INTERVIEW II

DATE: July 9, 1971

INTERVIEWEE: GEORGE BALL

INTERVIEWER: PAIGE E. MULHOLLAN

PLACE: Mr. Ball's office in New York City

Tape 1 of 1

M: I think maybe a good thing at the beginning would be to put on [tape] that I've read through your file of memoranda, and your caution to me, I think, is worthwhile for anyone who may be doing that in the future.

B: Right. At this point I know you last night read the file of memoranda which I sent to President Johnson during the period from October, 1964 through the middle of 1966.

I think I might say one word in explanation of these memoranda. As you no doubt noticed, the successive memoranda represent on my part a falling back from a more categorical and original position. The reason for this was, of course, that I was fighting, as I saw it even in those days, a rearguard action. I was trying to slow down or prevent the escalation of the war. I was trying to persuade the President and my other colleagues that we should systematically seek to cut our losses and disengage from what seemed to me from the very beginning a quite untenable position, primarily because I thought that both the political and physical terrain of South Vietnam were impossible for the effective utilization of the American force and that we should not commit it to such a terrain.

The result is that, as one reads the memoranda, it becomes clear that I was prepared at various times to concede things that had already been decided. This was tactically necessary if I were to have any credibility with my colleagues whatever.

M: And I think it is important to keep that in mind when reading any individual one of the memoranda.

B: Yes, if they're taken out of sequence it would appear that, say, by the middle of 1966 I was ready to concede that what had been done with respect to a great many things was quite right. This was necessary, simply because the decisions had already been taken, and to have challenged them at that time would have been not only futile, but it would have created unnecessary argument and led to the questioning of the credibility of everything I was contending to do.

M: Most of the questions that the memoranda raise, so we mentioned at least yesterday--there are a few that we didn't.... In the summer of 1965 you're talking about something you

refer to as the Acheson plan. Do I infer properly that this was to be a joint United States-South Vietnamese announced program?

B: As a matter of fact, there is a memorandum in there which is not mine. I should explain this. Let me get the memoranda in front of me, so it'll be easier to explain.

M: I think I can pick it out.

B: It was with a number of supplements. Let me give you the background for this.

M: It's June 1965 or slightly before?

B: Here it is. On April 21, 1965 I was at a meeting with the President, and some proposal for escalation was under consideration at that time.

M; Troop commitment at that time.

B: It was a matter of troop commitments. And I made a very strong argument against going forward with this. I said to the President that, "I am satisfied that there might be a chance of transferring the contest from the battlefield to the ballot," that we ought to take advantage of what appeared at that time as a possible diplomatic opening provided by the North Vietnamese in its answer to the Seventeen Nations' Declaration. I stated that I could very quickly give him a memorandum that outlined a serious diplomatic possibility that we ought to consider. And he said, "All right, let me have it by the end of the afternoon."

So that was the memorandum of April 21, 1965 entitled, "Should We Try to Move Toward a Vietnamese Settlement Now," in which I outlined the arguments for doing so, and then suggested that there might be a program that could be worked out for this.

I gave this to the President, and we talked about it. I said if it was agreeable with him that I was going to enlist Dean Acheson to come in and work with me in the developments of such a program and in working it out in detail. So he said, "Fine." I asked Dean to come in and we worked for two weeks together on the development of a program which now appears as something entitled, "A Plan for Political Resolution of South Vietnam."

M: I see. That's a joint Acheson-Ball recommendation.

B: What it was was an effort on Acheson's part to translate into rather specific terms a plan which I had outlined in rather general terms, which called for a series of actions to be taken by the South Vietnamese government.

Now after the Acheson plan was developed I sent a young man who was on my personal staff by the name of Tom Ehrlich, who is presently the dean of the Stanford Law School, on a secret mission to go over it with--who was it, Lodge or Max Taylor?

M: I think it was Lodge by then.

B: It must have been Lodge. With Lodge and Alex Johnson, who was there. And they threw cold water all over it.

M: That's what happened to it ultimately, then?

B: Yes. They simply took the position that it would be very awkward for them even to raise these questions seriously with the South Vietnamese government.

M: This was not something that grew out of any senior advisory group? This was a straight relation with Acheson by you, to come up with solutions?

B: Oh, sure. The senior advisory group never really functioned in this area.

M: During the 1965-66 Christmas pause, you have a long memo in the file there--the original I think is at the very back of the book--referred to as Pinta-Maria, in which you are suggesting a secret communication for a six-power conference. Both that original and the copy that's attached to it are marked, "Not sent. D. R." What were the circumstances of that suggestion on your part? Apparently it was an attempt to get something started while the bombing pause continued, and you're laying out some options with the six-power conference as the most preferred one.

B: Offhand, I don't remember. That is Dean Rusk's handwriting. I must have shown it to Dean and found that he was so opposed to it that we just decided not to bother the President with it.

M: It did not become a major issue that sticks in your mind?

B: No. Actually, as I mentioned to you, I followed one practice invariably. I never sent a thing to the President that I didn't send to McNamara, Bundy, and Rusk to give them a crack at it, because I didn't believe in mixed party dealings on these things.

This, to the best of my knowledge, is the only memoranda that was not sent to the President. Everything else was considered by the President, except there is one memorandum which we spoke of last night and which won't be in the Texas files--but it's here--and which the President read and which we discussed at some length.

M: I know what the code name "Pinta" refers to. What about "Maria?"

B: I don't remember at this time.

M: One of your memoranda there mentioned, when you were arguing that the resumption of bombing should not occur, some initiatives that took place in Laos through Ambassador [William] Sullivan and Souvanna Phouma. Were these more hopeful than perhaps had been indicated before publicly, in your opinion? The North Vietnamese chargé in Vientiane apparently approached Souvanna, who then.

B: Oh, yes. I thought at the time that something might be stirring. It looked a little possible. I never had great confidence that we'd ever work anything out, but again I was seizing at straws, as you can imagine.

M: Nothing came ultimately out of that?

B: No. I've forgotten. The meetings, as I recall, just never came off, or if they did, there was one that turned out to be rather stiff and formal. I can't remember exactly.

M: Is the same thing true of the contacts in Rangoon with Ambassador [Henry A.] Byroade?

B: Yes, same thing.

M: Just formal, non-substantive. That is apparent, but it could raise a question. When you were strenuously opposing the resumption of bombing, were you joined by anybody? [Did] anybody else who was basically in favor of the policy think that that might be a good thing to do at this time?

B: To the best of my recollection, there wasn't anybody else. I think I was alone.

M: You said a while ago that the senior advisory group was not in fact an institutionalized--

B: Let me say one thing: one of the things that President Johnson used to say to me about the bombing pause was, "If I say we'll have a bombing pause for thirty days, I know that at the end of that thirty days, George, you're going to argue against resuming."

M: Do you think it's true that that long bombing pause really affected the President adversely in the long run? I've been told that once that occurred he thought that he'd been tricked into it or pressured into it.

B: He was always very suspicious of the bombing pauses for a reason which is hard fully to appreciate at this time. He was deeply convinced, I think, that the real danger in American public opinion was the hawkish right wing, that they were all the time pushing him into things that he was doing his best to resist. The last thing in the world that he wanted was

to get into a war with China or with the Soviet Union, and he remembered very well the Korean experience. So his concern about a bombing pause was, "If I go through a long bombing pause and nothing happens, then the pressures to escalate are going to be almost irresistible."

M: It wasn't the fact of the pause that bothered him so much.

B: It wasn't the fact of the pause, although it did bother him that in the meantime it was giving the other side a chance to move through the end zone. But the big consideration in his mind was the one of the play of forces on the domestic scene. I think he was deeply and very honestly concerned at the fact that this would give a very big advantage to the extreme hawks.

M: Which it could have done. When did this so-called senior advisory group start?

B: This was an idea of Max Taylor's which he put forward--to have a senior advisory group. Now, which one are we talking about?

M: I'm talking about SIG, the so-called Wise Men--"Let's finish off Vietnam quickly"--the Wise Men of the 1967-1968 time.

B: I see. We had had a meeting--and I can't tell you when it was, but it must have been toward the middle of 1965, I guess--of the Wise Men. I was in the government at that time. So I obviously wasn't in the group. It was Arthur Dean and Dean Acheson and, I think, possibly John Cowles [?], a miscellaneous lot of characters. The President had talked to them about what action should we take, and they were extreme hard-liners. "Don't give them an inch. Go in and bomb and raise hell generally." At the end of it he turned to me and said, "All right, George, what's your contrary opinion?" So I had spoken to them and made no impression.

After the meeting I went over to Acheson, and I think Arthur Dean and somebody else was standing there, and I said, "You goddamned old bastards. You remind me of nothing so much as a bunch of buzzards sitting on a fence and letting the young men die. You don't know a goddamned thing about what you're talking about."

M: That's a real problem for these people out of government.

B: Of course it is. I said to them, "You just sit there and say these irresponsible things!" And I said to Dean, "Would you have ever put up with this if you had been secretary of state?"

M: What was his answer to that?

B: He said afterwards that I shook the hell out of him. He said he was very upset by it.

(Laughter)

M: And I'm sure the way he ran the State Department he wouldn't have been very happy with that kind of intervention. Did they meet regularly after that?

B: No, not very regularly. Every now and then they'd be [called together]. I don't really recall another meeting until--I think it was one I was involved in about November, 1967. Whether there had been another one or not, I don't know. Personally, I just regarded these old characters as nuisances, as I'm sure the people who succeeded me regarded us when we came in.

In the one in November, 1967 it went very much according to plan. Everyone spoke his little piece; I spoke my customary dissent; and that was the end of it. But I don't think I had a friend among the group, with the opinions I was expressing at that time.

M: So there was a striking difference between that one and the one in 1968?

B: This was why the one in 1968 had such an effect. There were so many reversals of position.

M: You say the one in 1967 went according to form. Did the people in the government realize how the one in 1968 was going to change when you called it?

B: No. I think Clark Clifford, who told me was the one who instigated it, was just hoping to God that the group coming in from outside would change things.

Now, there's a story that should be told, and it's never been told so far as I know. I've never heard it and never read it. And I can't even give you the timing, but it must have been--when was the long bombing pause? That was in--

M: 1965-66, December 24 to January 20 something.

B: All right. It must have been about the middle of 1965 that we had a meeting. The President had asked Clark Clifford to come in and sort of give his appraisal of the way things were going. And Clark, who had been there once or twice on earlier occasions, had taken a rather hard-line view, I thought, although he hadn't been particularly vocal. On this occasion he gave a long analysis of the situation of the war, which almost completely agreed with what I had been telling the President. And then said to the President, "This war is going to destroy this administration. If things go on as they're going now, and we keep escalating this thing, the American people aren't going to accept it." He stated it in most lurid terms. There was no particular discussion of what he said and a sort of an embarrassment.

I got hold of Clark immediately after the meeting, because he and I were old friends. I said, "Come into the Fish Room with me. I want to talk to you." So we went into the Fish Room and sat down at the table and I said, "Look. You have said the only sensible thing I have heard said by anybody in that group for a very, very long time. I can only tell you that you and I are in total agreement on this, and I think that your influence with the President is tremendously important. I want to put into your hands for you to read a series of memoranda which I have sent to the President. "Can you handle it?" And he said, "Yes, I am a member of the Intelligence Advisory Board," or something, "and I have a secure safe in my house." Which is wired downtown; we all have secure safes. "You have it hand-delivered to me, and I will see that it's taken care of."

The next day he called me, and I think I dropped by to see him at his office. He was extremely excited about the memoranda, saying that he thought I was absolutely right.

M: These are the ones you refer to here?

B: That's right. And [he said] he was going to have a very hard and long talk with the President. I think he had one talk with the President the day before. When the President saw Clark I was never clear, because at that time they were very close.

So Clark Clifford was a very early dove. This is something that nobody understands.

M: But the President must have understood it.

B: The President must have understood it, and I don't altogether understand. Someday I will have a talk with Clark and try to straighten it out.

At the time of the bombing pause the end of the year, when we were discussing the bombing pause, Clark came in again and made a very strong argument against the bombing pause. It seemed to me almost as though there had been a kind of total volte-face on Clark's part. Clark told me afterwards that this was not any change in his position whatever, but that he thought that a bombing pause was going to spoil whatever chances we had to get this thing slowed down because the escalation that would take place after the bombing pause would be at such a higher rate.

M: It's his argument about that bombing pause that has convinced people that he was a hawk still.

B: He was not.

M: That's the kind of thing that makes all of this activity worthwhile.

B: And I've never told that story to a single person.

M: And it will stay on this until--

B: Clark's going to be interrogated, isn't he?

M: Yes. I am the one who interviewed Clark Clifford, and he didn't tell me that story either, although he did give some indications that he might have been a dove.

B: You don't have another crack at him, do you?

M: I may make one, because I'd like to go into that with him.

The meeting in 1968, then, that did turn around, that he called, was it--

B: He got the President to call it. I think this was to kind of slow down this possible sending of the 175,000, or whatever the figure was.

M: And it was organized the same way? It wasn't stacked to produce that result?

B: No, it wasn't at all. If you'll remember the dramatis personae, it was Arthur Dean, Doug Dillon, Acheson, Mac Bundy who was by then out of the government, Omar Bradley. I don't know whether Jack McCloy was there or not. He may have been.

M: No.

B: I don't think he was.

M: But the briefing was the same as before?

B: It was also Bob Murphy and Abe Fortas. Abe was always [remainder of sentence inaudible].

This time, I think there was more briefing, a little more systematic briefing. We came down the night before. We had dinner with Rusk, and I think Bob McNamara was there. Then we went in the Operations Center of the State Department and sat at that green baize table there. And we sat around, and we heard these briefings. This was, as you will recall, right after Tet, and the briefings were very pessimistic. I was absolutely delighted with the briefings, because it seemed to me that these were so different from the kind of stylized briefings that department officers and Pentagon officers usually gave that the people were at long last telling the truth. The briefings, as I recall, were by Carver of the CIA, [Philip C.] Habib, I think, wasn't it?

M: The State Department. And DePugh from...?

B: General DePugh. And they were first-rate. They obviously had a very great effect. Then the next morning we had a meeting, I think in the same room. And we discussed it. Then Rusk and Clifford came in. It was clear that there had been a profound change of sentiment.

M: You were in the majority for a change.

B: I was in the majority. Well, actually, when we finally got into the Cabinet Room, I think Mac Bundy's opening statement was, "Mr. President, I must tell you that I'm about to say something I never thought I'd say in my life, that I now agree with George Ball." (Laughter)

M: Of course, Bundy had made some noises like he had changed his mind by then in a speech somewhere in the fall.

B: He'd made a speech in Ohio, in which he tried to justify our going in and tried to justify our coming out, which, as I told him afterwards, was the greatest apologia in history for the old Duke of York.

M: Did the President seem obviously affected by the consensus?

B: I thought he was greatly shaken by it. Then there was an effort on Walt Rostow's part to some extent to say that these guys have been prated by a very unfair briefing. This was Walt's theme particularly. So then, as I understand it, the President tried to get the briefing officers back and have it repeated to him. Whether they repeated it in quite the same way or not, I don't know.

M: You never will find out, I'm sure, too.

B: The theme that ran around the table was, "You've got to lower your sights. We can't achieve these objectives." And even Omar Bradley took this line for a truce.

I think the thing that shook the President most was Acheson, who had been pretty much of a hawk up to that point, although had been willing to work with me on this, because I had used Acheson a great deal. I used him, as you may recall, very greatly on that Cyprus thing, and I'd even had him go to Geneva for a whole damned summer.

M: So Acheson is a professional. He was willing to work that side while he holds contrary views.

B: I don't know that he held contrary views. If we could have gotten a settlement on the basis of Lebanon--we never could.

M: You mentioned in your memoranda a number of times when you are trying to convince the President that we should disengage that one of the first things that had to be done was a basic decision by him to accept something less than a flow low [?]. Do you think that after this briefing in March of 1968 and his announcement of stepping down, of the bombing withdrawal, that he really made that kind of a decision?

B: He made that decision.

M: To take less.

B: Yes.

M: It wasn't just a tactical change?

B: I don't think it was a tactical change. I think he really made that decision. I think he was torn. Because Rostow, on the one hand, was telling him all the time that Tet had really been a great triumph from the end of the North Vietnamese effort. But I think he was shaken by this kind of advice from people in whose judgment he necessarily had some confidence, because they'd had a lot of experience.

M: You were very shortly thereafter made U.N. ambassador-designate. Did the change-about in his Vietnam views have anything to do with your appointment to that?

B: I don't think so. The President and I always got along perfectly. Oddly enough, we never had problems; at least, I was never aware if we had problems. He treated me with great consideration and courtesy all the time. He rather liked the idea that I was reasonably independent in my judgments of things. At least, he knew that I was honest with him and that I wouldn't double-cross him, and loyalty was very big in his vocabulary.

M: You were in some of the meetings after the North Vietnamese responded favorably, and the discussion of where the talks might be held was taking place. How did it get into that mess about, "We'll go anywhere, but we won't go to A, B, C, D," and so on. What was the President's position during that period?

B: His concern was that, in the first place, he didn't want to give the French the triumph of having Paris chosen, and furthermore he thought De Gaulle might double-cross him.

M: So he resisted even Paris.

B: He resisted Paris.

M: How did you convince him that--?

B: I didn't convince him. I think that he finally accepted it because the position was an impossible position--that we would go anywhere anytime, but we wouldn't go to Paris, which was an ally.

M: And had all the facilities that we had claimed were necessary.

To get off of Vietnam, I suppose the best way to get off of it is to ask generally. The critics have always said that one of the great horrors of our Vietnam effort was that it distracted us so badly from everything else. Was the fallout that serious?

B: I think it was. I think it made it very hard to get attention on everything else, that judgments tended to be colored by the Vietnamese situation. For example, we pressed the British so hard to stay in line on Vietnam, and I'm sure we were willing to pay some costs for it we wouldn't have paid otherwise. We did this with other countries in a rather shameless way, I'm afraid. This was one of the arguments you may have noted I was making myself, that we were getting things totally distorted. In fact, I once drew a map for Dean Rusk and said, "This is your map of the world." I had a tiny United States with an enormous Vietnam lying right off the coast. (Laughter)

M: Strategic preponderance location.

B: And then a little bit of a Europe over here.

M: Did President Johnson come to office with any clearly defined ideas as to what kind of European policy he wanted the government to pursue?

B: I don't think so. I had always sort of taken the lead on European policy, and I didn't get much interference on European policy. Mac Bundy was the only fellow that had some independent views. I always suspected and used to accuse him of being a Gaullist, and he had a different appraisal of the General from mine.

M: Was it good or bad that you were given a pretty free hand? Good, I guess, as far as....

B: Good. From my point of view, it was fine.

M: What was the earliest issue? Was MLF still alive at the time Johnson came to office?

B: Very much so, yes. Actually, Bob McNamara was very good on the MLF, as far as that was concerned. During most of the period, he and I sort of fought shoulder-to-shoulder for it. He was in favor of it.

M: What happened to it?

B: We worked very hard on it. We sent teams around. On the fourteenth of January of 1963, which is a date you may remember as having some significance, I met with Chancellor Adenauer. This was the day of De Gaulle's press conference, and I met with Adenauer. I had been in Paris the Friday before, and while this is really not relevant to the Johnson period, it's rather interesting. I had gone over to talk about the question of British entry and see what I could do, and also I had a meeting on the MLF in Bonn. In Paris on the afternoon of the Friday preceding the Monday, which was January 14, I met among other people Couve de Murville, who was then the foreign minister and a very old friend of mine. I had worked with Couve; I had been his lawyer when he was in Washington, and so on.

I had been told earlier in the week by some friends of mine--a chap who was the editor of Francois, whose name was Georges Gambeau. He had brought a young reporter, correspondent, to my hotel and had the correspondent repeat to me what he had learned in a private press briefing in the Elysses Palace, which was almost a complete outline of every point that De Gaulle made in his Monday press conference. This was indicated to the correspondents as the line De Gaulle would take. So I repeated this to Couve de Murville. And Couve de Murville said, "Look, George, you've been around a long time. You ought to know better than to believe anything you hear in press circles. There are absolutely no ideas of that kind in this house."

That was on Friday. That night Ted Heath came to my hotel at the Plaza [inaudible]. I had a private room where the two of us had dinner. We had a very long dinner, and a lot of wine, and a rather jubilant evening, because he had been doing the same thing; he had been talking to the French government. He was convinced everything was going to be dandy.

M: Do you know what happened? Was there a change?

B: No, there was no change, no change at all. De Gaulle had been working on this press conference for a long time.

M: That confirms your view of De Gaulle to you.

B: It did. And it also caused a lot of mental reservations about my old friend Couve, too. I only mention this because on Monday I met with Adenauer, and Adenauer started first thing in the morning with the meeting by saying, "I should tell you, Mr. Ball, that I had a very bad dream last night, and I'm still suffering from it. I dreamed that tomorrow I am going to have a terrible fight with Mr. Ball, because I am not going to be able to accept any of the things he tells me." So I said, "Well, Chancellor, why don't you reserve

judgment on that until we finish this morning?" I then made the presentation of the MLF and answered all kinds of questions. We went at it all morning. At the end of the morning he said, "Mr. Ball, I want to tell you that that dream which was haunting me this morning has completely dissipated. You've completely persuaded me. You've answered every question. And I am going to announce this afternoon that the Federal Republic is completely in support of the MLF."

He gave a lunch then, and he said, "You know, since you're an old friend and since this is a special occasion, I have both of my foreign ministers here. My old one," and he put his hand on Von Brentano's shoulder. "And my new one," and he put his hand on [Gerhard] Schroder's shoulder. Of course, they both hated him. The old man was mean. He really was mean.

So he announced it in the afternoon. Then I had a party at the American Embassy for the members of the German government, and in the middle of the party we got word from the press conference. Yes, the answer is that the MLF was still very much alive.

At the Ranch I suspect it was the meeting just before the bombing pause, Bob McNamara and I were still arguing for it. This must have been in--

M: In late 1965?

B: Late 1965.

M: Still wasn't dead then?

B: Still wasn't dead then. As a matter of fact, the President agreed to it then. We were going to go forward. Then it was clear that the French were going to raise hell, and they started an offensive against it. We finally had a meeting in the White House at night in which McNamara and I made a fight for it. But for the first time in my life I really got very angry at Mac Bundy, because the President started to read a paper that Mac had written which Mac had not sent me in advance. I want to say that Bundy was extremely fair in all of his dealings. We used to have a lot of arguments, but we never had any problems between us. This was the first time, and I think the only time, I ever really got angry at him.

M: He was arguing the contrary view to the President.

B: Yes. And I felt if he were going to give the President a memorandum with that argument, he should have let me see it and let me have a copy before we got into the meeting. But anyway, that was a very minor thing, and it was, as I said, the only time I ever knew Mac to deviate from being scrupulously fair.

M: Did the President then just kill it?

B: Then he killed it.

M: Is it true, as I have heard, that you saved the jobs of the so-called cabal, or theologians, or whatever they were known as, of the MLF?

B: They needed some protection at that time.

M: And you were able to...?

B: Able to focus [?] at that time.

M: Most of them did survive rather well, actually.

B: One of them survived and is now our ambassador to the SALT talks.

M: I was going to say, George Smith and Henry Owen turned up all right, and most of them landed on their feet. Was the President vindictive in things like that? Would his inclination have been to remove these people from positions of much authority?

B: There was a certain amount of that. There was a certain amount more on the part of the White House staff. Once somebody had been shot down, then they became fair game.

M: I see. And they needed a protector in a high place.

B: Yes.

M: What about Mr. Johnson and De Gaulle?

B: I think the President respected De Gaulle as a brilliantly effective politician. He had sort of a high professional respect for him, and at the same time totally distrusted him.

M: But he did apparently favor a rather soft policy?

B: Oh, yes, because he thought that any harder policy would play into De Gaulle's hands. It was a tactical matter.

M: Did you advise that policy?

B: No, I would have taken a tougher line, particularly on such things as just walking out on our NATO agreements, because, actually, it was a repudiation of a solemn agreement.

M: You would have advised to hold their feet to the fire?

B: I did. I preached it very strenuously.

M: The President personally rejected that?

B: Yes.

M: On the grounds of his respect for De Gaulle?

B: No. On the grounds that this wasn't the way to be treated, and it would just make the situation worse. He had a different tactical view from mine. I'm not saying for sure he wasn't right. I think a part of it was also that De Gaulle was very popular in the country then.

M: In the United States?

B: In the United States. And it would be against public opinion.

M: What about De Gaulle's efforts in Vietnam, the neutralization speech and so on? Did that have any prospect at all that the President would buy De Gaulle as a peacemaker in Indo-China?

B: No, I think just exactly on the contrary. There was during this early period a very strong kind of rejection by our own government of any neutralization talk. Neutralization was, in effect, giving them what they wanted. I went to see De Gaulle during the Kennedy days and had a long talk with him about it. I found myself in the position which is familiar enough with anybody who is working at the business of arguing a brief which didn't represent my own conviction at all and hearing De Gaulle say a lot of things with which I thoroughly agreed, but which I obviously had to try to negate.

M: You saw De Gaulle in late 1965 at least and other times as well. Do you think he was inclined to try to be helpful, or was he, as the President seems to suspect...?

B: I think he was playing his own game. I think he was playing, as he always did, a very pecuniary game which was designed for the aggrandizement of French interests, in prestige terms, in terms of regaining a position of some authority in that part of the world.

M: What about the President and NATO?

B: Which didn't mean at all that he might not have been a good force if he'd been given a little more opportunity.

M: Did the President's willingness to let De Gaulle violate a solemn agreement on NATO indicate that the President wasn't very firm himself in his commitment to NATO?

B: No, I think the President was very firm. The President was very clear on this, just as he was on the maintenance of troops in Europe, just as he was on the Berlin issue. But I think it was tactical from the President's point of view. I think his feeling [was that] to put himself against De Gaulle given the prestige that De Gaulle had would only enable De Gaulle to claim that there was an argument between France and the United States.

There was a good deal of merit in the President's basic instinct on this, and that was, France was not a power that was equal to the United States. It was at best a second-rate power. Therefore, for the President to get, as he said, into a "pissing match" with De Gaulle would only serve to build De Gaulle up and to build France up. Therefore, he was inclined to give him a very soft treatment.

M: Did the President have any views on what NATO ought to be doing, other than what it was doing, that he pressed hard for?

B: I don't believe so. I think he thought NATO served a necessary purpose.

M: What about the so-called "bridge-building" programs of the administration? Did that come up as advice to the President which he took, or was that an initiative that he came up with?

B: No, I think this was advice that he took. There was quite a little agitation for this in the Policy Planning Staff of the State Department, and I think [Zbigniew] Brzezinski had had some influence on this policy and Walt Rostow was interested in this policy. Quite a lot of people were. And I think it was not much more than that. Nothing very much ever came out of it.

M: I was going to say, was there much substance? There was a lot of rhetoric.

B: A lot of rhetoric. But when it came down to a quite simple issue, were we really going to get an East-West trade bill through, for example, there was no particular inclination on the part of the White House to make a fight for it.

M: So the quite good-sounding speech, the East-West trade bill speech, I guess, in 1966, was really just about that.

B: I think the President would like to have done it, but he just wasn't prepared to risk the rest of his program in a fight with the Congress. So the thing went up and died. It went up and just sat there.

This was the trouble. I mean, rhetoric was quite easy on these things, but to turn them into anything very serious was wholly another matter.

M: You have said that any initiative toward East-West improvement that didn't attack the German problem was necessarily incomplete. Was there any presidential inclination to do anything on the German problem?

B: No, not really. During that whole period we were in what I always regarded as a rather false position, because we were making all these noises about ultimate reunification and so on. As a matter of fact, I wrote this not long ago in a piece I wrote for an Italian foreign affairs magazine which created quite a row in Germany--on the Ostpolitik saying that one of the reasons why the Ostpolitik might get some receptivity on the western side was that it relieved the West from a position of some hypocrisy, that actually none of the western countries would have been prepared to have accepted a unification. Given the present structure of Europe, they would have been as appalled by it as the Russians. De Gaulle actually said that to me.

M: Was that in fact the position of our government during the Johnson Administration, that we would have been appalled.

B: I don't think anybody ever thought of it for the simple reason it was obviously so far off and so remote a possibility. I thought of it in terms of some rational structure for Europe, because I was always making the argument and writing a lot of stuff during the period, that the only hope for the reunification of the German people was within some kind of a larger European framework, that this was the only basis on which it could be acceptable to the rest of the Europeans, either East or West.

M: Did the President really pay enough attention to a complex situation like that to master an issue like...?

B: When a specific one was up that required a concrete decision, then the President did his homework, and we got rather searchingly into it.

M: But as far as mastering the general European situation, he would not have been likely to--?

B: I think he was rather content to leave it to me.

M: That speaks well of you.

B: As I say, there wasn't anything unless you got a concrete issue like MLF which required a fight with Congress. And let me say the reason the President abandoned me on that was that he didn't think Congress would take it.

M: So it had to do with domestic politics as much as...?

B: Far more. Let's say if this was something he could have done without congressional action, he would have done the MLF. I don't have any doubt about that.

M: That's fairly clear-cut then, as to what his motives were.

B: Yes. But we were in a dilemma with respect to the MLF, because we were never in position to go up and lobby Congress for the MLF, because there was no final White House decision and the President wouldn't let me do it. But at the end of the road when the President was prepared to make a decision there was no preparation in Congress, and therefore he had a sense that Congress wouldn't take it. And it was this dilemma that we weren't able to resolve.

M: So one predestined the other, then?

B: Yes.

M: What about issues such as disarmament that are big today? Was the President interested in such things as that?

B: Yes, I think he was very much interested. I don't think he had too much confidence that we'd ever be able to achieve anything, but he desperately wanted to be a peace president. If, for example, there had been any kind of a signal such as President Kennedy got with regard to a partial test ban treaty, I think the President would have been absolutely delighted to have gone full ahead.

M: But none came.

B: None came.

M: And that applies to the NPT negotiations? Of course, I guess they climaxed after you left the department.

B: They climaxed after I left the department. I was never an enthusiast for them, because I thought.... As a matter of fact, I did a piece in a book I wrote, about the NPT, which was rather unorthodox.

M: Did the President ever take a personal interference or involvement in the discussion that went on pretty much all during the period?

B: Oh, yes, from time to time. But, again, when there was something he had to decide, and so much of the disarmament stuff never required that kind of a top-level decision.

M: What other European topics got to be presidential in those two years? I guess the offset pressure came mostly after you left.

B: Well, it was there, and the President was very disturbed about the balance of payments, just as President Kennedy had been. It was never quite the same almost "King Charles' head" that it was for President Kennedy. That, I think, related in large part to what his father was saying, because on at least a couple of occasions when I would make a rather eloquent speech, or what I thought was an eloquent speech, to President Kennedy about the fact that we were distorting policy in a very false way to try to accommodate it to the balance of payments which wasn't all that important--I would try to explain to him why I thought it wasn't all that important--he would say, "All right, George. I understand you, but how will I ever explain that to my father?"

M: What does a presidential adviser do when faced with that kind of response?

B: I must say I always tried to get any decisions on the balance of payments to the extent I could influence the situation during the winter months when the President wouldn't be going up to Hyannis Port. Every weekend he went up to Hyannis Port he came back absolutely obsessed with the balance of payments.

M: Was Johnson that obsessed with the issue?

B: He was concerned, but he wasn't....

M: It got worse, of course.

B: Yes. It got worse. And this was a situation where McNamara got deeply upset about it, too. Because Bob was prepared to distort any kind of policy in order to achieve some temporary alleviation to the balance of payments, which again to my mind was a function of his preoccupation with quantification.

M: That's right. That's something that could be quantified, measured.

B: That could be quantified. For example, I think he seriously proposed--and he may actually have done it on "buy American" issues--that if the American goods didn't cost more than 165 per cent of what it would cost abroad, we bought it in the United States. You know, this is the most horrible misapplication of resources!

M: Was the President that concerned about...?

B: Oh, yes. He would go along with Bob. In other words, they were willing to take a great deal of punishment on the budget in order to help the balance of payments.

M: What about the trade issues? Was the President interested in...?

B: On the trade issues, the President was generally good. There's no point in making any comparison with President Kennedy, because we had rather different issues come up. But then there would come something very specific like the Beef Import Bill. I spent any amount of time on the Beef Import Bill.

M: That was a Texas issue.

B: That was a Texas issue, and he was getting heat very directly on that. He didn't care how I settled it. I don't think he really cared whether anything was done for the beef interests, but I had to quiet them down somehow. So we finally got a bill through that was just about as meaningless as it could be. This was a triumph of my young friend Tom Ehrlich because I turned the negotiations of the cattle interests over to Ehrlich and he did an extraordinary job. And they only realized afterwards what had happened to them.

M: That's the best kind of negotiation you can have.

One of your crisis points in European affairs, I call it European, was the Cyprus episode in 1964.

B: The Cyprus thing was my issue in a funny way, because when the matter first came up, when David Harlech, whom I'm seeing this afternoon actually, came to call on the Secretary to explain that the British were going to get out of Cyprus, I was there and said to Dean, "Look, I'll take this one. Don't worry about it." So from then on, I handled Cyprus almost singlehandedly.

M: Did the President like to have someone like that that he could turn a crisis over to and say, "It's yours. Go to it."

B: Oh, yes, he was quite satisfied with it. And I got wonderful support from him on everything about it, wonderful support. He let me do it. He'd give me an airplane when I'd ask for it. I remember when we really had a tough crisis, when I went to see Makarios and Inonu and Papandreou, it was just a terribly precarious thing, and I had a feeling that Inonu and Papandreou each had to be given terribly tough treatment by the President if we ever were going to get any kind of a settlement. Oh, no, this was a different occasion. No, this was a later trip, when I stopped the bombing, or something out there. I hadn't gone to see Makarios on this trip. I had been to see Inonu and Papandreau, that's right.

M: They were coming here, weren't they?

B: They weren't until I went out there. The thing was so touchy that I flew from Ankara. I

had one of these converted tankers--what we call a McNamara kit. It was perfectly comfortable. Anyway, it was better than Air Force One because I could always get a bed not only for myself but for my staff. This day we didn't need a bed, because I started dictating when we left Ankara--I had two secretaries on board--and I had finished this memorandum just an hour out of Washington. I was met at the plane by someone from the White House saying, "The President wants you to come immediately."

I was able to go see the President and hand him a memorandum, saying, "This summarizes everything I can tell you, Mr. President." Among other things, that the President must immediately invite Inonu and Papandreou for separate visits. Which he then immediately agreed to do. We had them over there within a week.

M: How did he perform with them? Did he do what you wanted him to do?

B: He did what I wanted him to do very well. The President was very, very cooperative on this kind of thing. If he were convinced that I knew what I was talking about, and he was willing to give me the benefit of the doubt, and I felt that something was necessary, he'd do it.

M: Even if it involved a tough session with a chief of state.

B: Oh, sure, a couple of tough sessions in this case and disarranging all his plans--you know, some entertainment program and this kind of thing.

M: Are there European issues of consequence that I didn't at least mention here? None come to my mind, sitting here.

B: Throughout this period there was the general question as to how we would deal with the British and the French on the effect of the British entry. Of course, after the De Gaulle veto in July of 1963, it hadn't been as acute as it had been in Kennedy's day. Kennedy had pretty much let me handle all of this by myself, and Rusk, too. They weren't as interested in it as I was. I was very much interested, and again I had complete support.

M: Now we're coming up to 1971. It has been eight years, and now we seem to be getting to a point where we might finally succeed.

How much did you get into crisis situations such as, say, the Dominican Republic intervention in 1965?

B: In every one of them. On the Dominican Republic, I was with the President when we made the decision to send the troops in. I had gone over to see the President about something. I guess it was the Dominican Republic. There was a little tiny office right off the Oval Office, just half as big as this room. And the President, Mac Bundy, and I were

there. I can't recall whether anyone else was there--maybe McNamara, I'm not sure--when we got the telegrams in from the Dominican Republic about the five hundred Americans, or whatever it was, who were there in the parking lot next to the Hotel Ambassador, or whatever it was, and were in imminent danger of being killed. So we made an instant decision.

M: Based entirely on the need to--

B: Entirely on the need. Nothing else at that time. Now what happened was that this was a kind of slowly growing and developing affair, and it got rather transformed. After the troops got down there, and particularly after we began to--I don't know, we sent something like twenty thousand down. But there is absolutely no doubt whatever that the initial decision was made with only one consideration in mind, and that was a consideration which any head of state would have been derelict if he hadn't responded to: that we damned well had to get some troops in there in one hell of a hurry or our people would have been killed. Now, whether they in fact would have been killed is another matter. But let me say that on all the evidence we had before us at that time, this was the only conclusion we could come to. So I have no apologies whatever for that initial sending of the troops in.

On the question as to whether we should have sent in such a mass of troops and whether we should have so obviously then come out against a communist takeover, I think again you have to read this in terms of American domestic politics at the time. The clamor that if we had permitted the Dominican Republic to become another Cuba, which was the thing that was on the President's mind, I think it would have been devastating. I think this very deeply concerned the President; that, plus the fact that he was getting a lot of what I thought were highly dubious reports from J. Edgar Hoover about the number of communists.

But then the thing got taken out of everybody's hands. The President became the desk officer on the thing. He ran everything himself.

M: Is that because it was in Latin America? Was it true that he felt differently about Central America, South America...?

B: He felt much more familiar with them. After all, a Texan has a feeling for Latin America. I think he felt that this was something right off the coast, that his own position was very much at stake on this issue of whether we had another Cuba on our hands or not. So he moved in, made every decision and did everything.

There's one thing again that I don't think has ever been printed, and that was the activities of Abe Fortas in this situation, because Abe Fortas had gone down under an assumed name to try to persuade.... You see, in the days when he was under secretary of

interior and when he began to practice law, he had a great friendship with Munoz-Marin, and through that friendship he had gotten to know Bosch and these other people. Bosch at that time was in Puerto Rico. He was down under an assumed name negotiating with Bosch for a period of ten days maybe.

M: On direct presidential instructions.

B: That's right. And telephoning the President always that, "This is Mr. Martin calling," or something of the sort. This went on.

M: Did you stay engaged in it through the Bundy-Vance mission?

B: Yes, I was engaged in it through the Bundy-Vance mission. I must say I began to lose interest in it after a time. I played a role in getting Ellsworth Bunker into the thing. I think Bunker was my original suggestion; quite frankly, I don't think anybody but Bunker could ever have worked it out. It cost him a year of his life down there.

M: I expect so.

B: I meant he spent a whole damned year.

M: Did the President have a specific solution that he insisted we come out with?

B: He just wasn't going to let the communist government run the country, that's all.

M: Under any circumstances.

B: Right.

M: Was Balaguer the President's boy, or was he willing to take anybody?

B: He would have taken anybody who was non-communist. I met with Balaguer myself secretly in New York on a couple of occasions at the Waldorf-Astoria during this period.

M: Apparently Bundy was negotiating with another group.

B: Yes.

M: Why was that shot down?

B: He couldn't get anywhere with them.

M: It wasn't his choice of people, then?

B: He and Vance went down and Tom Mann went down. Tom had a very simple solution to all these problems, which put the army in control.

M: Their army?

B: Yes. Tom's basic philosophy with regard to Latin America was that the only group you could count on, who had any continuity, and the only stable element of the society was the military. So that you always found the right military and put them in control.

M: When the President got engaged like that, became, as you called him, the desk officer for the thing, did he keep those of you in the department, for example, informed as to what happened, or did a lot go on that you didn't know about that he was pursuing?

B: No. I think we knew about everything. We went to a thousand meetings over there. We'd get down into the minutiae, really the minutiae, and the President would preside and handle everything. It put us all--it put me in a position where I just practically lost interest. I had a lot of other things to do, and I tried to avoid the Dominican Republic as much as I could.

M: What happened to the rest of the government business? What happened to Vietnam, for example?

B: Oh, it got put aside for the time being.

M: The government can't really deal with two crises like this?

B: Not when the President immerses himself in the way he did at that time. This became a thing of such passion, almost an obsession.

M: Why did it affect adversely so many of the people like Fulbright, for example, when it came out reasonably well?

B: They didn't know the end of the story then. One of Bill Fulbright's great disabilities was that he read books. Nobody in the Senate should read books.

M: Don't worry. I don't think very many can be accused of that crime.

B: He had read books with a very strong anti-colonialist bias. One of them that he talked to me about a great deal which affected him very much was a book by a woman named Han Su Yen called The Crippled Tree, which was a book about China and the negotiations over the treaty ports. So he was always reading something that indicated the anti-colonialist bias, and he was preoccupied with what appeared to him to be a kind of

recrudescence of American imperialism, almost like the 1890s.

The Dominican Republic had some rather special meaning for quite a lot of people, because, after all, we had had Marines down there for a long, long time. I think this was Bill's reaction, and I think it was an honest reaction. I think it was impossible that he and Lyndon Johnson could over a period of time ever have gotten along very well.

M: On foreign policy issues or on any issues?

B: Fundamentally on any issues. I'll tell you a story, too. I don't know if this is a good one to postpone for the ten-year requirement or not. In 1952 right after the presidential election when Eisenhower came in I got a call from Bill Fulbright or I went up to see him for something; I can't remember. He was in despair because he said, without anybody knowing about it this young fellow Lyndon Johnson had been lobbying the Senate and had got the votes to be the leader. All of Fulbright"s friends were appalled by this, including Bill himself. They wanted somebody much more liberal and so on. He was deeply upset.

M: So the seeds go back a ways.

B: Well, it just indicated a kind of incompatibility. These weren't the same kind of people. Fulbright thought of himself as an intellectual. He was a man who was interested in ideas; he wasn't interested in politics per se. So they were incompatible.

M: I suppose the next high point is your resignation in the summer of 1966. Did you finally just get tired of fighting the fight, or were there more reasons?

B: No. I had a kind of developing feeling that Vietnam was consuming everything. This was no act of conscience on my part. I had no intention whatever of going out and denouncing my colleagues. I've just never worked with people on that basis. I was physically terribly tired.

M: Six years is a long time.

B: And I had a feeling that we were all outstaying our time. The basis on which Rusk and I worked was that Sunday was like any other day. We never took a break. I had four telephones by my bed. There was hardly a week went by that I wasn't called at least once in the middle of the night on some crisis. More often than not, I had to make a decision as to whether this was worth bothering the President or not.

I had a very early experience with President Johnson soon after he came in. We had a crisis in Brazil--it was the time that Goulart was being thrown out--I had a strong representation in. At three o'clock in the morning I was down at the department, which was normal in any crisis. Rusk was away somewhere. As I mentioned, crises always

seemed to occur when I was acting secretary. I don't know why. Finally, on the strong urging of our ambassador down there who was--

M: Lincoln Gordon at the time?

B: Yes. I sent a telegram or issued a statement which had the effect of, in effect, recognizing the new government. Goulart wasn't quite out of the country, and I was taking a chance. But it worked out beautifully and was very effective. It was the kind of thing that marked a period to the end of Mr. Goulart.

But the President was furious with me, the only time he was ever really angry with me, I think. Why hadn't I let him know? Why did I do this without letting him know? I said, "It was three o'clock in the morning, Mr. President." He said, "Don't ever do that again. I don't care what hour in the morning it is, I want to know. I'm not saying that what you did wasn't right, but after this I want to know." Thereafter I never hesitated.

M: Did that lead to him getting bothered by a lot of things that he shouldn't be bothered with?

B: I don't think so, not in his judgment. So I would call him. I never hesitated to call him. I'd call him at two, three, four o'clock in the morning, ask them if they'd wake up the President, I had something I wanted to talk to him about. He'd always say, "Yes, George, what's the problem?" And I would outline it. He would always say, "Well, what do you think we ought to do?" And I would always say, "What I propose to do with your approval, Mr. President, is the following." There was never once that he failed to say, "That seems about right to me. Go right ahead, and I can't tell you how grateful I am to you for calling me."

M: Sometimes he was known to get angry at people who announced that they were departing. Was there any of that in your case?

B: No, I don't think so. I was very frank with him. I just told him that I really had to go back and repair my fortunes, that I had been away from my professional activity too long. At that time I expected to go back and practice law. And [I said] that I was physically tired and I felt that it was time for a change in the guard, as far as I was concerned.

M: Did he contact you frequently during the period you were out of government, between then and 1968? I know you were called in for the Pueblo.

B: The Pueblo, and, actually, the time that the Six Day War started. I was in Chicago making a speech and I was awakened early in the morning by Walt Rostow saying, "Do you know there's a war on, and the President would like you to come right down." I said, "I've got a speech today, and if I cancel it, what will the appearance be?" He consulted the President and said, "Maybe you'd better not do it then." So I didn't get down. Mac Bundy did get

down and got stuck for two weeks, so I was glad I hadn't [gone].

M: You didn't then go afterwards?

B: No. It was for a particular meeting. If I had gone down, it was reasonably possible I would have been stuck for a continued time, which I didn't particularly welcome.

M: What did he use you for in the Pueblo incident?

B: I headed a group, a little committee which we got together, composed of General Mark Clark, Admiral David McDonald who had been chief of naval operations, and General Larry Kuter, an air force general--he was the vice chairman of Pan American Airlines. We examined all of the evidence on what had happened to the Pueblo and came up with a series of recommendations for the President.

M: Which he followed?

B: I think so. By and large, they were carried out.

M: Your recommendations were basically that we not do anything drastic?

B: That's right, and, also, they related to the conduct of these operations in the future.

M: The surveillance thing that had led to the Pueblo trouble?

B: Yes.

M: When you left your job as U.N. ambassador to go to work for Mr. Humphrey, you made it quite clear the reasons that you did so.

B: I telephoned the President. I had been thinking about this. I took a trip to Europe and had the impression over there that Mr. Nixon was going to be elected. My attitude toward Mr. Nixon had been formed at a time when I was working with my friend Mr. Stevenson back in 1952, and I had rather strongly-held views, as you may recall. No, I just decided that Humphrey was going to be badly beaten. Humphrey was a good friend of mine, although I'm not sure that he would have been the man among all men I would have picked as the candidate, but he was a man of great honesty and a terribly fine human being. I thought it was tragic that he was being put in an impossible position. I thought he was going to lose and lose very badly, but I had a feeling that too shattering a defeat would have hurt the party and would install Mr. Nixon with too great a mandate.

So I made a decision in my own mind that not only was I going to quit, but I was going to be quite outrageous and see if I could contribute to reversing this trend. I had a

feeling that Humphrey immediately thereafter had to do something fairly decisive with regard to Vietnam.

I telephoned the President down on the Ranch. I said, "Mr. President, for the first time in my life I am in a position not of asking your advice, but of telling you what I'm going to do, because this is a matter of conscience with me. I've come to a decision after a great deal of soul-searching that I'm going to resign," and so on. "I would hope I would have your blessing on this, and I would certainly want to do it in a way that would create the least problems for you."

He was very nice about it and said, "All right." Then he called me back a little later and expressed deep concern. Very often his delayed reaction was somewhat different from his first one, which is true of everybody. He expressed concern that it looked as though we were being very erratic, that I was just coming in and then going out again. But he didn't make any real effort to dissuade me. He did ask me to hold off for a couple of days, because he wanted to be able to announce my successor at the time he announced my resignation.

So on the basis of this, even though I hadn't gotten the final clearance about this, I telephoned Humphrey, who had known nothing about this.

M: This is not worked out with the candidate in advance?

B: It wasn't worked out with the candidate. I said, "Hubert, I'll tell you what I'm going to do. I'm going to do this; I'm going to declare for you, and I'm going to go to work. What I intend to do is to be very outrageous. I want to make a very strong attack on Mr. Nixon. I think I can command the television and newspaper attention for about three days, and maybe we can help deflect this thing." So that's the way it worked out.

M: Did you tell Mr. Johnson that you were going to strongly push Humphrey in the direction of some change on Vietnam?

B: No, I did not. I read him the statement I proposed to make, which announced something about qualities which Mr. Nixon manifestly does not possess, or something which indicated I wasn't going to be an easy fellow to get along with.

M: Why did it take so long to get Humphrey to make a more forthright statement on Vietnam?

B: He was terribly confused. Then he was getting lousy advice. One of the problems that Humphrey had was that he had a lot of really second-rate people around him. It's almost implicit in the job of vice president that he can't get good staff because he really has nothing important to do, and first-rate people aren't going to spend their time with the vice

president. And [inaudible] may have had the same problem, I don't know.

M: And he emerged as a candidate so late.

B: He emerged as a candidate so late that he just went with the people he had with him, which was normal and he's very loyal, more loyal to them than they were to him.

So this was what occurred. I said I had a speech already arranged. "I want to fly out and join you." I flew out and joined him, I think in Seattle. I said, "We've got to get to work on a speech on Vietnam." A draft had been prepared which I thought was hopeless. I flew back to New York because I had a television appearance there on "Face the Nation," or "Meet the Press," or one of those damned things. We wrote it en route and took it back out. In the meantime there had been some other rewriting, and we put all of these things together in what was the Salt Lake City speech. It finally came down to how strong the language would be, and Larry O'Brien put it up to me, and I made the final decision on just what the critical language was.

Then Humphrey said that he would call the President and would I call him right after he had called him. I said, "Yes." Then I got a word from the television station that "the Vice President has not been able to speak to the President, because he has had to do a retake of his television because he didn't like the first take," and would I call President Johnson and tell him.

So I telephoned the President. The operators--of course, I knew the White House operators very well--said, "Mr. Secretary," or Mr. Ambassador, whatever they called me, "the President is talking to Mr. Nixon and as soon as he's off, I'll put you through. And it was half an hour later.

(Laughter)

M: How strong was the President's presence in the Humphrey campaign, as far as holding the line on the policy?

B: He did his best; that was made known down the line when he changed it all. As a matter of fact, the President's reaction to what I said on the passage I read him was, "Now, can't we make it clear that that's no change in policy?" Which was, of course, exactly the opposite of what we were trying to achieve.

M: That's right. Did that seriously hinder? After all, Humphrey did come fairly close.

B: Look, from then on that broke the thing. I mean the combination. I don't know how much my quitting did, although I think it had something to do with it. It was a dramatic event on a forty-eight hour basis, plus this Salt Lake City speech immediately thereafter.

From then on the curve was up. We were down seventeen points on the Harris Poll.

M: Did the President hinder the campaign in any way, or help it in any way?

B: What hindered it was the pulling and hauling over getting to Paris. With a little more flexibility two weeks before the election, then we could have gotten the negotiating talks started.

M: What delayed that?

B: Rigidity at the top of the government, plus a terrible resistance on the part of the Embassy in Saigon.

M: Not a conscious effort on the part of the President to keep it out of the campaign.

B: No, I must say I think that the President's attitude was, one, a great reluctance to appear to have been manipulating the thing so that it broke just before the election, because he wanted to make clear for history that he was not using Vietnam for political reasons.

M: Any subsequent relations during the balance of his term, from the election on to January?

B: I saw him, yes, sure. We went down for a dinner for Dean Rusk, and he delivered a eulogy of me--the President did--and so on.

M: No disruption in your friendship?

B: Never has been. I was down there in Austin the other day and the President couldn't have been nicer. He just wrote me a terribly warm note. I'm very fond of the President. I have great respect for him. I think he is a man of great, great qualities, and it was tragic that the Vietnamese war is the thing that his administration is likely to be known by, because he did magnificent things, and he had a great vision of the United States.

M: Are there any major topics that you'd like to recite on that we haven't managed to at least touch?

B: I think we've covered most of it.

M: The general administration and organization of the State Department we haven't mentioned, but I know you're engaged here in a few minutes. Suppose we do it this way: if at some time when I'm back in town and you're in the country, we might want to continue for one additional tape session and get things like organization and such out of the way.

B: Be glad to.

M: Okay. That way you can get to your appointment on time.

B: Right.

[End of Tape 1 of 1 and Interview II]

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Legal Agreement pertaining to the Oral History interviews of George Ball

In accordance with the provisions of Chapter 21 of Title 44, United States Code, and subject to the terms and conditions hereinafter set forth, I, George Ball of New York, New York do hereby give, donate and convey to the United States of America all my rights, title and interest in the tape recordings and transcripts of the personal interviews conducted on July 8 and July 9, 1971, at New York, New York and prepared for deposit in the Lyndon Baines Johnson Library.

This assignment is subject to the following terms and conditions:

(1) The transcripts shall be available for use by researchers as soon as they have been deposited in the Lyndon Baines Johnson Library.

(2) The tape recordings shall be available to those researchers who have access to the transcript.

(3) I hereby assign to the United States Government all copyright I may have in the interview transcripts and tapes.

(4) Copies of the transcripts and tape recordings may be provided by the Library to researchers upon request.

(5) Copies of the transcripts and tape recordings may be deposited in or loaned to institutions other than the Lyndon Baines Johnson Library.

Signed by George Ball on August 20, 1986

Accepted by Frank G. Burke, Archivist of the United States on September 16, 1986

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