure of staff work?
- M: I haven't any idea. I didn't know a damned thing about it until it was done. The President never, that I can remember, asked me about it. I had spent about four or five months looking for a successor to myself. I came over on March 1, 1965 on loan, as it was called; I was still paid by the State Department, and I was quite obviously being tried out over here in the White House. I spent several months looking for a successor. I took several successors to Mr. Fulbright to try them out on him and was greeted in almost every case negatively. I took Frankel finally and got him by the President finally, and that was almost at the point of a gun. I was damned near about to be sent back over there myself, which would not have destroyed me. I enjoyed

the program and would have wished for more years in it if that had been possible. From a career point of view, it didn't make the maximum sense for an ambitious young man to come to the White House and then be thrown back into the pool from which he came.

B: The President was reluctant to take Mr. Frankel?

M: Yes.

B: Any particular reason?

M: Oh, he didn't know him; he didn't know anything about him; he was an academic and a scholar who Fulbright wanted. I think probably he took him in part because he hoped that Fulbright might soften his opposition on other things. It was one more piece of the attempts to bring Fulbright around on Viet Nam and the Dominican Republic, et cetera.

B: Before we leave that area--

M: Let me get back just for a moment to the question of Congress' intervention in this field. In most cases that I've observed, unless there is a very strong Congressman or Senator who spends most of his time worrying about a particular program, such as Chairman [Congressman George H.] Mahon used to on the Defense Department, Congressmen really can't be said to run programs at all. They simply don't have the time to invest, and they can hurt you badly by denying you funds or by writing in restrictive language in the legislation. But they can't really direct and shape your day-to-day operation. They just simply don't have the time, they don't have the focus for doing it. That's the case in most bureaus and agencies of government. As I say, some Senators or Congressmen have just devoted all their time to one particular area and they do have quite an impact in that area. There are some special circumstances such as Jewish Congressmen in Middle Eastern and Israeli matters and that sort of thing.

With the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, I should say that most of the Congressional interest is in stimulating support for some hometown operation. The Senators, the Congressmen, the Mayors, everybody of a particular state, want to get the East-By-Jesus State College Choir to the Soviet Union, something of that sort, and they want support in doing that from the State Department. That's one situation.

- B: I've often wondered how some of those choirs are selected.
- M: Well, they were generally selected--Of that kind, and I meant that not as a favorable reference to that choir, they were generally supported in the old days from a kind of political viewpoint. They would be selected by my predecessors in that agency on the basis of who had applied the most pressure. As a consequence, we were frequently destroyed in competition with Soviets or other efforts abroad. They would send the Bolshoi; we would send the East-By-Jesus State Choir to follow up; and it gave the United States a rather ridiculous and provincial third-rate aspect in the arts. But Luke Battle, my predecessor in the job, who was I think the best man in that job that there ever was, had as part of his general reorganization of the bureau, established an advisory committee on the arts including people like Peter Mennin, who was the head of the Julliard School. They set up panels--one in dance, one in music--serious music--one in popular music and so on. And they chose the very best available entertainers and artists, and this helped immensely.
- B: To save some future scholar a good deal of travail, is the East-By-Jesus State Choir hypothetical?
- M: It's hypothetical. But it's not far off.
- B: I was going to say--I remember earlier there had been fairly minor state college groups sent.
- M: That's right. This is a real--it's not quite as easy as I'm making it sound. You do want to show the world some of the depth and breadth of America's artistic interests. Also, the East-By-Jesus State Choir may be willing to travel throughout a bunch of little African countries and entertain and get involved in local school projects and sing impromptu performances in all kinds of situations where the Robert Shaw Chorale would simply not go. And the Robert Shaw Chorale may not be available to go. This is worthy of a whole study in itself: what is our best foot forward insofar as cultural and dramatic and musical presentations are concerned?
- B: Related to this, when you were in that position, did you ever receive any direct or indirect indication from the President as to what his idea or philosophy of the program was?
- M: No. Not a bit.

- B: By philosophy, I mean the question of whether cultural exchanges in themselves are worthwhile or whether they should be primarily a means to an end for political purposes?
- M: None at all. The only conversations I've ever had with the President about the work of that bureau, or for that matter I may say with Secretary Rusk, were on the general subject and the very difficult subject of the utility of bringing large numbers of foreign students to the United States as against supporting local institutions abroad and putting those two in opposition for this purpose. We have now, in the United States, about one hundred thousand foreign students, many of them from the under-developed world. And the question has always come up whether the wisest thing to do is to invite more and more of those students and to facilitate their coming, or to try to help them in their home country. The President and Rusk both essentially feel that the latter is preferable and so does Fulbright, in the point of view of the under-developed world.

Fulbright really doesn't give a damn about his Fulbright Education Program outside of Europe. He sees it essentially as a Rhodes Scholarship kind of program. It was the way to take unlettered Arkansas farm boys and expose them to Europe--to the culture of Europe--and to bring Europeans here so as to bridge the cultural gap between the United States and Europe. He really doesn't care at all about bringing large numbers of fuzzy-wuzzies into the United States, or Latinos, or Asians. Fulbright is a cultural snob. I like him and I enjoy talking to him about these issues, because I enjoy reading Boswell's Life of Johnson, and essentially he's an eighteenth century--perhaps not a Tory, he's more of an eighteenth century Whig, a deeply conservative man from that point of view. The speeches he makes are generally written by Seth Tillman or others of very liberal persuasion, but when it really gets down to it Fulbright doesn't give a damn about most little brown people in the country and the world. This is not to say that he's a profound and active bigot, but he does have a Southern planter mentality to a degree.

Once when he echoed Walter Lippmann's argument that we were involved in Viet Nam among people with whom we had no real cultural interests, that sort of thing--they are different kinds of people--the President said contemptuously, "Do you know what a man from Arkansas means by that? Do you know where you hear that down in Arkansas? You hear it in the big white house up on the hill, and you

hear it from people who are talking about those black people down on the river bottom. 'They're not our kind of people?'" And I think there's a lot of truth to that.

In any event, Fulbright, Rusk, and Johnson all agree that it would be wiser if one could bring it off to assist the education of people in the under-developed world in their own countries. The reason why this hasn't become a matter of great policy, why our policy hasn't changed, and why we haven't tried to do this before, is simply because the program has a very low order of interest and priority. Nobody has really focused on it and has taken on the job. The people who are interested in educational and cultural exchange are university professors and presidents, foundations, and a number of other do-good types, who have very little political power. You can get a good meeting going down here. We had a good one about four or five months ago, with everyone from McGeorge Bundy to Jim Linen, the head of Time, the whole community of people who are interested in matters like educational and cultural exchange. And at the end of it, I made an angry speech about the fact that we had spent the entire day speaking brilliantly about the way the program ought to be run and new initiatives in the field of educational and cultural exchange, and that the Congress had just cut the guts out of the appropriation bill and not one of these people had raised a voice of protest. There is no organization in the country that buys a full page of the New York Times and says, "For Christ's sake, Mr. Rooney and Congress, you're destroying a very vital element of United States foreign policy." It's as if two worlds are operating and the world of the academic and the foundation executive is good so far as it goes, but it goes within the State Department. It does not go into actual political power or into any attempt to influence policy at all. And it's most regrettable that that's so.

B: Is the program basically incompatible with politics? Would it work better outside of government?

M: That's a possibility. The program has two elements basically. One is the element that essentially derives from the theory that it's good to have exchange and gets to know people and that education itself is a good and so on. The second is a very political aspect which is directly related to United States' foreign policy objectives. That's the Leader Grant Program and the whole business of bringing potentially powerful journalists, parliamentarians, and others to the United States for a period of anywhere from

three weeks to six months of visits here to make them familiar with our country and see that we're not a bunch of mad dogs or whatever. This has been, by and large, a highly successful program. At one time, I believe in about 1961, half the German Bundestag had been here on Leader Grants. It probably had something to do, has had something to do, with the prevention of widespread anti-Americanism in a number of European communities. I should say, incidentally, that the French program has been not as successful as either the British or the German. We've never really made the contact with the French perhaps because of the cultural imperialism of both countries, and all the stuff that's given rise to DeGaulle on their part.

But essentially we have never developed a coherent educational--international education--policy as far as I can tell. Nobody has sat down, in the way we've tried to sit down with domestic programs, and looked at the entire spectrum of our effort and said, "Let's get rid of this part of it here; it has a very low order of priority, and let's concentrate on this."

In the last couple of weeks of my experience in the State Department, I took the top forty officers from my bureau, the people who were running the programs in the various countries and areas, down to Airlie House for a weekend to talk about the program. I spent a couple of days trying to structure a very elaborate program for the discussion. After awhile I threw out the elaborate program and decided on two questions. And I asked the first question the first day we were there and the second question the next day, and it really worked out very well.

Our budget at that time was about forty-nine million dollars. And the question the first day was "What would you do--what would you recommend if our budget were one hundred million dollars, just twice what it was?" We broke up into groups; at the end of the day the groups reported and it was a very lively discussion. We got some new ideas out of people, what they considered fruitful activity that we were presently unable to fund.

The second day the question was "What would you do if our funds were twenty-five million dollars, half of what they are? What's really worth saving?" Well, it turned out, unfortunately, that the second question needed to be answered because within a couple of years our budget would be not much more than that.

But I remember that as one of the few times in my six months in the State Department, operating this program, in which people really concentrated not just on the administrative details of various programs but on the real value of programs. What are we shooting for here? What is the purpose of conducting this kind of program?

At any rate, the President and the Secretary of State, with the exception of those conversations in which they came down in favor, as a theoretical matter, of educating people abroad instead of bringing them here, neither the Secretary nor the President involved themselves in my program at all.

George Ball was supposed to be, I was told by Luke Battle, the man who would be my best adviser, and indeed George Ball is highly intelligent and a thoughtful man. But at the time we're speaking of here, the fall of 1964 to January or February of 1965, there was a presidential campaign against Goldwater; there was a terrible decision on Viet Nam as the escalation of the war from the North mounted very rapidly; and this was just a very low order of priority. It had the great benefit for me of permitting me to run a program without direction from above. I saw Secretary Rusk three times a week at staff meetings; I never raised a question about my bureau in that staff meeting, because it was quite obvious that he was absorbed in other things, even though I don't think he would have been at all displeased if I had. Secretary Rusk has a curious ability to give himself--to give his full attention to an almost limitless range of subjects. This is very good and it's also slightly disturbing that on a morning on which the world is blowing up in some part of the world he can take an interest in all kinds of other things, things that are happening elsewhere in the world. He has an omnivorous interest--

B: He's really knowledgeable on them? This isn't just listening politely?

M: Yes, he is. But you really wish--I used to wish that he would say, "Oh, Christ, I don't care to know about a military coup in Tanzania, Viet Nam is happening; that's all I want to hear about this morning." But that wasn't his style.

In any event, I never saw anyone from above who told me how to run the program. I kept my lines to Fulbright open, as a matter of courtesy, and to protect myself from any feeling on his part that I was not interested in his views.

I saw Rooney several times during that six months, and I had a number of conversations with irate Congressmen whose local glee club had been turned down for a grant, or any number of conversations with members of Congress who wanted people to be permitted to remain in the United States. As you know, an exchange scholar, who comes here for a period of study and who wants to become an American citizen, is required by law to leave the United States for a period of two years--not necessarily to go back to his home country but to go outside the United States--before applying for and returning to the United States. This is very good policy, in my view, but it does work a hardship on a lot of people and the head of that bureau gets a lot of complaints from Congressmen.

B: One last thing--after you came to the White House staff here, did you ever try to provide the interest in the centralized direction you've been describing as an ideal for this policy?

M: I worked a good deal with Douglass Cater on the program. I maintained an interest in CU but not a continuous one. CU is the State Department term for that bureau. But I found myself involved in a lot of other things here.

B: A question of priority--?

M: The real question of priority. It was also being run, during the interregnum between me and Charles Frankel, by an extremely skillful man who was my deputy when I was over there and who helped me through the six months--a man named Arthur Hummel, who is now the Ambassador to Burma and was a USIA official. Art Hummel knew more about the program than I did, and I felt extremely confident in his leadership.

B: That brings us to the White House position. You've already mentioned this briefly--that late in 1964 you got an invitation to come and came early in 1965. Can you describe in more detail the circumstances of how you got on the White House staff?

M: I think, as I said before, when I went to the State Department, I sent a message through Jack Valenti to the President to find out if I should go, because I didn't want to go for a very short period and was told to do whatever I wanted to do. It wasn't, I guess, more than four months before I had the call from Bill Moyers.

I came over to see him and he said, "the President

wants to know if you would be interested in coming to the White House staff."

And I asked him, "In what capacity?" He said that Mike Feldman was leaving (Mike was Special Counsel at that time--Lee White was Deputy Special Counsel), and the President had promised Lee that he would promote him to Special Counsel. That Lee was not going to stay for a very long time and that I would come and if it worked out, I would succeed Lee. I said that I would come, but not as a deputy to Lee. I would come in some other capacity. I was looking out for myself, very specifically, as a matter of my place on the greasy pole. Coming from Assistant Secretary of State, a position that required Senatorial confirmation, over to be a deputy to somebody on the White House staff didn't strike me as the right thing to do for an upward mobile youth. So Bill said that could be worked out and that if I did come, after a period of trial on loan, to see if I liked it and if I was thought to be suitable as a member of the White House staff, that I would become a Special Assistant which would give me the clout that I felt I needed. So I said, "Okay, I'd like to come."

I remember Bill looked at me for a long time and said, "Really?" He couldn't quite believe it, because even though he was enjoying power, he also was suffering from it and from his proximity to the President. Both of us know the President very well, and we knew his problems. I think what Moyers was reflecting was his own sense of loss of personal freedom here in the White House. While he was already a person of very great consequence in the Administration and had the power of the White House under the Presidency behind him when he spoke, he maintained a genuine sense of loss, I think, throughout his time here that he was not back in the Peace Corps or in some other organization in which he had freedom to run the thing as he chose--freedom from the white telephone of President Johnson. And he knew that I had that freedom in the State Department and was a little incredulous that I would want to give it up. But I'm afraid, to be entirely candid, that I was very much like Moyers. While it was great to have that freedom over there, it seemed much more exciting to have the White House as a fulcrum and to be able to do some things of greater immediate impact.

B: Did you have any hesitancy about coming to work for Mr. Johnson, whom you knew well and knew what a task master he was?

M: Not that I recall. I like the President and as difficult as

he some times is to work with, I enjoy him. And he is the most extraordinary teacher I've ever had. The opportunity to watch him from close range in action was something I very much wanted as part of the education of Harry McPherson.

B: Is the trial period a standard procedure for White House assistants?

M: It was in my case. He was moving very slowly to change the guard here. As you know, when he became President, he retained most of the Kennedy staff as well as the Kennedy Cabinet, a very wise decision. The potential for savage internecine warfare was very high; if you read all the books about the airplane on November 22nd [1963] you get the feeling. It took tremendous guts on his part, I think, as well as a good deal of political sagacity, to keep them here, to go through with it. I think in an earlier tape I talked about Johnson's ability to bite the bullet and to go back into the fray; to do the tough thing; to swallow his own sensitivities, his own pride, and all the rest of it; and to risk a lot for the sake of larger goals. I think in this case, with the Kennedy staff, he did that.

Some of the Kennedy staff were inclined to be relatively friendly toward him; some of them were otherwise inclined; all of them were terribly distraught for a long time.

B: By Kennedy staff in this context, do you mean those who stayed on at the White House?

M: Yes, I mean Kenny O'Donnell, who stayed for a time; Ralph Dungan; Larry O'Brien; people who had been close to him here. That does not include the Dave Powers and Ted Reardons and others who were further down the line.

B: Then, as you have already said, you got permission to stay and carry through the appropriations of the Educational and Cultural Bureau?

M: Yes.

B: And then on the 1st of March, I believe you said, you moved over here?

M: Came over here, yes.

B: In this process, did you have any conversations with Mr. Johnson himself about what you would be doing?

M: No, I can't remember when I saw him after I came over. Yes, I do. I remember on about the first or second day I was here, Leonard Marks asked me out to lunch and since Leonard Marks was close to the President and had been his lawyer in private life for Mr. Johnson's communications interests, I thought that was quite an acceptable thing to do. So I went over to the Hay-Adams [Hotel] with Leonard and halfway through the lunch, I got a call to come back to a staff meeting. And I hustled back and found the President with about five or six members of the staff--Douglass Cater, Bill Moyers, I can't recall who else--and the subject of conversation was going out to lunch. It was a rather jocular conversation; it wasn't angry by any means, but the point was very clearly made that the President wanted people available right now. Because of his peculiar work schedule, he was at his peak of activity during the day around one o'clock, so it would be wise not to go out. I didn't go out for the next few weeks and then that began to fall apart to some degree and I ended up being one of the principal "goers-outers" for lunch.

B: How do you carve out a function on the White House staff? Do you get assignments or do you just sort of--

M: Well, let me describe as briefly as I can the way the functions of the Special Counsel devolved and generally of the White House staff. There have been four Special Counsels here in the White House since 1961--Ted Sorensen, Mike Feldman, Lee White, and myself.

Ted Sorensen's job was essentially to be an adviser to the President on a broad range of domestic programs, to put together the legislative program, and to write speeches.

Mike Feldman had worked for Senator Kennedy when the Senator was representing Massachusetts and had become something of an expert on a great many of Massachusetts' particular problems. These included the textile industry, trade and tariffs, relations with a number of industry groups, rubber footwear and all of it, even agriculture. He had become the guy on the Kennedy staff who tried to bridge the gap between the sophisticated Easterner and agricultural policy generally. So he became something of the commodity man, the guy who maintained the Administration's relationships with these industry groups. When he became Special Counsel, he carried those responsibilities into the office, became something less of a speech writer than Ted Sorensen had been, and the job of putting together the legislative program devolved upon Moyers; that is, Moyers

took the Sorensen job essentially and became both the legislative draftsman and the legislative draftsman and the speech draftsman. Feldman did some speech writing, but not the major speeches.

At the same time that Feldman was Special Counsel, Lee White had a number of things in his portfolio that had arisen primarily because of his own personal interests. They included civil rights; civil works and the whole public works function; and natural resources. Lee had worked for the TVA at one time and maintained an interest in power matters and in natural resource development in general.

When he became Special Counsel and Mike left, it was shortly after I came--as a matter of fact I came in the week Mike left for private law practice--Lee carried those interests of his into the Special Counsel's office and I took over Feldman's, namely being the contact man with the textile industry and being the trade and tariffs man in the White House. And I did some work on this peculiar responsibility of the Special Counsel for international aviation matters. The Civil Aeronautics Board has the power to grant routes and make rates for all domestic matters--a route between New York and Chicago is entirely within their power and their decision is final. Any time a route involves an international carrier or even a stopover abroad, as part of a route that also includes the United States, the President must sign off on the recommendation of the CAB before it becomes law. At the moment we have a we have a giant case, that you may have heard about, called the trans-Pacific case. So the business of processing those recommendations and making further recommendations to the President has been a function of the Special Counsel. Sometimes they involve an awful lot of intense industry pressure and interest, and one serves as a buffer for the President, listening to the various claims and counter-claims of the industry. But essentially this industry function, including agriculture and so on, became mine when I came into the White House. I was familiar with some of it because I had worked in the Senate on some of the problems it involved, in the trade field and the textile field. There was an organization that President Kennedy had set up with Mike Feldman as his representative called the President's Committee on Trade Policy; it included the Secretary of State, Secretary of Commerce, Secretary of Treasury and so on, and the White House man sat in on it.

I began also to write a few speeches. I had never written much for Senator Johnson, which was kind of curious,

because my interests lay in speech writing, in writing generally. But George Reedy had been Senator Johnson's speech writer and George was both rather jealous of that position and satisfied Senator Johnson. George understood how far Senator Johnson wanted to go in any given speech and was able to write very cautious speeches that were entirely suitable for a Senator from Texas. He was getting out of the speech writing business here in the White House, both because of his job as Press Secretary and because the kind of speeches that needed to be written were much more aggressive than they had been in the Senate.

Dick Goodwin was also here writing speeches and he was certainly responsible for the majority of the major speeches during the first year that I was here--he and Bill Moyers. There was a time--it was a slow accretion, I should say; I was nowhere near as heavily occupied in the first six months as I became. There was a time when we were so desperate to find someone to succeed me in the State Department and the problems were so many of leaving that position untended, that the President's temper grew fairly short and he thought that unless I could find somebody, he'd send me back over there. This was--I think also it had something to do with the fact that I had sent him some memoranda that he was disturbed by, and I think there was a time when his patience with me was fairly short.

B: What memoranda disturbed him?

M: I think probably the one that really got his back up was a long memorandum that I wrote him about the Kennedys. I felt that he was developing an obsession with loyalty to him, as against loyalty to the Kennedys. An awful lot of very able people in the Democratic Party and particularly in the universities were loyal to the idea of John Kennedy, and they were also interested in helping Lyndon Johnson. But there was no question but what some members of the Kennedy operation--that is, the people who were closely related to them, and particularly Bob Kennedy--would never be satisfied so long as Lyndon Johnson was in the White House. And the President's very mixed feelings about the Kennedys began to get unmixed after a time. That is, at the time of the assassination and thereafter he was genuinely, almost desperately, concerned to make life more tolerable for Mrs. Kennedy--to do everything he could to be forthcoming for the family. This was at a period when everything from the half dollar to Cape Canaveral was being changed for John Kennedy. I suppose if they had wanted to rename the United States of America the United States of Kennedy that it could

practically have been done at the time. He did not want to be in the position of opposing that, although I think there must have been some degree of reluctance on his part to go along with it quite as much as he was requited to. He would get stories from Georgetown dinner parties of people mocking him, people who had been part of the Kennedy Administration and had been close to the Kennedys; he knew what took me a long time to learn--that there was a very curious and very tight circle of Kennedy aficionados who included not only a number of people in government and academic life, but also columnists and newspaper writers. That this tight little circle in Georgetown had a very great impact on public opinion generally. I know this because I became part of it. I suppose Joe Califano and I became part of it to a greater degree than anyone else in the Johnson Administration; that is, we went to dinner often in Georgetown with members of this crowd. We were what a friend of mine, a Jewish friend, calls the White Jews to the Kennedys. We were acceptable.

B: Is there a center for this circle?

M: No, it's a self-sustaining circle, in this was: no member of the circle--and I must say, it's probably not a circle, it's maybe a trapezoid--but the members of it, of the group, do not criticize one another. They are held together essentially by a common background. Most of them are Eastern college people; most of them summer on the Cape on Martha's Vineyard; it is genuinely the Liberal Establishment. And in that world, it became de rigueur to attack President Johnson, and there was no social consequence attached to that. That is, a columnist--Rowly [Rowland] Evans, for example--who attacked Johnson in his column would pay nothing for that. But one did not attack Bob Kennedy. The Kennedys were also part of it; I suppose, as much as anything, were the center of it. Invitations to Hickory Hill were treasured. The elan and glamour, which is very real, of the Kennedy world was the center of excitement and energy within the group.

B: I've heard it said that the various Mrs. Kennedys were active in this kind of thing. Is that a correct assessment?

M: Well, I think there was a time when Ethel Kennedy was fairly sympathetic to President Johnson. She became quite unsympathetic and as a matter of fact became so distraught over his Presidency that she was one--I understand--was one of the principal factors in Bob's decision to go for the Presidency. But the women, including Eunice Shriver, Jacqueline Kennedy, and Ethel Kennedy, were fairly

sympathetic with Johnson for a long time. Johnson does very well with women. His polls have always been unbalanced in his favor among women. At a time even when his polls were going down generally in the country, he maintained through most of that period a majority of support among women. And now commands a very heavy, heavy two-and-a-half, or three-to-one majority. Part of it, I think, is because he is a big man and conveys a sense of manliness. Some women, I suppose, find him gauche and with too many warts, too self-centered and all that, particularly highly-involved, highly-educated women who are deeply concerned with policy issues, but women qua women find him an attractive man. And I think that sustained him with the Kennedy women for some time. And he was also very gracious to them and wrote some very tender personal notes to Mrs. Kennedy during the whole first year.

B: Was Robert Kennedy involved in this kind of thing, either actively or by acquiescence?

M: Yes. I believe so. He was skillful enough never to launch a full scale attack on President Johnson among President Johnson's supporters or the people who worked for him. That is, he never spoke to me or, as far as I know, to Califano in disparaging terms about the President. He did speak about his concern that we were not doing enough in many areas and that sort of thing. But there's no question but what he was the man that most of this group looked to to save them from another four years of Lyndon Johnson.

At any rate, Johnson knew that that was the case. His instinct as a politician told him that he was being undercut, and that there was a very strong feeling in the New York Times and some parts of the Washington Post that was determined to bring about his downfall.

B: May I ask you one more question? I don't want to sound like I'm pressuring you on this, but I suspect future scholars are going to delve into this. Can you name any more people who were involved in this, what you call, the Georgetown circle?

M: Well, take the Kennedy people--Bob himself and there at the end, well, the whole family; the Vanden Heuvels who were close to the Kennedys. Some of Kennedy's outlying people like [William] Vanden Heuvel were much more active in anti-Johnsonism and were active in New York as well in turning that society against him. Rowly Evans; Phil Geyelin; I should say to some extent Joe Alsop, although

Alsop is a very strong supporter of the View Nam War and his relations with President Johnson are very mixed. Joe Kraft and his wife. There are some lawyers in it, and I think the President always felt that Nick Katzenbach was part of it, although Nick has been the soul of honor, in my opinion. While his heart and guts were with Kennedy, his mind was with Johnson and he maintained a consistent loyalty. Sander Vanocur was a member of this group that I'm speaking of; Burke Marshall, whom the President had very mixed feelings about. He respected Burke's intelligence and integrity, but Burke was also very much a Kennedy lawyer and his soul was also deeply connected to the Kennedys. Some of these--I shouldn't make it appear that these people spent all their time figuring out how to bring Lyndon Johnson down. The point is that there was very little tolerance for him, in the sense that they would support him when he was up, but if ever he slipped or showed signs of weakness on any particular point, they were quick to seize on it and had very little moderation toward him.

B: Was your memorandum then a suggestion of how Mr. Johnson should react to this situation?

M: My memorandum was essentially a long plea for judging people on their merits and for making use of people who were willing to work for Johnson and willing to be loyal, like Nick Katzenbach, and who could contribute substantially to the goals of the Johnson Administration; not to write them off simply because their hearts were with Kennedy. There was one particular example, a vivid one, is a very close friend of mine, Pat Moynihan. Pat Moynihan was never very close to Bob Kennedy, and I don't know how much he ever saw of Jack Kennedy, although he was increasingly active in Jack Kennedy's Administration. Pat is a dazzling, dazzlingly brilliant man with the heart of a Brendan Behan, a really Irish heart, with the assassination of Jack Kennedy. He entered a period of Celtic grief which included a lot of rough, bitter humor about Lyndon Johnson. That is, the grace note was gone. Pat has always been very close to Sander Vanocur and to Mary McGrory, a very skillful writer for the [Washington] Evening Star. They all felt that the world had gone to hell. At the same time, Pat was a brilliant producer of ideas and could have been wooed by Lyndon Johnson if Johnson had wanted to, I believe. He was having a very tough time with his boss Bill [Willard] Wirtz. Pat was Assistant Secretary of Labor at this time. And in 1964 when Bob Kennedy announced for the Senate in New York, somebody came to Pat and asked him to go up and make a couple of speeches for Bob Kennedy. He sent Bill Wirtz a

note and said that he was going to do that; and Wirtz translated this, according to Pat, to the President as saying that Pat had left the Labor Department to go to work for Bob Kennedy. Well, one thing led to another and the President wrote off Pat Moynihan as an ingrate and a traitor.

And I wrote a long memorandum essentially based on that case, but also concerning the whole Kennedy aperature, called on the President to make judgment on the basis of a man's merits and not his emotional absorption in the Kennedy mystique. It was a very tough, candid memorandum which set the President off. As a matter of fact, at that time we were looking for a replacement for Franklin D. Roosevelt Jr. as chairman of the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, and Moyers came to me shortly after that memorandum and said the President wanted me to be that chairman. And I politely declined and said that if the President wished me to be outside the White House that I would go back to the State Department rather than go do that.

B: Was the implication that the memorandum was cause and that post was effect?

M: That's right.

B: Did Mr. Johnson tend to see the kind of activity you described where it did not exist?

M: Yes.

B: And did he tend to judge--

M: But he also saw it where it did exist. Moyers and I were saying ruefully to one another one day after we had made a long argument with him and had lost--about something, I forget what it was--that in our experience with him where we had really argued with him, had really fought with him on a particular matter, that he had turned out to be right about ninety-five percent of the time. Abe Fortas told me once when I was questioning Johnson's character judgment or something, that as bad as it was in some particular instance, that it was still the best he had ever seen in his life. He was the shrewdest judge of character that he had ever seen, and I have come to feel that both those statements are true. A lot of people in whom I put trust and believe that they were not really sedulously determined to bring Lyndon Johnson down, I consequently came to feel differently about. I came to see that he was right. He has

a very sensitive feeling for his own skin and he can tell when somebody has got the knife out for him.

You see, one of the problems with this is that if you are sensible of Johnson's faults, you tend in part to agree with the man who has got the knife out for him. I mean, it's simply that after that judgment is made, those people who do have the knife out for him really mean to do him in; whereas people like Moyers and myself and Califano make the same kind of judgment on some particular character fault of his and then return to support--the general support of him--and to loyalty to him. The fact that we were conscious of his faults as they were, as those were opposed to him were, made us a kind of bridge to their world--made us more sympathetic to their impatience with him, but also to some degree blinded us to the consequences of what they were doing; that is, ultimately bringing him down.

B: Was it possible to be a bridge between the Johnson group and the Kennedy group? That is, you've said that you and Mr. Califano tried to stay in that circle, did that last? Could you?

M: Well, we tried it until it began to fall apart in late 1967. And then after March 31st of 1968, it didn't make much difference whether we did or not. We were out of it, but we tried for a long time, with some degree of success on occasions. I suppose from a practical point of view what we were attempting to do was to keep the newspapers from cutting him to shreds, and to try to help him in his attempt to communicate with the American people and to prevent savage anti-Johnson material in the newspapers.

B: Were the problems of late 1967 the problems of the approaching Presidential campaign?

M: Yes.

B: I have digressed you away from the--we were talking about the White House staff generally.

M: Let me very briefly go through it. Outside the President's office sits the keeper of the portcullis--the Appointments Secretary. Marvin Watson took that job in 1965. Marvin is a tremendously industrious person, totally loyal to the President, a literalist, who had to learn the hard way that the President doesn't always mean exactly what he says. He doesn't want to see anybody whose name begins with "B" because he's mad at somebody whose name did begin with "B";

but he really doesn't mean that. It's a terrible job to do.

There's a story that Kenny O'Donnell tells of his time with President Kennedy in that job. Kennedy had finished ten meetings that day--thirty minutes apiece, all on different subjects. He was absolutely distraught; came into O'Donnell's office and said, "I can't think; I can't put two thoughts consecutively together; and I want to see nobody. I don't want to see Sorensen until I say otherwise." And that went on. Kenny O'Donnell behaved just like Marvin Watson, literally, and the President had no schedule at all for two weeks. One night he went over to dinner in Georgetown at Senator Cooper's house and he came back then the next morning and said to Kenny O'Donnell: "God, last night I heard about so-and-so and so-and-so and I had never heard about it before. How the hell am I going to learn about these things unless you let me see some people?" So it's almost an impossible job to do.

B: Is that literal-mindedness what caused some of Mr. Watson's early difficulties?

M: Yes. And also profound provincialism. Not so much a Texas provincialism as a limitation in understanding of tides in American history. Marvin was the keeper and the processor of reports--personnel reports from the FBI--on potential appointees. The FBI reports are a disaster. I've never been able to figure out how to change them, so all I do is complain about how they are. They are, quote, objective, so that if they're talking about Dr. Baker, they may have three pages of reports on conversations with people who are favorable to Dr. Baker, ending with forty-four other people who said that they thought he was a good man and his appointment would be in the national interest. Then begins the "con" after that "pro," and the "con" will include without subjective comments some absolutely outrageous material; that is, there will be no attempt by the FBI to evaluate the material. They'll just report that somebody said that they think Dr. Baker was part of a communist cell in Mississippi that was operating with the Freedom Democratic Party. Then there'll be an asterisk: Freedom Democratic Party. And it will describe what that party is and will say that one of the members of that party is Joe Jones. Joe Jones' sister, Euphelia Jones, was in fact a member of the Joint Anti-Fascist Committee which has been cited by the Attorney General. So you get all this bilge that goes on for page after page, elaborate reporting of this kind of stuff. Then it's signed "Dr. Baker appears--his name does not appear on the list of felons or

he seems never to have been arrested for a major crime--signed J. Edgar Hoover."

Well, when Marvin first began reading these things, his fascination with the "con" evidence and his inability to bring an historical sense to the material, that is, that a man might very well have been involved in an organization--a bookshop or an academic organization at one time--that had either then or later some Communist members and was ultimately taken over by the Communists and had been cited and so on, but that was back thirty years ago, and since then he hasn't been in that organization and was not apparently a conscious member of the Communist conspiracy then. That kind of historical sense--that things were going on in the 1930's that aren't going on now and that don't have much relation to anything going on now--Marvin lacked. And we had some real battles over particular appointments.

B: "We" meaning among the staff members?

M: Yes, me essentially.

B: Well, certain elements--in the press--

M: I must say that Marvin was--this sounds prissy but that's the only way I can put it--he was educable, and he in time came to feel differently about--I don't know if he felt differently about the reports but he felt differently about what meanings should be attached to them, in part because some of the very fine people who were helping the President on various commissions and informally, were the very people who had that kind of, quote, negative FBI report.

B: Certain members of the press at the time depicted Mr. Watson as a kind of dedicated right wing ogre. By your statements, that was really not the case?

M: That was not the case. Marvin is conservative, has always been identified with the conservative establishment in Texas. He is by no means a Bircher [member of John Birch Society] or that sort, and I think he has very much liberalized his views about a lot of things since he has been up here. But essentially Marvin is an organization man, and he's a man of, as Southern politics frequently requires, a tremendous personal loyalty. Marvin Watson, for the past twenty years or fifteen years before he came to the White House, was the campaign manager of each campaign of Wright Patman [D.-Texas], who was certainly not a rightist. He was the campaign manager. He raised all the money for

Mr. Patman's campaigns and he was the guy who organized them down in East Texas. He's also very close to John Connally and to President Johnson; utterly devoted, utterly dedicated, single-minded.

Marvin had been connected with the Lone Star Steel Company for a long time, which had an anti-labor record. But when Marvin was assigned Senators and Congressmen to go work on in behalf of the repeal of 14-B of the Taft-Hartley Act, he went and worked just as hard as anybody in the White House for that repeal. So he does what he is told and does it loyally and faithfully. He did believe that Califano and I and others--he believed and so did Jake Jacobson believe--that our influence was not a good one with the President; that the President should not be going as swiftly and as vigorously toward the left as he was going.

B: I've forced you into another digression. Would you prefer that I avoid that, that I save questions like that that come up? For instance, you were describing generally the operation of the White House staff and got as far as the doorkeeper and then I dragged you out--

M: It may give it a bit more intelligibility. Because even though the President, every now and then, reads an article about the fact that the White House staff is not organized like a military command and I think on two or three occasions since I've been here, he's sent out a memorandum saying everybody is to put down exactly what he does, and we're really going to put this thing in boxes, just the General Eisenhower had it. That either never lasts or never even gets done. I was told to do it one time and I never even did it, because it was obviously so much a personal matter.

B: Well, I think most people are aware that the White House staff isn't any military-type staff and that what amounts to personalities, or at least a fluidity of situation, is the way it works. This is why I keep asking you these digressive questions.

M: Well, they're really good questions, because Mr. Nixon's staff has been--at least a few weeks ago, when some of their people were down here, gave every indication that they were going to put things in neat boxes and all of us reacted with amazement. And I'm sure that they will learn, just as we did, that the requirements of the jobs to be done and the capacities--individual capacity--of staff members who do them has a great deal to do with what ultimately happens.

Nothing in Joe Califano's original writ over here gave him the authority to do what he has subsequently come to do. He's an extremely capable and aggressive guy, who has taken the responsibility. He was talking to Pat Moynihan yesterday, and Pat asked him "How do you get power in the White House?" and Joe said, "You take it. There are vacuums everywhere, and if you do it, if you take it and seize it and run with it, it's yours, and you develop a certain right of adverse possession to responsibility."

B: Does that kind of thing ever get bitter among White House staff members?

M: It hasn't here as far as I know. There was some bitterness, I think, or at least concern, on the part of one or two members who had substantive responsibility--Douglass Cater is one--in Health, Education and Welfare. When Joe began to set up his small staff of young gun-runners--Jim Gaither, Matt Nimetz, Fred Bowen and so on--and they began to intrude upon some of Cater's Health, Education and Welfare responsibilities. But I'll leave the development of that staff to Joe to describe.

Jack Valenti was the second member of the staff, and he performed a function that has been described as "valet" et cetera. He was a hell of a lot more important than that and was a tremendously active member of the staff. Because of his proximity to the President and because he was an extremely active and almost hyperactive man, he got himself into all kinds of activities, not many of them on a continuing programmatic basis. But in the daily doings of the President, what the President said, who the President saw, and the President's relations with all kinds of people in the outside world--Jack was extremely active.

B: Is the phrase "got himself into" precisely correct, or is it that the President gets him into?

M: Well, Jack--it's a little of both. I suppose it's probably more of the President getting him into it, but Jack would be there early in the morning and late at night, and the President would turn to him and say, "Tell so-and-so that I need his help on such-and-such," and Jack would do that.

Jack and Bill Moyers were what I came to regard as--in a basketball term--as the tip-ins men. And Doug Cater once in one of his books called the White House staff under Johnson and Kennedy as very much like a basketball team in the sense that the ball gets passed back and forth between a

lot of people and anybody can shoot. You have complete access to the President on any subject, as distinguished from Eisenhower's staff which was a pyramidal one with Sherman Adams at the top. The tip-in analogy comes from Valenti's and Moyers' being there early in the morning and late at night, and when the President had a memorandum from one of us recommending something which he was inclined not to do, very often, they could make a final argument for us at a crucial point and persuade the President to do it.

B: Is physical proximity involved in this, location of offices?

M: Very much. Well, Valenti's was two offices away from the President's, Bill was down the hall, but they were both there very often, particularly when Bill became Press Secretary, early in the morning when the President starts going through his night reading, when he starts passing out his night reading and giving it back to the staff with comments. And frequently late at night when he's receiving his night reading.

Doug Cater was a substantive man, as I said. He had very wide responsibilities in Health, Education and Welfare, primarily as liaison man between the President and that department. This function is a contingent one. You have the power to speak for the President so long as the President gives it to you, so long as your water is not cut off; and you speak as the President and you bring a Presidential perspective to bear on the problems of various departments. That is, departments are self-operating and they're self-aggrandizing; they look to the completion of their programs in a kind of independent world. And yet what they do has a very great impact on the way the country looks at the Administration; therefore somebody must look at the programs from the point of view of the President. What does the President really want to achieve here? And that is the function one performs. You can get yourself very easily and quickly into a position of developing animosities with departments, many of them, since they [may think] that you're taking over their responsibilities and you try not to do that.

B: By departments, do you mean generally, or do you mean specifically the Secretaries?

M: The Secretary, the Under Secretary, and the Assistant Secretaries. Those are the people who count. A lot of the scrapping with the departments goes on at budget times and the preparation of the legislative programs.

Moyers prepared the Great Society program--was in charge of preparing the Great Society programs, partly for 1964, although much of it had already been prepared, and for 1965. In 1965, Califano came over from Defense. After a long struggle with McNamara, the President extracted him from the Department of Defense.

B: Did you by any chance have anything to do with that? You've already established that you and Mr. Califano were close when you were in the Defense Department.

M: Yes, I did. The President had heard from Moyers that Califano was the ablest of all the Special Assistants to the Secretaries that he had known--that he was a real can-do man. When Moyers moved to Press Secretary, that task of being the President's man on domestic programs and of putting together the legislative program was left vacant. The President, for a time, thought that he would put me in there and I--I don't know whether with a sense of my own limitations or of my own desires or a combination of both--thought that I would not be the best engineer of that operation. And I--when he said he was also thinking about Califano, strongly recommended that he get Califano here. And as I say, after a long struggle with McNamara, he was able to get him over. Califano has developed in the last two-and-one-half years the most coherent organization for the preparation of the legislative program that I believe any President has ever had in the White House.

B: Was he given the freedom to develop his own staff, as he has?

M: That grew very slowly by accretion. He was never told, I believe at any one time that he should go out and hire a staff. The President has sort of a loose idea about that--he thinks that you should go out and hire whomever you need.

[End of Tape 1 of 1 and Interview II]