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STEWART L. UDALL ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW III

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78705

ACCESSION NUMBER 74-259

INTERVIEW III

INTERVIEWEE: STEWART UDALL

INTERVIEWER: JOE B. FRANTZ

DATE: July 29, 1969

Tape 1 of 1

F: This is another interview with Stewart Udall in his office in Washington, on July 29, 1969, the interviewer is Joe B. Frantz.

Stu, let's talk a little bit this morning about your Indian problems during your administration, what you had to do in the way of resettlement, what you had to do in the way of getting the Indian--I hate to use the word--problem over, but we've really never had any satisfactory answers to the Indians 'till the time you came in. It is history that there's been a surge of concern about the Indian now after a long period of neglect. So I think the best thing you can do is just start off telling what you found, what you tried to do and then I'll interpose some questions as it seems judicious.

U: All right. The question of Indian policy was one I found one of the most frustrating issues of my Department. I made the rather foolish statement the day President Kennedy announced my appointment--he and I held a press conference and I, because of my familiarity of being from a state that had the most Indian people and Indian reservations--that I might be my own Indian commissioner.

F: As a young Congressman, had you dealt much with Indian problems?

U: Well, I had to. I had all of the State of Arizona except the Phoenix area.

F: They were part of your constituency?

U: They were part of my constituency, which gave me a great deal of insight. In fact you had enough diversity of people and problems that it was a fairly good cross-section. This, of course has been a problem where all of our policies have more or less circumscribed and bedeviled by the whole history of the American Indian. Unlike some of the minority groups in our country, these people have been isolated. They've been defeated, conquered, beaten. Then, in this century we had a whole history of very inadequate education and the legacy of all that of course is relative weak leadership, a general demoralization and a feeling on everyone's part that there ought to be some simple solution. That was the basic attitude of the Eisenhower Administration. Their so-called termination policy is that what we ought to do is put them on their own and let them sink or swim. Of course the Indians and their friends realize they'd probably sink--or a lot of them would--if you went too fast. This is what we inherited.

We also inherited the Indian Bureau which is one of the oldest bureaucracies, one of the most deeply entrenched. Half the people in the Indian Bureau, incidentally, as a result of a preference policy on hiring are Indians. Although there are many capable people, a lot of them were people of very limited ability. This meant the bureau as an instrumentality is very sluggish, very deep in a groove, and not very flexible, and not very quick to produce new policies. The problem is so complex, because there isn't an Indian problem, there are eighty to ninety various Indian groups all over the West, in Alaska, all the villages in Alaska, and people with different resources, different leadership capabilities, different relationships to local governments. Therefore the problem is very diverse, has many facets to it and inevitably any Secretary is not going to have time to get involved in all of the details. As I look back it's extremely important who you have as Indian commissioner and what kind of leadership he provides.

I selected, after waiting for six months and with some reluctance, Philco Nash, who had formerly been Lieutenant Governor of Wisconsin. He's an anthropologist, a person interested in the Indians, person of good spirit. He's very interested in the Indians. But during the four and a half or five years that he was commissioner he had a tendency to exclude me from involvement on the theory that I was too busy. He didn't bring the problems over to me. I was increasingly frustrated with this.

F: You didn't take him out of the service? You brought him in from the outside?

U: We brought him in from the outside. That had been the tradition usually. In fact that's one of the unfortunate things, that we brought non-Indian political types in and made them Indian Commissioner. Then they worked with the Indian Bureau. And you never had a kind of fresh look at new policy with the sort of dynamism and new ideas exciting the country that we were finally going to do something significant.

The tendency, too, with Indian Commissioners--both with Nash and his successor, Robert Bennett--is that they would spend much of their time in what I would call Indian politics, going to the various groups. If the Indian people liked them and they were popular they considered themselves a success on that count. Yet much of the problem was in developing new policies, selling them to the Congress, selling them to the Indians.

F: The general tendency [is] for them to manage what you've got rather than to try to create.

U: That's right, and with a cumbersome bureaucracy that really needed over-hauling seriously. I saw this in my last years.

To get down to the Johnson phase of the thing, I decided along in '64 that I wanted to replace Nash. I wanted someone that would work more closely with me, that would be more dynamic, that would shake up the bureaucracy, that would come in with new ideas. Yet Nash had a strong political base. He was very close to Hubert Humphrey.

He was very close to other Congressmen and Senators, although strangely enough the thing that finally made him a weak commissioner in my view was that he completely lost contact with the important Congressmen, Senators on the Hill. He was just almost persona non grata to those people. Consequently, he wasn't producing any legislation. He wasn't producing any policy. He was just hobbling along with the Bureau working with the different Indian groups. Some important things were done, some good things were done, but essentially I don't think we were making the kind of big strides I would like to make. I said when I got through I thought we did better in the '60's than in the '50's. I thought we made more progress. I think there are more things we can point to that are significant in some areas. But there wasn't the kind of drive and dynamism that I thought--.

In order to get Nash out, because he had support, I felt the best way to do this was to pick the best Indian that I could find to be Commissioner and in effect shove him to the sideline on the ground that the time had come to have a new kind of leadership. I felt that Robert Bennett, who was a career person--he was only part Indian, but he had considerable sensitivity, had done well in Alaska and was generally identified to me as the ablest career bureaucrat in the Indian Bureau--so I proposed him as Commission to President Johnson. The President went along with me on this, but it took time and Nash went out reluctantly. At least then we did have a new opportunity for leadership and much of this culminated in the message that President Johnson delivered in the winter of 1968. This is the kind of thing you can't come up with over night. You've got to work on it. I spent a good deal of time in 1966 and '67, working with him on new policy, new initiatives.

F: With him, you're talking about Bennett?

U: With Bennett. This was the first Indian message, message on Indian affairs, that any President had ever presented this century!

F: That's incredible, isn't it?

U: That's right, it shows you how much in the backwater--out of sight, out of mind--the Indian problem had been.

F: Both Kennedy and Johnson when they talked about minority problems--and this is not arguable--had a strong feeling for minority problems. Did the Indian cross their vision in that case? Or were they thinking more of the blacks, and the Mexican-Americans and people of that sort?

U: Everyone, unfortunately, it seems to me, all of us, tended to put the Indian off in a side pocket, in a category of his own. With the poverty program, with the whole civil rights program as we called it in the '60's. Most people didn't think of the Indians as being part

of this. It was only in the last year or two, I would say, of the Johnson Administration that the Indian began to move up front. I think the President's message was an indication of this, that the Indian was going to get more attention, that we were going to provide more emphasis all along the line on education.

F: Was this a result of education on your part?

U: I think it was a result in part on our leadership, but I think, to be honest, it was a result too of the whole ferment that was taking place in the country. The question of poverty and the rights of minority, and the trouble of the blacks in the cities tended to focus on it, because if you were talking about the plight of the black in the ghetto, the Indian housing, their unemployment, their health conditions were far worse and always were, all the time. You know, if we were going to start and take an attitude that morally we were going to make it up to the Indian, we were going to take action, the Indian always in my view should have been at the head of the line. But we tended again, because he's isolated and he was off by himself--the Indian was not in the ghetto in a big city where he could demand and get the attention. He's off in the backwater and that was one of the reasons it was always so difficult.

F: If he wants to make trouble, he can only make trouble against himself.

U: That's right, that's almost part of the problem. So I felt that the President's supporting me on putting Bennett--the first Indian Commissioner incidentally--U.S. Grant had a military aide, I think he was a lieutenant [Lt. Col., Col., BVT B Gen. Ely Parker] person, who was with him in the military and he appointed him as Indian Commissioner in 1869 or '70 as I recall. He only lasted a year and a half. The members of Congress kind of drummed him out because he was too pro-Indian at that period of time. You know that was before Custer and the battles were still going on in the plains. So for nearly a hundred years you never had Indian leadership in the Indian Bureau. This is one of the oldest bureaus in the government.

Yet Bennett had a lot of good points, he did some good things and he certainly had the confidence of the Indian people. But he was too much a prisoner of the bureaucracy, too much a creature, having worked in it twenty-five years, of the whole process. He wasn't radical enough. He did get support from Congressmen on the Hill that Nash did not get. But we had a great difficulty in developing the kind of new initiatives and new policies that I would have liked to have seen. This still remains to be done.

But under President Johnson we did have substantially more money for Indian education. I put a great deal of stress on this. Whereas Nash had gone along with the old career education people who were very unimaginative, Bennett and I reached out and got some of what we felt were some of the best educators in the country with disadvantaged children and got new leadership and new initiative going. And education is, was and is a

very vital function.

One of the other things that I took most satisfaction in the last two years, and again the President and his people gave me support right down the line on this--was in championing the cause of the Alaskan natives and their desire to have land in Alaska. And I put a freeze on; I deliberately picked a head-on fight with the state of Alaska and said we weren't going to let them select further lands until the natives got their lands. This put me into a head-on conflict with Governor Hickel of Alaska. It became a very bitter controversy. As of right now, it's I think the main Indian issue before the Congress. We didn't resolve it, but I did after a lot of very deep work come up with a proposed solution and what Congress, I hope, is going to do this year, or next year, will be very close to what we developed two years ago and initially presented to Congress. We said we weren't going to allow the State of Alaska to preempt land and property that the natives of Alaska were entitled to. What I was doing essentially was saying, "Well, we've made all these mistakes in the past." The one area where we still have an opportunity to come up with the right policies initially was in Alaska, and at least we were going to try and achieve that.

F: Now this was political dynamite. Of course, you also had another political problem in Alaska in that proposed Rampart Dam on the upper Yukon. Was President Johnson sensitive on the political ramifications? I remember you lost your Democratic Congressman from there. I suppose this was part of the pattern when Ralph Rivers was defeated.

U: It was interesting on the Rampart Dam thing because this had several aspects to it. The conservationists, the wild life people, were very disturbed about this because it would flood one of the major water fowl areas of the whole continent. Some of the natives were disturbed because it was going to flood their areas out. This came in this time when we were really evolving new conservation policies. Although Senator Gruening, in particular, was vehement. Rampart Dam was his baby, his concept in the beginning and he felt that I was--very critical of me for taking the view that we did in coming in with our report, which essentially killed Rampart Dam. Yet I'll say this for the President and the White House people, they never wavered on this. They gave me my head, in effect, to do what I thought was right. Gruening, interestingly enough, after we had announced our recommendation, our decision which effectively killed Rampart Dam, he caught Hubert Humphrey coming back from the Orient once in Anchorage and had him there. He persuaded Humphrey to say or sort of intimate that maybe my decision was wrong and it should be reviewed and Rampart Dam should be reconsidered. Humphrey did this without talking to me, without talking to the President and even when he came back here he said he was going to talk to me. He never did talk to me. He never did bring it up with the President. I never heard about it from the White House.

F: So really you had a contradiction--

U: That's right. But I'll say this. I had both from the Bureau of the Budget--from Ramsey Clark and people at Justice in those last two years on the Alaska fight--they all supported the position that I took. I think the Administration record that we made on the Alaska natives and their rights was a very good one. I think we set the stage for maybe doing right in Alaska and coming in with the kind of solution that can mean that these people will both prosper and will share in the great mineral wealth of that state and will, I hope, make much greater strides, much faster strides, than some of the other Indian groups have.

This occupied a lot of our time and I told my people the last year and a half or two years, because I sensed that whatever happened my time was running out. I said, "I want to make all the pro-Indian decisions on legal matters, on land rights, on everything else; you just tell me what you think is right and lay it on my desk." And I did quite a few things in the last year or two that I believe again set the stage for the right kind of action in the future.

F: For instance?

U: These were questions of water rights, where the rights of the state conflicted with the Indians, a question of land policy, and as to defining boundaries of Indian reservations--a lot of major issues.

F: You get on a sort of shakey ground here, don't you, in the sense that part of this undoubtedly feeds through the Justice Department? How do you keep your lines straight?

U: The Justice Department has an Indian section over there and these people normally are pro-Indian, too.

F: Is there some kind of liaison?

U: Oh yes, there's a regular liaison and on legal matters we'd have to go through the Department. One of the other disappointments, though, is the fact--and much of the difficulty on formulating new Indian policy--that it takes new laws and the House and the Senate were at war all the time.

The Senators were much more inclined to take the view that we were not only too paternalistic but that the Indian Bureau ought to shrink and the Indians ought to be more or less pushed out into the main stream faster than the Indians felt they could go. The members of the House, again, there was divided council. They tended to be what I would call more pro-Indian, more inclined to be sympathetic with the Indian interest, the Indian cause. This meant that much of the major legislation that we proposed the last year or two instead of it going through readily it ended up in a disagreement with no results. This was an important part of the whole frustration. But I did feel overall that we made some important steps forward, that we quickened the pace of progress, but that we still didn't

move as fast as I hoped we would in Indian policy.

F: Has the Indian progressed to the point where he can bring the pressure of votes the way that, even now, the black has done in places like Mississippi, where you can no longer sort of shunt him aside?

U: Unfortunately, I have to say in the main, no. Now there are people like Senator Fred Harris of Oklahoma and others. You know Oklahoma has a large Indian population. This was a result though of two or three things. Number one, the Indian didn't have the type of leadership. He wasn't an activist in politics. A lot of the Indians like the Navaho in New Mexico and Arizona, the biggest tribe, most of them don't even register. They vote in tribal elections, but in the first place it was difficult for a lot of them to register. It's as difficult as it was in the South for some of the blacks. So the Indian did not muster some of the political clout that he might have had. Much of what he got came from members of Congress who sympathized with them on moral grounds. And, you know, got support from the other political constituency. So this is an important part of the problem.

F: As a problem, is it pretty much of a Western problem? In other words, does it begin where you begin to hit the arid sections of the states? Or did you spend much time on the Eastern Indians?

U: No, actually Eastern Indians long ago have been largely assimilated into society. The Indian groups who have land of their own, were given land, are mostly in the Southwest, in the Dakotas, and then some in the Northwest--smaller groups--and then this very big problem in Alaska. So it's essentially a Western problem.

F: Were you involved in the salmon fishing rights at the mouth of the Columbia?

U: Oh yes, this was again one of these running controversies. Essentially what we did with the Justice Department was to take the Indian side in that controversy. They did have treaty rights and their rights should be respected and the states shouldn't be allowed to push them around. And we won most of the law suits on that point.

F: Essentially, does this evolve into a state versus federal government controversy?

U: Essentially the state against the Indians and their rights, and the Federal Government as a guardian has to defend the rights of the natives. That's the position that we took basically.

F: Do most of your Western Senators and Congressmen tend to be pro-Indian?

U: It varies. That's the curious thing about it. All of them would publicly identify themselves with being pro-Indian--even those who in my judgment were actually hostile--because the Indian does have that sympathy. But we didn't have the kind of strong leadership we had

in conservation, you know, where you had a chairman or a prominent member who was out to help us forge new policies and to really champion new policies.

F: You didn't have anyone in Congress then who was saying to you periodically, "Let's get something going here and I'll help you?"

U: It was a matter of us serving balls up to them and of them getting into an argument as to how they were going to serve the ball back. Oftentimes the ball never came back across the net. This was part of the difficulty and still is.

F: Did President Johnson show any sort of creative leadership in this, or did he pretty much leave it in your hands?

U: I would say in this field he substantially left it in my hands. When it came to the kind of presidential visibility and leadership which we did develop in this Indian message--and I think it was a very fine message and one that certainly sets the stage for action right today--there came the same kind of warm sympathy and interest that the President had given to the cause of other minority groups. I can't think of a single time when I was ever called down or rebuked or anything by the White House or my orders countered in anything that I did. So in that sense there was a heavy delegation responsibility and pretty thorough going support.

F: Whose idea was it to devote an entire message to--

U: It was one of the ideas I had developed and worked on. I had tried to get this done earlier, I think, as far back as under President Kennedy's Administration, the Indian message.

F: Was there reluctance on the part of Kennedy and Johnson to go ahead with such a plan or was there just a matter they just didn't get around to it?

U: It was a matter of developing something that was coherent and hard-hitting, that laid out a new policy. Also it was something--that was always one of the problems--would the President buy a message? If he didn't put it in the right tenor and so on, was he helping or hurting with the Congress? And the President's 1968 message, I think, really laid it on the line and laid the basis for the kind of action that was needed.

F: Was the message pretty well written in the Department of the Interior?

U: Yes, the President's people, as always, we shoot it over them. They would question some provisions and help rewrite it, but the essential message was the one--

F: There were no surprises in it, or no great disappointments?

U: No, no.

F: How was the message received by the Indian community?

U: I think it was received very well. I think it was received surprisingly well in the Congress. We got the kind of reaction that we wanted and this really, of course, was pointed towards President Johnson's second term. This came out, as I recall it in early March, could have served as the sort of foundation and basis for the President's term.

F: Could have been an issue to run on in the fall.

U: That's right.

F: Did you work with any resettlement ideas during your Administration?

U: No, basically what we did was to continue to carry out the programs--what was called relocation. This came out of the experience from the Japanese, as you know, in World War II. The Indians who felt they were ready to move into the urban centers and have job training and take a job--and this was on a voluntary basis of course--that they were ready to do so. This continued, and again this was a program that had mixed success. I think the figures I always heard from my people was about a third of the Indians who left Indian country and went into the cities would return and a lot of the others, you know very understandably, they wanted that tie with their tribe and their home country so that they could return.

But the Indian problem over all of these years has developed a lot of complexities, a lot of difficulties on administration, and much of the time the Indian Bureau is spent on these nasty little details--so much so they became almost preoccupied with them and there's never any initiative from the Indian Bureau for kind of drastic radical changes. I'm not so sure if I had stayed on and were in there today that I would not want to think of a completely different kind of an Indian Bureau. Maybe call it the Indian Service, and completely restructure the whole bureaucracy. I think this kind of rather thorough-going change is needed.

F: Do you think you need to bring the Indian section of the Justice Department over into this sort of arrangement? In other words, do you have a fundamental conflict there?

U: No, there's no problem there. They've got to advise on certain matters and they usually cooperated with us and were pro-Indian. One of the things that I did, however, the last two years, was to give my Indian solicitor, who one of the solicitors, under the Solicitor Department--give him a kind of free hand, make him kind of an advocate and a free-wheeler so that he was not under the thumb of the solicitor but was suggesting things right directly to me as to what should be done legally to further protect and enhance

Indian rights.

F: Has there been a tendency just to treat the Indian problem on you might say a one-dimensional level, instead of recognizing that you do have these tremendous varieties of Indians and of Indian practices through the country? In other words, would you treat the Navahos the way you would the Winnebago?

U: Well no, they each have their peculiar history and problems and you have to take them as separate groups. That's the reason the talk of the Indian problem is in itself a bad generalization, because there isn't a problem. There's a series of problems. It's a series of separate communities, separate groups. Each have their own resources, their own history, their own leadership or lack of it, and you've got to work with them on their own problem.

F: You said you got mixed up in details occasionally, did you get down to the level of perhaps having to be arbiter for some intra-tribal fights occasionally?

U: Oh yes, we got involved in some of those. There was a bitter boundary fight between the Navahos and the Hopis in Arizona. We sent it to court, and the court didn't really resolve it. This really came back to the Bureau as a question how we solved administratively in terms of court decision.

In the main, most of the Indian arguments and quarrels and disputes involved the state in which they were located, or non-Indian land owners, or people who wanted to take their water rights, or their fishing rights-- things of that kind. You have to be constantly vigilant and find out what the Indians' rights are and fight for them.

F: Do you think that assimilation is an answer? Do you think it's more viable to have these sort of vacuums of Indians with their having the privilege of coming and going at will?

U: I came to the conclusion, I believe this was one of our major policy changes of significance on Indian policy. You know, the thrust always had been well, give them a good education and get them in the main stream, and assimilation was essentially the policy. I came to the conclusion that we had overlooked what the Indian, with his own history and his own culture, what he could add as an extra element, extra dimension to our society and that the Indianness of the Indian, his own history, his own background, that this was important, that if he wanted to continue to intermarry and to maintain his own communities, that he ought to have that option. The individual Indian that wanted to move out and to go to college and get a job and become part of some other community, that's fine. The Indian who wanted to cling to his values and his culture and his art, that we ought to be big enough as a country to allow this kind of diversity. We ought not to put all of our thrust on saying, "Well, get out of these Indian communities," and, "We're going to push you out into the larger American community," that you ought to have as many options as the Indians themselves wanted.

F: Am I correct in believing that there has been a tendency to bring the schools to the Indians instead of sending the Indian to the school?

U: No, this had gone through a rather long history. Initially, of course, we took the schools out to the Indians, except they were so isolated and so backward, with the language barrier, cultural barrier, that Indian schools were very inferior. A movement began about fifteen years ago to get the Indian into public schools wherever possible, which is a sort of educational assimilation, you might say. This policy seemed to work quite well. It was integration quite frankly and it gave a lot of advantages, although they uprooted a lot of kids and put them in boarding school situations.

But still we were left with a lot of the Indian communities that were so remote, so isolated. In fact some of the Indian groups don't even live in communities. You had to gather them up and bring them in. This is where the Indian Bureau itself still had a heavy responsibility of carrying out Indian educational programs. Alaska's Indians are an example; the Navahos are an example; and so you essentially had two Indian school programs running on two tracks. One where you turned the responsibility over to the states, the local school districts and paid them money, and the other where the Indian Bureau was still running Indian schools.

F: Do you have a fundamental or a potential overlap with HEW in this matter of Indian education? Or conflict?

U: This was a running problem because the health responsibility, for example, in 1954 was transferred to the Bureau of Public Health. This worked very well. Everybody said, "Why don't you give the education responsibility--" curiously enough the people in the Office of Education in HEW didn't want it.

F: They would have to build a different staff for it too.

U: This would put them in the business of running a school, you see. They sensed that this could be very embarrassing and everybody said, "Well, you're telling us what should be done in American education; how are you coming with your little school system?" you see. So they were very wary of it and I talked with Secretary Gardner about this in 1966 or '67 and told him that I was open minded on it. When he checked into it I think he found his people were very reluctant. They did begin for the first time to give us some type of help and assistance that we hadn't had, but I still sort of was flabbergasted in a way to find out how little they wanted to be involved in Indian Education, I think partly because they felt it would give them a sticky nitty-gritty type of responsibility they didn't want to have.

F: The one place they showed would be the place they least likely--

U: But on the other hand this would have put them on the spot probably. In my own view,

they probably could have done a better job than we could do.

F: Do you think that one solution is to have a sort of over-all Indian Agency--- whatever level you put it at that would be concerned with Indians instead of fragmenting him among several Departments?

U: Well, certainly when it comes to government or land rights or resources I think those responsibilities have to be kept together. But I think health and education can be parceled out, so that you can have fragmentation.

F: We'll get back to this in more detail later but I think it's pertinent now. You have periodically advocated at least a titular change and some functional change into a Department of Natural Resources, or whatever name you want to give it. Would you look on the Indian as a natural resource in this?

U: I discussed this many times with the Budget Directors and also with Califano, and the President's people. This was during the period in '66-7 when the President was particularly active on reorganization of Departments. He created two new Departments. I said, "Why shouldn't Interior become a Department of Conservation?" This is what we talked about at that time. The answer I always got back from the experts in the Bureau of the Budget was, "Well, that's fine, but if it is going to be done, we favor a sorting out and taking away from your Department the responsibility for the territories and for Indians, and transferring them"--they never said exactly where, I assumed this meant HEW--and this became a kind of stumbling block. These were not resource problems except in an important way they were--you could always argue it both ways--because the Indians own land. They have two percent of the American land they own and that land is a resource and has to be managed. So we never did resolve this because we always came into this kind of a confrontation and argument of them saying, "Well, we'll go along with the idea but you're going to have to strip out of the Department some of the important responsibilities."

Then there were others who would also say, "Well, if you're going to make it a Department of Conservation, you've also got to transfer to it the Forest Service in the Department of Agriculture." Of course that was the kind of big argument we weren't quite ready, I think, to tackle. I think this should be done. I wasn't quite ready to propose that as a step as long as Secretary Freeman was there, at least. So we just never got quite to the point where we proposed this kind of a change.

F: Did you ever talk this over with Secretary Freeman?

U: Oh, we just joked about it.

F: You never sat down and talked it out on what would be?

U: No, but we talked out controversies out a great deal and we developed a kind of modus vivendi since we had basically the same convictions on conservation. We did a lot of things, working together, that were positive and constructive and got things moving. We didn't let these kind of bureaucratic quarrels block progress. Therefore as long as Freeman was there we were making enough headway that the prudent thing seemed to be--and the political thing--was to work along together rather than back off and pick a big fight which would color all of our relationships.

F: Did you have any supervision at all in the work of the VISTA people with the Indians? Or was this more or less imposed on you from the outside?

U: No, it was more or less what you'd think of as an added activity. I advocated one time having the Peace Corps go into Alaska because I felt that the problems there were so severe and we needed something like the Peace Corps. But the VISTA people and the Poverty Programs, they worked directly with the Indians. They had the affect, you see, of stirring up the Indians, of stirring up the young people. The Indian Bureau people didn't particularly like the OEO programs because they were not supervising them. The complaint kept coming back they were stirring up dissatisfaction and so on. I thought dissatisfaction should be stirred up. If I were an Indian I'd be dissatisfied. It seemed to be this was always a bureaucratic complaint that they were causing trouble. Well, there should have been dissatisfaction and hell-raising and so on.

F: You really haven't developed though the Indian activist leader the way you have among the Mexican-Americans and the grape growing in California and that sort of thing?

U: There hasn't been up to this point. The Indian hasn't been militant. You had few militant leaders. I think we're going to see them. I think it's maybe five years or less away. This could have been helpful had we had that kind of Indian leadership but the Indian leaders of the 1960's tended to be more the quiescent types who were looking primarily towards their own politics of staying in power, rather than reach the country or influence the country or to dramatize Indian injustice, or something like that.

F: Has there been any thrust among the Indians for their brighter young people to go to law school in order to represent them in Indian claims? In other word develop their own lawyers rather than let outsiders carry the ball for them?

U: This is a very recent development in the last three to four years, and a very good one. The University of New Mexico, for example, took a lot of promising Indian students and had them in for a kind of pre-law seminar, I think two years ago. I thought this was excellent. We're getting some in law schools now. One of the brightest young Alaskans is going to UCLA, for example. I think this is long over-due, but again the educational system is so poor you weren't producing educated youngsters of the caliber that could even aspire to go to law school until within the last three or four years. So there were practically no

Indian lawyers.

F: Along the line while we're on VISTA, have you worked with the Job Corps on the fringe of some of your national parks areas?

U: Well--

F: Again, you've got an outside operation.

U: This was a disappointment to some of us. I was an advocate all during my years in the Cabinet of the Youth Conservation Corps, which was again something like the CCC's, where we would have been given camps and men and run our work programs. Shriver and his people and the Bureau of the Budget people and the others that framed the Poverty Program, they were against this. They wanted to run the programs themselves, and that's the solution they came out with.

I even had a big fight with Shriver at one point over whether we should call these Job Corps, Conservation Centers. He wanted to just call them all Job Corps Centers. I wanted the word "conservation" in and he and his people objected to this. I never understood quite why. I finally told him we were going to call them that whether they called it or not. I forced their hand. They finally reluctantly agreed to that. But they treated these Centers, you see, as the educational function being more important than the work program. Therefore, considering what we expected when we talked about a Youth Conservation Camp, the effect was much less because they deemphasized the conservation work side and emphasized the educational programs carried on in these centers. In a way these were the most costly centers of the Job Corps because they were isolated. If you were just going to emphasize education, you should have stayed in the cities. You could have people live at home.

F: Did they take these people pretty well out of the cities and, in one sense, set them down in an alien environment? They didn't make a great appeal to the more outdoor rural minded person?

U: They took the kids from the ghetto, a lot of them, and they put them in these Conservation Centers which were isolated--usually not near communities and out on their own. I'm not saying they didn't give them a good work experience. I think they did. But the program was very costly and that's the reason I suspect the Nixon Administration discontinued it because the emphasis was heavily on education and work training rather than, as with the CCC's, on the actual doing of large scale conservation projects.

F: Within your purview how did these ghetto boys respond to this sort of isolated experience, work experience I'm talking about particularly?

U: I think as far as the human result was concerned it was pretty good.

F: Do you think it developed a certain feeling and sensitivity toward the benefits of the outdoors? I'm sure you were dealing with lots of boys who really didn't know what you did when you got out of the city limits.

U: We weren't running the program. I visited several of them, and I would talk both with the boys and with the people running the camps. They felt in the main, taking city kids, giving them an outdoor experience, giving them the experience of working with their hands, and some understanding of nature--this was a very healthy and very beneficial experience.

F: A lot of talk went on, I think it was all over-rated, on the transition between November and January of '68-'69. Did you and Mr. Hickel have any transition at all?

U: We had a very unfortunate transition. I'll describe it to you this way. I had known him as Governor of Alaska. In fact, one day on a plane from Juneau to Anchorage, we spent about three hours together. This was just after he'd become governor. He's a very outgoing person and we got along very well. I had these big fights with him that didn't seem to bother him particularly as far as him treating me as a public official and dealing directly. In fact, he used his Attorney General who conducted a rather bitter vendetta against me. This is an appointive office, and the Governor always pretended as though the Attorney General was somebody kind of acting on his own. Well, I knew better, but I didn't hold that against him because this was good politics for him to be fighting me.

So having friendly relations with him when President Nixon nominated him I had a very good feeling about it because I knew him and I felt we could have a good transition. When they came to town for that original announcement we just spent a few minutes together. There wasn't much time. Again things were very friendly. Then on December 18 or 19--he went back to Alaska; he came back to Washington--it was his first trip. He held this press conference where he used the wrong code words and got in all this trouble, indicated his Alaska attitudes, at least that's what all of us regarded it.

That same day--I didn't even know that he had had a press conference, didn't know what he had said--he came on over to my office. He brought two or three of his people with him. We had about forty-five minutes, six or eight of us, talking about the transition. Then he and I sat and talked. We had lunch together and this was rather preliminary. He was asking a lot of questions about details and one thing and another. We were laying the basis at that point for the transition.

Then the storm broke over his head and at that point, too--right at that point--I began making decisions that I had had in the works, some of them for six months or a year, to set aside these wildlife refuges in Alaska. It began to get in the press I was proposing these national park areas in Alaska and I was also taking an adamant position

on the Alaskan natives and their rights. Hickel, as a result of this--I'm reading this as my own interpretation--he blamed me for much of the controversy over his confirmation, feeling that I and my friends had stirred things up.

I didn't have to stir anything up. His words did that. I didn't go to any of the Congressmen or anything and suggest they oppose him. But the result was that he chose to feel that I was hostile to him, that I was doing a lot of things that as he and his people said later, were trying to box him in and making decisions that should have been left to him. After all I had been in for eight years, and no matter who was elected in the 1968 election, I was not going to stay on. If my President would support me there were a lot of things I wanted to do with Alaska in particular, because there were more opportunities and options.

F: More to be done, yes.

U: And yet he chose to treat this as something that I was doing in order to harm him. Well, as far as I was concerned it was completely accidental that, or incidental, that he happened to be from Alaska. If it had been anyone else from any other state who Nixon had nominated, I would have acted just the same way.

F: Just a last minute tidying--

U: I kept a file on the transition, and even put some papers in it later. We can make copies for the Johnson Library if they want subsequently. But I sent several memoranda to him. I offered for him to sit down and go over some of these Alaska decisions with me. I never got a reply back from anything. The morning I left office on January 20, I left a letter--a personal private letter to him--with some suggestions about the Department, expressing my good will. No reply ever came. He just chose to regard me as someone who was hostile, who was trying to make his job difficult. So we had no transition. That's the effect of it. We just had that one conversation.

F: Let's shift a little bit now. Let's go down on the border between Texas and Mexico--or the whole Southwest and Mexico. Primarily, you inherited the Falcon Dam and the accompanying lake and then, of course, you had continuing for years this idea of a Big Bend International Park and you were right in the middle of the Amistad Development. Let's talk a little bit about some of your problems in connection with that, your relations with Mexico, what you tried to do, what you couldn't get done, and what accomplishments, if any, you think you made.

U: The effort both by Presidents Kennedy and Johnson to settle border problems and to create a new climate of opinion between the U.S. and Mexico provided the sort of climate in which we approached those problems. Of course, I went down with the President when he was at Amistad with President Lopez Mateos and the deciding to make this an

International Park was rather easy to do because the Presidents themselves--they were deciding these things. This was a good initiative and they were searching always for settlements, for compromises for doing things together--what we did to the Chamizal, the end result there, is a very good example of, I think, the kind of leadership. Of course, that came right from the Presidents themselves. They were surfacing these things.

I was very disappointed that we couldn't get something going on Big Bend. This always seemed to get caught in the Mexican bureaucracy. I still think that there's time to make that into an international park and a magnificent one, but the Mexicans apparently never had the interest and the leadership in conservation that we've had. We'd occasionally get a signal from somebody in the government--this usually was coming through from the park director or someone--that there was interest and they were getting ready to do something. Then I'd try to take this to a higher level and nothing would happen. I think President Johnson, at one of the meetings, we either got this on the agenda or tried to get it on the agenda and it was sort of sloughed off by the Mexicans. They weren't quite ready to talk about it so nothing was done.

I would say the most serious problem, though, and the most potentially dangerous problem was the one that concerned the water in the Colorado River, the water quality. This had the potential of becoming a major new incident. The White House people and the State Department people put heavy pressure on me to produce a solution. The problem essentially was that the Senators, like Senator Hayden, Senator Anderson, Senator Kuchel and others from the Southwest--they were determined that Mexico had no right to water of any quality, which was really outrageous as a concept and that we could just give them just any kind of deteriorated crappy water, whatever was left over. It was all reused water when it got to the Mexican border.

F: You'd siphon it off as it came down.

U: That's right. They'd have to take it. We'd use it and reuse it. Then they were farming cotton which requires good quality water. So here was an instance where White House leadership and White House pressure put me in a position where I had to talk cold turkey to these Congressmen and Senators. We just slowly brought them around to the fact that the U.S. had a responsibility to deliver water of certain quality. It was eventually resolved that way. Now, it could flare up again but I was quite pleased that we did respond to the Mexican pressure. You see the treaty was silent on this point. People just weren't thinking of water quality. Therefore the U.S. Senators and the states involved said, "Well, hell, the treaty doesn't say anything about it." Well, the Mexicans at one time were thinking about hiring lawyers and going to the World Court and that said, it was implicit that if you delivered water the water had to be of usable quality, you see.

F: Of course originally we never thought of useful water, water was useless.

U: That's right, even twenty-five years ago when the treaty was executed. This was a victory for the Mexicans in a sense but it was also a victory for justice. It wasn't done easily. I spent days on that problem wrestling with Congressmen and Senators, talking with them.

F: Did you work directly with the Mexicans?

U: Oh, the Mexican ministers would come here and talk with me about it. I would talk with the Mexican Ambassador. They were always putting pressure on. In fact, in eight years, although I came from Arizona, I never went to Mexico City. I never went down there in part because this problem was potentially so dangerous that they didn't want me down there, you see?

F: They were trying to keep you from being exposed.

U: Somebody might attack me. Or it might be bad for them politically and so that's the way that one went.

F: You worked pretty closely on State on this then.

U: That's right.

F: When you get down to Chamizal, how did all this develop? Part of this, I know, is a Kennedy story--actually it's a fifty year story.

U: Well, that's right. What President Kennedy and his advisers did was seize upon this as the sort of thorn in the side of the Mexicans.

F: You think this is probably originated in State?

U: Yes. I think the Mexican experts in State, with President Kennedy saying, "Well, now what are our problems in Mexico; what can we do that would symbolize the fact that we're different now- we're trying?" And Chamizal surfaced. President Kennedy began it. President Johnson picked it up and I thought very, very effectively carried it on out. This, as you know, particularly for a Texas Congressman, Senator was not easy either. It took a lot of Presidential leverage and Presidential pushing. We were involved in a limited way, primarily to the extent that this international park that you were going to come out with would be something we would be involved in. But I would say the State Department people and the Attorney General probably were more deeply involved than we were in the actual details of working out the Chamizal settlement.

F: Did you have an equivalent group on the Mexican side to work out the park area?

U: Oh yes. There were constant discussions going on. In fact, the Mexicans, because of the

whole emphasis they put in recent years, a very wise emphasis, on border development and making their border towns--cleaning them up, making them a showcase--they were more ready to go ahead with something handsome than we were. This was very encouraging.

F: How do you work this sort of twin-management?

U: It's a matter, really, of coordination and of making plans compatible and that sort of thing.

F: By and large then there's not the case of your doing it up to a boundary line and they just follow an independent policy on the other side? You try to make it mesh.

U: No, no, it's a matter of making it mesh together.

F: Also, in the international line, you put through a Columbia River treaty with Canada in 1964. Is this pretty much the same pattern as the one with Mexico?

U: No. It had some similarities but it was much different and it was very difficult. You see, the Eisenhower Administration, as one of its last acts in January, 1961, had consummated a Columbia River treaty. But the whole thing immediately fell apart because of the details. A treaty is general, but how did you implement it? How are the benefits to be shared and how could all of this be worked out? Because the Canadians were obligated under this to build some dams on the upper Columbia in Canada, and that water being impounded and released at the right times with increased power production all the way down the river, and Canada was to share half the benefits. But you know, how would you market the power? How specifically were the contracts to be drawn and how could all this be worked out? This was the problem we inherited. And under Canada the resources belong to the provinces more than to the national government. Bennett, the Prime Minister of British Columbia, moved in throwing monkey wrenches and throwing his weight around, and the whole thing suddenly was thrown off track. We worked on that for three of four years in perfecting the details of it. The whole thing was consummated very happily in August-September of '64 just before the election. Pearson met the President. We made that Western trip, and this also worked out at the same time. Part of working it out was the Northwest-Southwest electric power intertie, these thousand mile long high-voltage lines that were going to take power from the Columbia River all the way to Los Angeles. It all fitted together beautifully and became, I thought, one of our most notable regional accomplishments in power and water. In this instance it involved two countries.

But the Canadians drove a hard bargain. For instance we were supposed to put up part of the money for these Canadian dams. Well, the circumstances how we were to put it up and the interest rates and the financing and everything else--that's where Bennett of British Columbia moved in and ignored the national government. And he began making demands. We had to work all that out. But it was worked out and the President and

Prime Minister Pearson were able, just before the '64 election, to congratulate each other and their countries and get the thing launched.

F: Did this involve a certain amount of that so-called personal diplomacy, or did they just take what was handed them between you and State and shake hands over the results?

U: I made a couple of trips to Ottawa and talked with their people. You know we had these Canadian Cabinet Conferences and this was always on the agenda. There were one or two people in the State Department who spent a lot of time on this. And I would say essentially, as distinguished from the Mexican thing, we were working it out and the leaders of the country, other than identifying this is something they wanted worked out, it was a matter of sticky details that had to be resolved and that the leaders didn't play a major role in working on these details that we had to work out. The word was that they wanted it done and it was up to us to work it out. But the White House was relatively uninvolved in this as compared to the Mexican matter.

F: Along the international line, under your leadership the Department of Interior began to export some of its know-how, as far as I know for the first time. Can you tell us a little bit about this? I'm thinking of anything from our fairly minor involvement in Montreal's Expo all the way to what you were doing in places like Ethiopia.

U: With the development generally that's taken place in the world, of course, and with jet travel and everything else, the importance of tourism as a dollar earner, foreign exchange earner for the countries, the national park idea in the 1960's, as a unique American idea, began to attract much more interest than heretofore. Therefore, our opportunity to export our insights was heightened very considerably. This mean that East Africa. It meant the fact that Japan and other countries were very much interested in what we were doing. Of course, a lot of these countries were sending people here saying, "How do you manage; how do you run national parks, what is the concept?"

Some of the Latin American countries began to take a much more active interest in national park preservation. I made one trip down to a OAS conference in Argentina in 1965, I guess, where we discussed a lot of this. So the National Park Service developed, for the first time, an international arm which was sending individuals and, in a few cases, teams of people into places like Jordan, Iran, and other countries to show them how to develop and administer national parks and historic places and things of that kind. There was some important work done in this field.

F: Did this meet any particular opposition in Congress for excessive expenditures?

U: No, interestingly enough it never cropped up. But I think it was in the main because we were spending very limited amounts of money. It was a few people basically. Some of it was financed under the AID program, like the team we sent into Jordan.

F: How much of the responsibility for the oil import quotas is yours and how much is State's?

U: When the President said he delegated it to me that meant that I had the basic responsibility. The State Department, the Council of Economic Advisers, Bureau of the Budget--they and the Attorney General when legal matters were involved--these people had to be consulted. Increasingly though in the last two or three years, State Department people--this usually was Assistant Secretary Anthony Soloman, who became quite expert on oil matters. Particularly where Canada, Venezuela, and these relationships were concerned, they usually had very strong views and were breathing heavily over my shoulder. We spent a lot of time talking together about policy. Most decisions that I made received scrutiny from some quarter or another, like the famous decision on Puerto Rico, letting the Phillips Petroleum have this major refinery. I just didn't decide this one day. I remember one meeting we had in my conference room where there must have been twenty officials from five or six different Departments or agencies who were there. We just had a slam-bang argument about the whole thing.

F: Was there a wide divergence of opinion?

U: Oh, there was a great divergence of opinion. In that instance the question was whether the President should sign a proclamation change. I mean, this is an instance where I just couldn't make policy. I had to have a Presidential proclamation in order to implement it and some of the Justice people and others, the Anti-Trust people, were violently opposed to it. We argued it out and so on. So there was plenty of participation.

F: Did you get your Presidential proclamation?

U: Yes, I got it. Any significant changes in program that affected Canada or Venezuela for example, the State Department wanted to be, and was, right in the middle of that.

F: Did you have the same problem with Hess on the Virgin Islands?

U: This did not involve a Presidential proclamation as I recall it. I don't think it did. As a second decision--I made others after Phillips--it was much smaller in scope and didn't involve the controversy with any administration that it might have otherwise.

F: Domestically, I would suspect--and you can confirm or deny--that most of the pressure on import quotas comes, most of the domestic pressure comes from your independent oil men rather than your majors. Is that correct?

U: The independents were pulling the strongest oar for an oil import program because they felt it protected their production and their exploration. They were usually most vehement. Of course, the large integrated companies, particularly the ones that had holdings abroad, they had sort of mixed feelings about it. I think most of them favored the program, feeling

there ought to be a program, and they undoubtedly didn't like some details of it, but I think they were willing to accept it. But the one group that was the most militant in fighting to keep the program and keep the imports as low as possible were the independents.

F: How did they bring pressure on you? Through their Congressmen directly?

U: Both ways. My door was always open to anybody that wanted to talk about oil. I talked with the executives of the big companies. Usually three or four times a year the officers of the IPAA or the TIPRO group, they'd come in and I'd call my officials in and we'd sit and go at it for a half hour or an hour, trying to get them to make their case and argue it. Then when any crunch came they would go to the Congressmen they were close to and they'd put pressure. This is the way they worked.

F: The President pretty well gave you a carte blanche in this. Did he ever countermand you?

U: No, the only time that there was a White House intervention on an oil matter--and this was in 1965 or early '66 I guess. One of the most controversial parts of the oil import program in those early years was the importation of residual fuel oil. This was, of course, not cured petroleum. This was very vital on the East coast in particular in terms of home heating and space heating, power production and everything else. There was a strong feeling among a lot of people that it should not be controlled. Yet the coal industry saw that limiting imports was helpful to their industry, so they were very vociferous and very angry and very demanding. And we kept moving in the direction of whittling away at the program and having less control.

I finally decided in '64 that essentially it was ridiculous not to decontrol it. The President even at one point assigned Secretary McNamara to make an analysis of it. He came up with the conclusion that supported me. I thought I had the thing all cleared and set and we had an order which I could do myself, that would completely decontrol the importation of residual fuel oil. I issued it, announced it. At that point--I was always convinced, I never knew what happened--that Senator Jennings Randolph and Senator Byrd of West Virginia probably crashed through to the White House. Whether they got to the President on it I don't know. I assume they did, because I began getting word from the President's counsel--it was Lee White at that time--that I'd gone overboard and that I wasn't going to be allowed to carry this out. I said, "Well, I've already announced my decision and it was public and that I thought it would be disastrous for the President to get involved in this, even assuming he felt I had made a serious mistake," because this would indicate that he wasn't serious, and wasn't straightforward in delegating me the responsibility. He was taking it back.

This became a very sensitive question and White ultimately took the responsibility for countermanding it on legal grounds. All this got in the press. It was well reported in

the press whatever time it was. My guess was, I don't know, that strong political pressure was put by the coal state Senators on the President to countermand it. This was an instance where he listened too much to the political pressures and told his people to sidetrack it. Actually what happened, we held it up and I think six months, or eight months later we just entered a different kind of an order and it was done. All the coal people wanted--they just wanted to buy a little more time. They knew they didn't have the arguments on merits.

F: Was there any attempt in this case by the White House for you to be able to save face?

U: No, I didn't save much face on that one.

F: You just got skewered on that.

U: That's right, and this caused a lot of speculation, you know, as to what had happened and how it was done. I can't say because I never talked to the President about this, had no communication whatsoever with him.

F: He really never talked to you about oil at all, did he?

U: The only discussions that we had on oil were occasionally when we were talking casually and so on. If oil or anything came up then we would usually discuss it by me saying, "The President delegated me the responsibility to keep it out of the White House, and I took some satisfaction from the fact that I had." He would usually thank me for that. But we never discussed it as a policy issue. And in this instance, when I say I suspect the President was involved in this, I don't know. But the way his lawyers presented it to me and the way the whole thing was handled, my assumption was that a decision had been made by the President. I was never told that. But my guess was, knowing the politics of residual oil, that very heavy pressures were put. I think the White House people realized later that these people were playing a political game of their own and trying to exercise a veto power they shouldn't have had.

F: In your negotiations regarding oil, were you ever hampered or made defensive by the fact that you did represent a President who was so closely identified with oil interests from a major oil state?

U: No, as long as I could say to people honestly and continue to stress the fact that I had the authority and I was acting independently and the mere fact that I was from a non-oil state, had a background as a Congressman being somebody not close to the industry, I think this gave me a credibility both to the President and to his Administration. And all of them that thought I made mistakes, or the ones that were even bitterly critical of some of my decisions, I think they questioned my judgment rather than my motives--or attributing something to the President.

As a matter of fact, one of the most embarrassing decisions, from the standpoint of the White House I had to make, was the Phillips decision, because Abe Fortas [who] was known to be close to the President, represented the government of Puerto Rico--his law firm did and Oscar Chapman, also close to the President, a former Secretary, represented Phillips, on this matter. From the standpoint of my making a decision, you couldn't have had a worse cast of characters to be involved because it looked like it was something inside except--and I see some things being written now and things being said and so on--except no word, no pressure of any kind ever came from the White House number one. Number two, it had the appearance of being something which would have naturally the White House blessing. The mere fact that it didn't put me on the spot even more in terms of my taking the responsibility.

F: In something like this Puerto Rican situation, do you pretty well exercise judicial function? Do you sit as the ultimate court in it?

U: That's right. I had the final responsibility of making decisions on these imports. It was almost being judge and jury, having the full responsibility.

F: Now then, had tidelands, off-shore drilling pretty well settled down by the time you came in--as an issue?

U: It was settled as an issue as far as the basic law that Congress passed in 1953. There was still this dispute--still under way from Louisiana, their wanting to make this larger claim. They tried to use all kinds of political pressure--Boggs and Long and all the rest of them--to get the government to fold up in this case. All of us resisted this. The people in the Justice Department were very good, and that dispute has continued to stay in the courts. California tried some of the same pressure.

But the thing we spent most of our time on was implementing the drilling policies and deciding when to have sales. Then we had this big argument in the last two or three years, in regard to whether Texas and Louisiana proration should apply on the continental shelf or whether we should set up our own.

F: The Texas Railroad Commission, to a certain extent--kind of like U.S. Steel does on the price of steel--determines the proration allowances throughout the country, as one of the more powerful state regulatory bodies anywhere. Did you have direct relationships with them? Did they consult you on what you were going to do when they gave their monthly proration allowance?

U: No, they didn't consult us on their decisions. There were a few times, like at the time of the Arab-Israeli War in 1967 when the Suez Canal was closed, that I remember talking with them. We had conversations with them.

F: That is almost non-controversial in a case like that. You've got to get the oil.

U: That's right. The decisions they made were vital in terms of the overall picture because U.S. imports couldn't be brought in. They had to really open the lid and open it up wide. They, of course, were also generally responding to Texas independents in favor of the oil import program. They used to come and talk with us once or twice a year. I had a few phone conversations. They were usually expressing, as they had a right to do, what their views were on what we should do--just as on these unusual occasions we tried to communicate with them.

F: But when, for instance, say the Texas Railroad Commission issues its October oil allowable for seven days of drilling, do you shift your import quotas accordingly? Did you make these frequent changes, or did you have a policy and you pretty well stayed to it?

U: For awhile, we made our oil import regulations every six months and then later we moved it to a year. So we laid down our basic program and they operated within it.

F: So they could look at your long-range program and then they could figure how they wanted to handle it month to month.

One thing I have wondered and this is strictly subjective--I've had California oil men for instance--they wish they had a commission in California that would practice the same conservation practices that you get in Texas. I have had always a suspicion that part of this was not so much an interest in conservation as an interest in controlling the flow of oil and therefore the price and equating it with the demand. Is this right?

U: Certainly the oil import program, as well as proration, are artificial constraints on a free market. You'll always have economists and others argue that these types of restraints tend to further monopoly, to decrease competition, to raise consumer prices. This is a subject that's been discussed vigorously and I think it's going to be discussed even more so in the future. Certainly you can make out a case--I've read a great deal on that--that Texas proration does, for example, protect some of the least economic aspects of production, the striper wells and things of that kind. Yet that in turn raises large questions of policy which have never been brought out in the open, you know, for national decision or discussion.

Texas made its own decisions on the proration system and on controls as a result of the whole very unhappy economic consequences of hot oil and things back during the depression years. This developed historically and they've had it. Whether it should be changed is not only a Texas question, because it does affect the overall national picture. I tended to feel, although we inherited the system, that there should be closer questioning and scrutiny given to any kinds of forms of artificial controls. You know, you have to justify them as you go along, not just assume it's something that's there and it may have been a good thing when it was put in; well, is it a good thing ten years later. You have to

bring it up, review it, look at it in a hard-nosed way.

F: We're always looking for scapegoats and the new Administration to a certain extent leveled some of the criticism at you for what happened at Santa Barbara. Do you want to give your version?

U: Well, this is pretty well spread on the record in what I said to the Senate, Senator Muskie's committee in February. I think Hickel was very relieved when I stepped forward and said I was responsible and that I made the decision. He simply happened to be Secretary when the trouble began. This subject--I mean the question of leasing off Santa Barbara--we argued about in the Department for a year. I put some of my best conservation advisers, oceanographers, my science adviser was one of the best California oceanographers and I kept asking questions, "Well, what risk are we running; this is an earthquake prone area and this is a magnificent stretch of coastline; are there going to be spills?" and so on.

In large part because of the very favorable experience--we drilled twelve to fourteen thousand offshore wells, most of them in the Gulf Coast, and there had been something like twelve or fifteen what they would call blowouts, and most of those were quickly controlled, and therefore this caused us to be overconfident in hindsight. It caused everyone to not realize that we should have been more cautious. I made that decision after asking a lot of questions and really everyone in the Department, all of my people, ultimately signed off on it. That's the reason I called it the conservation Bay of Pigs. I really had no argument made to me that we shouldn't do it. Once we felt we should do it, some of the risks were very minor. Well, it turned out because of these peculiar geologic circumstances that we made an error of judgment. I think with hindsight, at least for my part, I would say you ought to leave something like Santa Barbara and drill it at the last phase when you need it, and when you've improved your technology to the point where you understand things we don't understand today.

F: One last question. Do you have a fundamental conflict between the conservation end of your Department and the mineral and specifically the oil division of it?

U: You have conflicting pressures. But I always thought it was much better for a conservation-oriented Department, a conservation-oriented Secretary, to make these decisions, rather than move it off into some other area, where they're going to look at it in a very narrow single-minded--say, "We need oil; we need revenues from the continental shelf; let's go ahead."

F: Sort of like the Army Engineers.

U: That's right. I think we agonized over it a lot more than some other agency would but you could argue it both ways. You know, some of them argued pollution control ought not be put in my Department because I had minerals and oil.

[End of Tape 1 of 1 and Interview III]