INTERVIEWEE: E. ROSS ADAIR

INTERVIEWER: DOROTHY PIERCE MC SWEENY

March 12, 1969

M: This is an interview with Representative E. Ross Adair, Republican from Indiana. Today is Wednesday, March 12, 1969, and it is about 4:15 in the afternoon. We are in Congressman Adair's offices in the Rayburn Building, Room 2263. This is Dorothy Pierce McSweeny.

Congressman Adair, I'd like to begin the interview with just briefly giving a background identification of you. You were elected to the 82nd Congress in 1950 and successively reelected since then. Your committee assignments are on the House Foreign Affairs Committee and the Veterans Affairs Committee. Before running for Congress, from 1933 to 1950, you were a practicing attorney and probate commissioner of Allen County, Indiana. In 1933 you received your LLB from George Washington University. You also had military service during the war and retired with the rank of lieutenant colonel in the Judge Advocate Reserves. Do I have the correct background information?

A: You have, Mrs. McSweeny. That is correct.

M: To start with, I'd like to just ask you a very personal question. Why and how did you happen to go into public service and run for elective office in 1950?

A: I had just come out of the service in 1946 and had resumed my law practice, but I found a great interest in public service. I've had that interest ever since I was a young man. My father, who ran a weekly newspaper in a small town near Fort Wayne, was interested

in politics and public life, and I guess he inculcated that interest in me because as long as I can remember, I've had it. And the time then seemed to be a good one in which to enter the political field, as I was just resuming my practice. It might have been more difficult a few years later when the practice was better established--or better re-established.

M: Mr. Adair, have you ever been interviewed before by any sort of oral history project similar to this?

A: Not precisely this same type. Of course everyone I suppose in public life has done some sort of documentary recording, but I think none of the kind that you've just designated as oral history, which seems to me a novel and very worthwhile concept.

M: My reason for asking that, of course, is to avoid any duplication --or ask you if, in any publicized word that has been attributed to you, you have any changes or corrections or additions--anything like that. Has that ever occurred?

A: No, I think that won't be a problem with us here.

M: Sir, you came to Congress just two years after Mr. Johnson ran and was elected to the Senate--and at the time when Sam Rayburn was Speaker. Do you recall what you knew or had heard of Lyndon Johnson when you first came into Congress?

A: Yes. I did not know him, of course, but I knew of him. I knew of him by reputation and having read of him in the newspapers. So his name was very familiar to me, and obviously I was pleased to meet a man who had already made such a career for himself. I was particularly interested, I think, because I knew that he came here first as an employee. And during my law school years, I too was a federal employee

up on Capitol Hill, working at various jobs as I went to law school. So I felt that we had something in common in our careers.

M: Do you recall when you first met him?

A: I don't specifically, but the first time that I remember having a conversation with him was at a reception at which we were both present. Our paths just happened to cross, and we fell into a few minutes of talk. I found that it was very easy to talk to Mr. Johnson. I don't think we settled any earthshaking problems at that time, but it was a very casual comfortable sort of talk.

M: When was this?

A: I would guess that that was probably in late-'51.

M: Was the reception of a social--?

A: It was a social reception. I don't recall where or when or what the occasion was, but I have a recollection of people coming and going and greetings being exchanged and that sort of thing.

M: Do you recall any first impressions that you had?

A: Yes. The first impression was that here was a large man of a friendly nature, a rather open at that time approach to problems, and one who was willing to chat with a relative newcomer to the Congress of the United States.

M: Do you recall subsequent meetings where you got to know Mr. Johnson better--what they were?

A: Of course, as the months and years passed, Mrs. McSweeny, there were more occasions to come in contact with Mr. Johnson. Increasingly, again, as time passed and I myself had more responsibilities, I would from time to time find it necessary or desirable to consult with him upon legislative matters. Now, this is not to say at all that

our consultations were frequent in any sense of the word. That was not true. But it is true that when there was occasion to talk about some matters of public interest, it was always possible to do so.

M: This was while he was still Senator?

A: Yes.

M: What did you think Mr. Johnson's goals and motivations were?

A: I think one had to talk to him only a very few minutes before one had the impression that here was a man of very strong ambitions. And I would hasten to add I don't think that's bad. I think we need that sort of thing in people in public life, especially people who seek elective office. It's a good thing. It provides a stimulus, an impetus. He obviously had that. Even a casual conversation would disclose that very shortly.

M: Can you recall anything that specifically made you feel this way, or think this way?

A: No, I do not recall any specific things. But one had the impression, and as years went by and he assumed position of leadership in the Senate, the impression deepened. As his time became more valuable and much in demand, conferences had to be shorter. But still one had the impression that here was a man of very strong desire for further political preferment.

M: As you've just mentioned, Mr. Johnson in the course of the 1950's became the Minority Leader and then Majority Leader. How do you think that Mr. Johnson became such a powerful figure in the Senate?

A: I think a combination of things. First, his own desire--the thing we've just been talking about here, the drive which he himself had. And secondly, the fact that he came to this position of leadership

at a time when, although there were many people who aspired to it, there were none of outstanding ability and qualification really to stand in his way. And by having said that, again I don't mean to minimize his own approach. But it seems to me that here was one of the series of times in his life when he happened to be the right man at the right place.

M: Were there occasions during the '50's of legislation that you felt Mr. Johnson and Mr. Rayburn managed through Congress, and could you give me some specifics?

A: In the first place, although as you pointed out earlier I was not of the party of Mr. Johnson or Mr. Rayburn, I did admire both of them. And I admired especially Mr. Rayburn because I was, of course, under his leadership in the House for some time. He was always a great admirer, as everyone knows, of Mr. Johnson, and in a position of being a mentor and teacher and so forth--instructor and leader. Together they worked out a great many pieces of legislation. I took an increasing interest in matters relating to foreign affairs, and especially such bills as the Foreign Aid Bill. I recall on more than one occasion when there were questions to be ironed out--and some of the questions had been raised by me as a critic of the aid bill--the Speaker would call for me and others to go over for a meeting to discuss these things. On a number of occasions such as that, he would point out that he'd been in touch with Mr. Johnson; Mr. Johnson thought that such-and-such an arrangement would be acceptable to the Senate, and so he said, "Let's try to work for an arrangement of that sort." One certainly had the impression that Speaker Rayburn and Mr. Johnson worked very closely together, and had a great deal of respect and

admiration for each other.

M: What did you feel was Mr. Johnson's attitude and policy on foreign aid at that time?

A: It seemed to me that increasingly through his public life, and especially after he became Vice President and President, that he felt that foreign aid was necessary. In his earlier days, as I study the record, and the things that he said--and he wasn't a man to speak a great deal on this subject--but he did make some remarks. It seemed to me in his early days that he had considerable reservation about the program. But more and more, and especially after he became President, he became an ardent advocate of it. I don't recall the record. I think he probably voted for it always when called upon to do so. I think that is true. But things that were said led one to believe that there were reservations in his mind about it.

M: What do you mean by "things that were said"?

A: Conversations, as I've indicated previously, with Mr. Rayburn in trying to iron out some of these problems, of which there's such an abundance in the Foreign Aid Bill, but also quotations from the President--those published in newspapers especially, and I suppose in the Congressional Record, although my memory doesn't run back very clearly that far. But certainly he was very frequently quoted by newspaper and radio and TV reporters. In the early days one did have the impression that, well, he felt perhaps demands here at home ought to be given precedence over the demands abroad.

M: Mr. Adair, were there occasions--being of the opposite political party--where you thought Mr. Johnson outmaneuvered the Republican party in Congress?

A: Yes. I think we had that feeling on a number of occasions. I did not feel it as much, I would suppose, as those who served with him in the Senate. Because while he was in the House, and although I never served with him in the House as you pointed out, one never hears from talking to people that were here when he was that there was much opportunity to display his talents at trying political maneuver. I think those flowered and came into fruition during the period that he was Majority Leader of the Senate. He had the opportunity to use them, and he did develop, without any question, these abilities.

M: Does any specific legislation come to mind?

A: No. Again, I would suppose that that would be something that those who served with him in the Senate would be better qualified to discuss.

M: How would you describe Mr. Johnson's relationship with General Eisenhower?

A: I know something of that, and I think they were relations of mutual respect. Now, when I say I know something about it, on some occasions --and I cannot be more specific than that--on matters relating to questions of foreign policy or foreign affairs, foreign involvements and implications, the then-President Mr. Johnson would say upon more than one occasion, "Now, I've been in touch with General Eisenhower on this matter, and he thinks so-and-so." So it gave you the impression that he did have a respect for the views of General Eisenhower. As I said a moment ago, I think they were two men who did--both having been President--understand the problems and appreciate the views of the other.

M: How would you describe Mr. Johnson's reception or attitude to General Eisenhower's foreign policy--what became known as the Eisenhower Doctrine?

A: Obviously, then-President Johnson adhered to that doctrine, and I never saw any indication that he seriously questioned it.

M: Did you have any specific roles or activities in some of the more crisis situations that arose during the '50's? I'm thinking of course of the Suez crisis. There was earlier the Korean armistice and treaty, the Lebanon intervention, and of course Cuba.

A: In the '50's I was still sufficiently junior upon the House Committee on Foreign Affairs that I was not often called to the White House for briefings upon any of those matters. My active participation and association with Mr. Johnson and the people in the White House increased during the '60's. A new and junior Congressman is not very often called for consultation to the White House, perhaps unfortunately.

M: Did you feel that Mr. Johnson lost much of his party support with his cooperation with General Eisenhower?

A: No, I don't think it affected it at all. I have never heard anyone say--a member of his own party--that they were not supporting him because of his relationship with General Eisenhower. I have heard a number of Republicans say that if President Johnson and General Eisenhower had agreed upon a certain issue, although maybe they might not themselves feel completely at ease about it, they would go along. So I would think that his relationship with General Eisenhower was a very decided political plus.

M: How would you rate Mr. Johnson as a Senator and Majority Leader from what you saw of him?

A: I would say that from what I've seen of him that perhaps some of the happiest and most effective days of Mr. Johnson's life--that part of it, that segment, which I've had occasion to view--was during his days as Majority Leader. I think there was a period during this time when he had rather comfortable Democratic majorities in the Senate and was thus able to get a program through. But it was more than that. It was his skill in persuading or debating or in one way or another getting people to support the programs which he was espousing at that time. I've always had the feeling that, while there is glamor in the sense of power and all the rest of it that goes with the Presidency and a challenge to which any man would try to rise, yet I believe that his days as Senate Majority Leader were among the happiest and really the most effective days of his life.

M: Do you recall when you first heard Mr. Johnson's name mentioned seriously in connection with the Presidential candidacy?

A: No, I really don't recall that. Of course there were a number of names being kicked around, and Mr. Rayburn saw to it that whenever, at that time, names were mentioned--that is, in the very late '50's and 1960, when names of Democratic President candidates were mentioned, that Mr. Johnson's name was always conspicuous.

M: What was your assessment of the 1960 election, since it was such a close race between John Kennedy and Richard Nixon?

A: Of course, there are a good many people who feel that there were some things done in that election which were not entirely proper and point to Chicago and some other places. But I don't want to get into that discussion because that's over and past now, and Mr. Kennedy is dead, and Mr. Johnson has retired from the Presidency, and Mr. Nixon

is now President.

But there were some things that do come to mind as a result of that campaign and election. It laid the basis for a question which is very much in our minds right now; that is, the need for remodeling the electoral college because of situations which might arise in the event of a very close vote. I recall well the day that the electoral votes were counted in the House of Representatives in early 1961. There had been some states where the vote had been questioned, and I think again particularly of Chicago, Illinois, and there was some question about the State of Hawaii and one or two others. Mr. Nixon was sitting there as one of the two presiding officers, of course, when these votes were being counted. When several of these states were called, as they're called alphabetically, and even though there was a question about them, Mr. Nixon would lean forward and say--I've forgotten the exact wording--but would direct that the vote be counted for Mr. Kennedy. And that went very far to settle people's minds. They said, "Well, if Mr. Nixon is willing to abide by this, why shouldn't we!" So I think out of that, although there was some feeling of unrest, people decided," "Well, it's over and done and Mr. Kennedy's President--just let it go."

M: Did you see within your own state--Indiana--in which you were running for reelection, any disturbing political events or management?

A: In the election of 1960? No, I don't think so. Mr. Nixon carried that state in 1960. We were deeply concerned at rumors that there might be some irregularity, and we have in my state some communities which are suspect in this connection. I'm thinking particularly now about those metropolitan areas contiguous to Chicago, the metropolitan

area which runs down into Indiana. But there was nothing, I think, unusual. It was a very spirited campaign, but I don't believe one that will cause political scientists any undue concern in the future.

M: Did you have occasion to have much contact with Mr. Johnson as Vice President?

A: No, actually I had very little contact with him as Vice President.

M: What did you think of Mr. Johnson's foreign policy role during the Kennedy Administration?

A: It was during that Administration that of course the then-President Kennedy had announced that he was going to give greater responsibility to Vice President Johnson, as almost every President in recent times has said he was going to do for his Vice President. And the travel that Mr. Johnson did in that connection I thought was worthwhile. It's difficult for a Vice President in our system to be a very towering figure in the field of foreign affairs. So much depends upon the President himself, or even his Secretary of State, that, while efforts can be made, and I think the most effective effort of a general nature would be the type that I've just referred to; that is, travel as an emissary of the President.

M: After the assassination in 1963, did you have any immediate talks or meetings with Mr. Johnson?

A: No, I did not. I saw Mr. Johnson on a number of occasions--at the funeral, and at events immediately following. I did not talk to him.

M: How did you feel about the efforts to get through the bill on the wheat sales that immediately followed?

A: A case was made for that bill. People needed to be fed, and there was a wave of emotionalism still in existence in the country, and I

think it all contributed to the fact that the bill did pass rather handily.

M: Sir, Congress under President Kennedy was said to be uncooperative and unproductive. There were several adjectives used, for the fact that he was not able to get much legislation through. How did you feel about this?

A: I think it is true. Although there was a liking in the minds of most of the legislators for President Kennedy, he wasn't very effective in getting his program through.

M: To what would you attribute the very flood of legislation in 1964 and 1965?

A: Two things. One, a simple matter of arithmetic, the size of the Democratic majorities in both Houses of the Congress, and secondly, the skill which President Johnson showed in those days--a carry over, I'm sure, from his Senate Majority Leadership activities in getting people to agree to the legislation that he wanted.

M: Do instances or examples come to mind of legislation that passed through the House by means of the cooperation of Mr. Ford or Mr. Halleck with the Administration?

A: Yes. There are a number. In my own field, I think one that might be useful to recall was the so-called Gulf of Tonkin Resolution, because there were many people who had real reservations about that. In fact, I like to go back occasionally and read in the Congressional Record the expression of doubt which I made at that time about the scope of the resolution. But assurances were given; people on both sides of the aisle said that this was to be a necessary part of our foreign policy. And, amid prodding from the White House and with the cooperation of our own

leaders--I believe Mr. Halleck was the leader at that time if my memory serves me correctly--the matter was pushed through. And now of course as we know, the Congress is having second thoughts, particularly the Senate with respect to that. We in the House have also these same reservations, although I don't believe we're pursuing them quite as actively as our colleagues across the Capitol are.

M: Sir, have you ever had any direct calls from Mr. Johnson or his staff as to how you were voting on an issue?

A: I had very few. I have had a few, and they came not from him personally but from members of his staff. I think that it's fair to say that more people of the President's own party were the recipients of these calls than were people on the other side of the political aisle. The President felt, and very properly--the success which he encountered indicates the correctness of his view--that it would be much more effective to talk to members of his own party. I have spoken to a number of them and found that the White House was very likely to call rather frequently when controversial issues were up. This is not to say that the President himself did the calling. He could not be expected to do that as purely a matter of time. He would communicate with the leaders, but the rest of the people would be reached by members of his staff who shared his proclivity to use the telephone.

M: Who contacted you and what were the--?

A: Very frequently--and this changed from time to time--but very frequently I had contact with Marvin Watson there.

M: Do you recall what the issues were?

A: Generally, the issues upon which I would be called would be matters relating to my committee assignments, foreign affairs or veterans

affairs. There was a time when we had a great deal of activity in the Veterans Committee. There was an effort by President Johnson to close a number of veterans hospitals and some of the regional centers. That got into a situation where there was an argument between the Legislative and the Executive branches. Finally a commission was appointed to make a recommendation, and I served on that commission, and we did work it out.

Again, there were questions remaining as a result of World War II between the United States and the Republic of the Philippines, and a joint commission was formed of which I was a part, and we worked those things out. Things of that sort did require rather frequent liaison with the White House staff.

M: Were they attempting to change your vote on these occasions?

A: No. In these instances I mentioned, the effort was to find out why I, or others, had a particular view; and then perhaps to say, "Do you feel that you could change your view." My answer ordinarilly was "no", and that ended it. Now I do know that the White House would use considerable more force on members in the President's own party, because they would be much more susceptible to this sort of thing.

M: Were you ever the recipient, or did you ever see what has become known as the Johnson persuasive treatment?

A: Not individually. I have observed it in groups, large and small --sometimes successfully, sometimes not successfully. But I have had occasion to observe it on a number of instances.

M: Could you cite some of these for me?

A: One case where we had some differences, and in which there was a give and take of opinion, was in the matter of the closing of the veterans

hospitals. And people had rather strong feelings upon this. When our commission reported to the President, he indicated that his feelings were quite strong, but we got to an acceptable compromise, and I think the matter was very fairly concluded, and haven't heard anything of it for several years, which is a good indication that it was satisfactory.

I remember one early summer morning that there was a meeting at the White House of representatives from the Foreign Affairs Committee, the Foreign Relations Committee, the Appropriations Committees of both Houses, and the Armed Services Committee. This came at a time when we were having very great military difficulty in Viet Nam. It was during the period of time that our manpower buildup had not been fully completed. We did not have the number of men that we now have there, 540,000. And the President, obviously worried and concerned, had called this group in to talk about futher buildup and related problems in Viet Nam. He was given very direct views by the people who were there. I remember especially one prominent Senator speaking out as strongly as possible upon the question of putting more men into the reserves here at home so that they could be trained and in a state of readiness. The President listened to him but said, "Well, I don't want to get more men in the Armed Forces here than can be well used. We don't want to have people just sitting around here." and so indicated thathe was not going to follow the advice of the Senator, and in fact I don't think he did. But it was things of that sort that demonstrated the value of these meetings. And there were many people who were called much more frequently than I.

M: Who was the Senator, sir?

A: It was Senator Russell.

M: Did you ever see or feel what is called the Johnson temper?

A: Yes. I observed him burst into a pretty obvious bit of temper over both veterans matters and some foreign affairs. At the height of the criticism which he endured over our participation in Viet Nam, he was obviously extremely sensitive to it. And when there was a briefing session, if a question period followed and the questions took turns that he did not like, he was very prone to shake them off or disregard them, or to give a rather short reply back, or turn them over to Secretary McNamara or Secretary Rusk. So in that, as again in the case of the veterans hospitals closing, where I think he felt that his preliminary judgment was good and should be followed, in both these instances he would show flashes of irritation. But usually they seemed to be of short duration. After a few minutes, he'd be back settled down and ready to talk about something else again.

M: Did these particularly align themselves as partisan objections, or I should say, cross purposes or close questioning?

A: I don't think so. I think his flashes of temper or irritation were directed as much, or perhaps more, to members of his own party than to member of the Republican party.

M: It has been said that more Senators and Representatives were consulted at the White House than ever before, and you have mentioned several of these. Could you just estimate about how many of these that you may have attended?

A: It's very difficult to estimate--you mean during Mr. Johnson's term in office. I would suppose that on all subjects I was down there

twenty-five times.

M: Did these taper off towards the end? Was there a height of them?

A: No. As a matter of fact for me personally, they increased as my own seniority on the various committees increased. On the overall I'm not in the position to form an opinion as to whether they did diminish or taper off.

M: Did you think that Mr. Johnson adequately breifed the Senate and Congressional Foreign Affairs Committees, for example?

A: We never feel that we are adequately briefed, but he and his people --by that, I mean his Cabinet members--I think did quite well. This is a practice which is growing in recent years, and I hope it continues to do so. I think it's important and valuable. And if the legislature is not briefed, there's going to be more and more difficulty for the Executive.

M: How would you compare these briefings that Mr. Johnson had with either Mr. Kennedy or Mr. Eisenhower's briefings?

A: The Johnson briefings gave the impression of being more carefully prepared. One had the feeling that they were more staged than the Kennedy or Eisenhower briefings, especially the Kennedy briefings, which were not as frequent as the Johnson briefings, and were much less formal.

M: Did you feel that there was enough give-and-take in the Johnson briefings, or was it--?

A: It was pretty likely to be a monologue, or at least a discourse by two or three or four men. When he was feeling well, the President was constantly injecting himself into these briefings. I remember one night he called a number of people to the White House, and said, "Here is a newspaper man"--it was Jim Lucas, I think, if my memory

serves me correctly--"who has just been in Viet Nam, and I want him to tell you what he found there from the standpoint of the GI." And Mr. Lucas started to report what he had seen, and he was constantly interrupted by the President saying, "Well, what about this," or, "you mean that, don't you?" or something of that sort.

M: Did you feel that you were particularly consulted on these matters?

A: Not particularly, nor did I expect to be -- again as a Republican. The President has got to consult basically with members of his own party, and the leadership of the opposing party. But as a person not in a position of leadership, I felt that I was probably consulted as frequently as the occasion demanded.

M: Did you attend meetings on such things as the Tonkin Gulf Resoluation and the Pleiku decision?

A: Yes. I attended meetings of that type. A recent one that comes to mind, or relatively recent--a little over a year ago--was the seizure of the ship Pueblo. That would be the type of meeting to which I would be most likely to be invited.

M: I just want to ask you, generally where did the strongest resistance come in these types of meetings?

A: I would say, in trying to categorize that--and this is a difficult question because the resistance would come from so many different sources. I think basically it was a matter of individual opinion, of course colored somewhat by party position, where there was on. But basically I think it was a matter of individual opinion--judgment.

M: What was your reaction to the seizure of the Pueblo?

A: I was horrified and dismayed as I think almost all of us were. I shall never forget that night. On short notice a number of us--twenty or

twenty-five people--were invited down from the Congress. We gathered in what was called the Fish Room at the White House. As is customary, in a few minutes the President was announced, and he came in flanked by Secretary of State Rusk, Secretary of Defense McNamara, and Chief of Staff Wheeler. The President said, in effect, "Gentlemen, you've read and heard the reports of the seizure of the Pueblo. I want you to know we're all concerned as much as you are, and I want to bring you to date on what we know up to this point with respect to that incident."

So, having said that, then he said, "I will turn the briefing over to Secretary of State and Secretary of Defense and the Chief of Staff," and he sat down. He did not say another public word until about an hour-and-a-quarter later, when he arose to say that the meeting was dismissed. Now in the meantime, he had had some whispered conversations with aides but no public comment or question of the kind that he was so prone to make, where he would jump up on his feet and ask a question or make a remark, something of that sort. He simply didn't do it. I've never seen him at another briefing session where he was so quiet and subdued.

Now he pointed out that there were reasons for that. When the messages first had begun to come through the night before, it became apparent that this was a serious thing. So he was awakened, and was up a good bit of the night, so he was really tired and fatigued, all of which played, I suppose, a part in his general attitude and reaction.

M: Do you recall other ones of these meetings that struck you as different or exemplary of his technique?

A: Yes, there would be one other general class, and that would be the big, bright, brash press conference type that he would ordinarily hold in the East Room. They would invite a lot of people to those. The room would be jammed; the TV lights would be on; that big metal apparatus that he had had constructed to hold the lights exactly as they should be best for him, and the special reading aid which he had--those glasses, I don't know what you call them, on the Teleprompters anyway. That was quite a typical performance and quite different from the one I've just described over the Pueblo incident. I personally enjoyed the smaller meetings much more.

M: I'd like to ask you some questions about Mr. Johnson and Viet Nam. Of course, it had a very strong imprint on his administration. Did you feel that Mr. Johnson was a force for restraint or escalation?

A: I think his attitude changed from time to time. During the time that the troops were in numerical build-up, obviously he did favor the escalation. But more and more, as time went on, he favored a policy of restraint, so that at the end of his term in office, we had a policy which was possibly too much restraint, if anything, if we were going to be there. We may have unduly tied down our troops.

M: Did you think that there was a sincerity of effort in the exploration of all the peace feelers?

A: Yes, I did think so, and I made special inquiry about this with friends at the State Department and elsewhere. I wanted to satisfy my own mind, and I am convinced that every reasonable or every approach that had any promise of good results was followed through, and that led us down some strange aisles all over this country and in the world. But if there was any belief that a settlement could be reached,

efforts were made to do just that.

M: What was your assessment of the effectiveness of the use of bombing of North Viet Nam--and the bombing halts that we called?

A: I think the great bombing halts after Christmas in the Lunar New Year of more than a year ago certainly cost us casualties because they permitted the Communist forces to infiltrate, to move supplies, guns, ammunition, all the rest of it in. And that was translated then into the lives of American young men, I'm very sure.

On the question of the bombing pause, that has been discussed so much. I know that our soldiers generally are not in favor of it, because they feel that that bombing was of great support to them. But the decision was made, and it was made by the President and the members of his Cabinet. It had some pluses and some minuses; it's just hard to figure out.

M: Have you had occasion, sir, to visit South Viet Nam?

A: I have been there. I have not been there for a number of years now. In fact, I've rather purposefully stayed away because I felt that we were having a considerable number of Congressional visitors there. And while I think it's important that there are Congressional visitors, I didn't think we should have too many.

M: As you of course would know, the criticism from the Hill grew as time passed. I'd like to ask you what you think the Congressional critics on foreign affairs--what effect they have had.

A: I think that they have had some effect of course, because wherever there is an exchange of opinions, you do find that some reevaluation of position. But the President was a pretty strong-willed man, and I don't think that he gave in too much to Congressional pressures

unless he could see that he needed to give in to get a bill through quickly, or to achieve his end, and then he would gladly do that.

M: Do you think the criticism has contributed to the understanding of the war, or to divisiveness in the country?

A: Divisiveness, I think, without any question.

M: Has the trouble relations with Mr. Johnson and the Senate Foreign Affairs Committee had much effect on the influence and the operation of the House Foreign Affairs Committee?

A: If anything, I think we went out of our way to treat Mr. Johnson and Mr. Rusk a little better, perhaps as a measure of compensation.

M: Did this bring you any closer to the White House, to Mr. Johnson?

A: I don't know that it did the President because the President never appeared before the committee as a witness, but it certainly did with Mr. Rusk.

M: Was there privately the same split in the House Foreign Affairs that there was publicly in the Senate Foreign Affairs Committee?

A: No. I wouldn't say it was of so great a magnitude. And our split was over a little different point. We argued more over the question of foreign aid rather than of foreign policy otherwise. And it became a matter of individual conscience upon that question. Of course, the matter of our policy with respect to Viet Nam has become almost individualized too. But I think the factors governing each were a little different.

M: Why do you say that?

A: It's difficult to define. One just had a sense that different influences were bearing and causing the decisions that were taken and the conclusions that were reached. I don't know that I can put my finger

on anything specifically, but just a feeling that seemed to be there.

M: Did you feel that the constituencies of the members of the House Committee on Foreign Affairs had an impact on the position of the members?

A: I don't think there's any question but what that is true.

M: Do you feel that the House or Senate committee have a role in the foreign policy initiation?

A: Yes. Of course this is one of the classic arguments that exists between the Executive and the Legislative--and indeed in the Legislative between the Senate and House--as to how much of a role each may have. But I think there's no question that the Congress does have a responsibility and an opportunity with respect to not only advising upon foreign policy matters, but to take a more affirmative and effective role--to the extent even of initiating policy, if need be.

Now this is contrary, I fully recognize, to the philosophy that I think the majority of political scientists have, and certainly it's contrary to the philosophy that almost every President has had. But as I read not only the Constitution of our country, but the debates which went on before it was adopted, I'm convinced that the founding fathers did not mean to leave foreign policy decisions so much in the hands of the Executive.

M: Who do you feel has really made foreign policy decisions or been the most influenced during the Johnson Administration?

A: Here again, you've got a difficult one. The reason it's difficult is--certainly the answer to that in my opinion would be either President Johnson or Secretary Rusk; and the reason that I can't

answer more specifically than that is that they had a great influence upon each other in their thinking--and I don't know which had the greater influence upon the other. So it was either the President or the Secretary of State, or perhaps what they hammered out between them.

M: I'd like to ask you what other activities thatyou have been involved in regarding foreign policy. I know you have mentioned foreign aid which has been of interest to you. But have you had activities also in such things as the deployment of ABM, the NATO work, any of the treaties--Test Ban, Nuclear, Non-Proliferation?

A: Of course we in the House don't have to ratify treaties, so our interest isn't as direct. But on most of those questions you've asked, we in the Committee on Foreign Affairs either formally, through the process of committee debate, or informally, through the medium of small discussions, haveexplored such issues.

M: What do you feel that the Johnson Administration policy has been on foreign aid?

A: The policy of the Johnson Administration on foreign aid is clearly defined. He became, as I said earlier, increasingly a strong exponent of foreign aid. And of course his Administration reflected that.

M: Have you been involved in any of the investigations on waste of foreign aid?

A: Yes. Our staff people have made investigations on that and a number of other subjects. I have not myself had the time to go out in the field and make those investigations, although in a number of countries where I have visited, we make inquiry about them, and are brought up to date even though we don't have time to check the figures, as I

said. By checking the figures, I mean going into detail in the field that we would like to actually try to search things out. We have to have other people do that for us and give us a report.

M: What countries have you visited, sir?

A: I've visited a great many--most of the countries of Asia; about a third, I suppose, of the countries of Africa; most of the countries of Europe; a few in Latin America.

M: Have you been in any great disagreements with the foreign policy of the various areas that you've mentioned and traveled to?

A: Yes. When you get in Asia especially, you do find great differences of opinion over foreign policy. And I'm not speaking now of such countries as mainland China--Communist China--which I have never visited. I've been several times on Taiwan--Nationalist China. But countries like India and even Pakistan, which has traditionally been our good friend and ally, feel free openly to criticize our foreign policy--although I must say that they, particularly the Indians, don't like to have theirs criticized in return.

M: What has been your feeling about our military assistance programs?

A: I think the military assistance programs are the most appealing and by and large the best run aspects of the foreign assistance act. That's not to say they're perfect, but it is to say that they are far superior to a good many of the economic programs which we've had.

M: Doesn't it lend a bit to the criticism that we're arming people to fight among themselves?

A: Yes, it does. I'd say that'a valid point and one which we've tried to meet in recent years by putting restrictions upon the amounts and

types of military assistance.

M: You don't feel that there's any alternative to this type of economic assistance?

A: Oh yes I do. I feel very strongly that our aid bill, especially in its economic aspect, has to be restructured and rebuilt, or it's going just to fall of its own weight.

M: What is your feeling about the Johnson Administration attitude toward Europe and NATO?

A: I don't think that President Johnson handled General de Gaulle very well. Or perhaps I should put it the other way around. In many respects, they were perhaps too much like each other--strong men, large men physically, men of great dedication to their country, but men who are inclined to be impatient and not always tolerant of other people's views. When you put two people like that in a position of confrontation, you're likely to get a result that isn't very good, and that's exactly what happened between Mr. Johnson and General de Gaulle.

M: How would you compare or contrast General Eisenhower, President Kennedy, President Johnson's approach and direction of foreign policy?

A: President Eisenhower was a man that relied very heavily upon his advisers, especially John Foster Dulles. He was likely to take their opinions and say, "Well, if this is the view of most of you, we'll accept that." President Kennedy had a great belief in the efficacy and value of personal contact. This belief was shaken some in his confrontation with the Russians in Vienna, but he continued to have that belief. Mr. Johnson--it was a general feeling at any rate--was

likely to turn to his advisers, perhaps people like the Bundys and the Rostows more than the Secretary of State, or at least as much as the Secretary of State, for advice and counsel. And here again, I don't think there's any real doubt that President Johnson was influenced heavily by people of that sort.

M: Do you think that Mr. Johnson brought enough experience in foreign relations to the Presidency?

A: No one ever has as much as he should have. I would say he brought an adequate amount, but again, I think Mr. Johnson was better grounded in domestic programs than in foreign.

M: I think I really meant to say, has it been any handicap to him that his interests have previously fallen along the lines of domestic affairs?

A: I don't think it has been any handicap. There might have been some times when it has resulted in a slowdown of a bill or something like that. But as far as any real handicap, I don't think so.

M: Do you think that the power and prestige of Congress declined any during the Johnson Administration?

A: I think it did in the early years of his Administration. I think it waned then, but I think it was waxing--growing stronger--the Congressional power and influence--in the last months of Johnson's Administration.

M: Do you think Mr. Johnson lost his consensus?

A: To a considerable degree, yes, I think he did. That would be especially true here on the Hill. As his term was running out, and of course that's freshest in our minds, he himself sought less and less to establish a consensus; and perhaps that's the reason that this concept tended to get away and not to be followed.

M: Can you attribute it to any specific thing.

A: No. I think it's almost inevitable as a man comes to the end of his term in office.

M: I was wondering if you could sort of use it up, too?

A: Yes. This is true. It's the old saying that there's just so much sugar on the shelf, and when it's all used, it's gone. That is true.

M: Were you much surprised by his announcement of withdrawal on March 31st?

A: I was very much surprised.

M: How did you feel about the troop ceiling that he placed in Viet Nam in order to get negotiations started?

A: Would you repeat that please?

M: How did you feel about the troop ceiling that he placed in that same speech on Viet Nam when they were determining whether they were going to add additional troops in an effort to get negotiations--?

A: That didn't particulary surprise me because that had been gone over rather thoroughly in briefing sessions at the White House before, so I wasn't surprised by this attitude on his part. I'm not sure that it was effective, but at least it was something that was tried.

M: Let me just back up and ask you one question I did omit. In the '64 election did the candidacy of Mr. Goldwater really sort of solidify the position and the majority vote that he received?

A: I'm sure it did. It would be a very difficult thing to demonstrate, but just from conversations with people, I'm certain that that was the case.

M: Do you think that Mr. Johnson--this is very hypothetical--could have won the nomination and possibly reelection?

A: He might have won nomination because the President has access to

great sources of power--the exposure to the news media and all the rest of it. But I do not believe he could have been elected.

M: What do you think would be the main reason?

A: Discontent within his own party over the war in Viet Nam abroad, and the rioting and civil disturbances here at home. Admittedly, this is not all the responsibility of the President. But after all, he is the man we elect to lead us. If he permitted that type of thing to go on, the people were pretty well fed up on it.

M: Did you have any White House dialogue on any of the domestic legislation?

A: Apart from veterans legislation--and we were called in on that--I was very seldom consulted by the White House on other domestic legislation.

M: I'm thinking of course of the big ones such as civil rights, aid to education, any of those.

A: No. I was not consulted by the White House on those.

M: I asked this question relating to foreign policy, but let me ask you just one final rather general question. How would you compare the Presidencies of General Eisenhower, Mr. Kennedy, and Mr. Johnson?

A: As I said in another connection earlier, the Presidency of General Eisenhower reminded one of a staff operation of a general officer. He assigned duties, and expected reports to come back through channels and the reports to be of such a nature that they would contribute to his own thinking. Again, President Kennedy was very prone to rely upon his own personal charm and wit. President Johnson was a man who was obviously shaped considerably by his years in the House and in the Senate and as an employee; he reflected that by the knowledge of the way in which he was able to get people to react.

So they were distinctly different types of Administrations.

M: Could you assess the effectiveness of their Administrations?

A: No, I think each man has to have an Administration which reflects the individual. Mr. Nixon will, as time goes by, do the same thing. It has to be in his own shadow.

M: How do you think that history will rate Mr. Johnson and his Administration?

A: I think it will rate him as a good President who had a great many difficult problems both at home and abroad; and to use his own appraisal, as he gave it to us in his last message, at least he tried.

M: Do you think that it hurt Mr. Johnson's Administration much that a great deal of the opposition arose within his own party?

A: No question about it. As a Republican, it was very apparent--to stand on the outside and look at the internecine struggle within the Democratic party--it did hurt him.

M: Are there any other areas where your activities or your role intertwine with--?

A: I think we've pretty well covered the field.

M: I want to thank you very much.

A: Thank you.

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By E. Ross Adair

to the

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