INTERVIEW I

DATE: March 5, 1971

INTERVIEWEE: C. FARRIS BRYANT

INTERVIEWER: JOE B. FRANTZ

PLACE: Mr. Bryant's office in Jacksonville, Florida

Tape 1 of 2

F: Governor, very briefly bring us up in your career to the point at which you emerged as governor.

B: I was born in Ocala, Florida, and I was elected to the legislature in 1942. I resigned to enter the U.S. Navy and came back in 1946. I served five terms in the legislature of Florida, two-year terms.

F: Representing the Ocala area?

B: That is correct. I was speaker of the house in one of those terms, 1953- 54. I ran for governor in 1956 and was defeated. I ran again in 1960 and was successful. In the meantime, I had been to a couple of Democratic national conventions. I was chairman, it seems to me, of the delegation from Florida in 1952. I don't believe I was invited in 1956 because I was involved in the campaign.

F: Had you gotten to know Lyndon Johnson prior to this time?

B: Only to see him as one of the people on the scene. No, I did not know him.

F: Then in 1960, in the summer, you won the Democratic nomination for Florida governor. This was in June, as I recall.

B: That's correct.

F: Then did you go to the convention in 1960?

B: I went to the convention in 1960. I believe that I was the chairman of the delegation, although I'm not sure.

F: Tell me a little bit about the thinking of the Florida delegation as you recall it.

B: We had resolved a number of things. We basically wanted Lyndon Johnson to get the nomination. George Smathers, the then junior senator from Florida, was a good friend of Lyndon Johnson and provided considerable stimulus in that direction. Senator Holland was also a friend of his and pushing in that direction, and the three of us worked very well together. In fact, the entire delegation worked well together in that respect. There was some breakdown in Florida unanimity because on the lower east coast there were more liberal viewpoints, or what seemed at the time more liberal viewpoints. I'm trying to think who the other contenders were.

F: There were primarily Stuart Symington and John F. Kennedy, and some believed that Adlai Stevenson might come back for kind of a run on it, and Hubert Humphrey.

B: I don't recall much strength for Senator Symington, although I remember being with him in Orlando during his circuit of the nation. I think that we were all scared to death of Hubert Humphrey, who was the Young Turk of the time. John F. Kennedy, we didn't really think at that time that he was qualified to be president. His senatorial record had not been distinguished. We had not been exposed, really,

to his personality very much. Senator Kennedy had been down to Florida to speak at a Blue Key banquet and charmed a lot of people, but he had never really made an impact. So out of the delegation, if there were thirty in the delegation twenty-six of them would have been Lyndon Johnson people.

F: Did Florida have the unit rule, or could you split the vote?

B: We split the vote.

F: Did you have much hope that you could get a nomination?

B: That's a battle that we fought, from the southern states, convention after convention. We hoped that because of Lyndon Johnson's national posture, and because of what we assumed was his strength with senators, with their delegations, that there would be a chance for that, yes.

F: After Kennedy was nominated, did you or your delegation have any intimations in advance that Johnson might be offered and might accept the vice presidential nomination?

B: Senator Johnson had met with a number of others, I can't remember the circumstances, and assured us that he did not want to be vice president. As a matter of fact he had done this, I don't remember where or when, before the convention [said] that he did not want to be vice president, and as I remember it, would not accept the vice presidency if it was tendered. So after the nomination of Senator Kennedy I received an invitation to be at some suite somewhere, an invitation that came from Senator Johnson's office or in his name. My wife and I went to that place and joined I suppose twenty, thirty,

forty other people in the suite, watching a television set among other things. No, that's not correct. In the suite we were talking about what was going to be done, rumors floating, who we were going to support and so on and so forth.

If my memory serves me, at eight o'clock, or just at the turn of the hour, whatever it was, Senator Johnson walked into the suite. [He] walked directly to the television set, I think without greeting anyone, or certainly without any conversation, turned it on and focused on the set. It warmed up, and then very briefly Senator Kennedy appeared, or a news commentator. But the impact of it was that Senator Kennedy had invited Senator Johnson to be his vice presidential nominee and Senator Johnson had accepted. I was pretty upset.

F: Did that seem to be a general reaction through the room, or was it mixed?

B: I'm sure it was mixed. I was disappointed, and Mrs. Bryant and I shortly left the room.

F: Did you then come on back home?

B: Oh, no, I stayed for the rest of the convention.

F: Just sort of went through the motions?

B: Went through the motions. After all, the issue was then moot.

F: Did you consider in 1960 leading a revolt against the ticket?

B: Oh, no. We had a real problem in Florida. Senator Kennedy, the liberal Democratic wing, was very unpopular in a general election. In the Democratic primary--

F: Of course, you were up for office, too.

B: I'm up for office.

F: With the ticket.

B: We had just run in that year with a platform, run for governor with a platform. It was a conservative platform. Then you come along and come back from a convention with a liberal platform at the national level, and you're caught between your commitment in May and the May primaries to your own platform, and your presumed commitment to the national party, of which you're a member, and to its candidates. At this point the cabinet of Florida, which is elective, and most of the congressional delegation decided to leave the national party as it were, and really--I don't mean formally but in effect--that's a matter of survival. You simply can't carry the national party, or you couldn't at that time, and be elected. So there was great dissidence.

I went up to Washington and had one of the most interesting interviews or meetings of my life in one of the small rooms that Senator Kennedy was using, at which there was in attendance Senator Kennedy, Senator Johnson, I think Senator Smathers, perhaps Senator Holland, and myself. Senator Johnson was beseeching us, perhaps that word is too strong, persuading, and Senator Kennedy was soliciting our support for the ticket. I finally came out with the proposition that, "If you will let us support you and disavow your platform, I'll try to get the Florida group back in the fold." And on that pragmatic basis we reached an understanding. I have always been flattered by the fact that I made at that time I guess what was probably a fairly

F: Tell me a little bit about that campaign and how it went, that part of the campaign.

B: Senator Johnson was well received. Having made the decision to go, we went.

F: Was there any advice sent up to Washington that maybe Senator Johnson would be more effective in Florida than Senator Kennedy?

B: I can't recall that, but I'm sure it was. I'm quite sure.

F: That word filtered anyway.

B: I'm quite sure that we conveyed the information, and I'm sure that's why Senator Kennedy in good part had him on the ticket. The strength was in these areas, and so Senator Johnson came and did make a very effective campaign.

I remember one instance, if I may just interject here because you may have missed it somewhere along, the southern governors were pretty upset with the ticket. So a number of us were invited to Governor Buford Ellington's home in Tennessee, and Senator Johnson met us there. The governors over there are pretty strong-minded people, and some of them by today's views pretty hard-nosed about their conservatism. Senator Johnson I recall being in a side porch room of the Governor's home, and the governors seated around in a circle. Senator Johnson, in the way that I now know he's so effective at, sat them down and with his long finger and his penetrating voice went down the line, relating his campaign and Senator Kennedy's campaign to the welfare of each of these governors and of their states, persuading them almost in a body to abandon their up to that time somewhat

impassioned statement of principle, as I understood it, [of] why I could not support the Democratic Party platform. I say I had been flattered because when I went back in 1966 to talk with President Johnson, when he was considering appointing me as the director of the Office of Emergency Planning, he virtually quoted my statement at that time. So I say I probably was fairly impassioned at that time, and he probably remembered it because of that.

F: It had some impact on him.

B: But I came home and got with the cabinet. We got in a small plane and came back to Washington and met again, I believe, with both of those senators, and we sealed the pact, as it were: "We'll be with you personally, but we won't be with your platform." We ran the campaign in that bifurcated sort of way.

F: Senator Holland fell in line with this?

B: Yes. Now, Senator Holland was at that time a very highly respected senator. He totally sympathized with what we were doing, although he had less difficulty supporting Senator Johnson and Senator Kennedy than the rest of us did under the circumstances.

F: [He was] also a fellow senator, too, which would have given him a little different vantage point.

B: That gave him a little different perspective, yes, that's correct.

F: I know the fact on this, but I'm asking questions in some cases just to let you do the talking. Senator Johnson came into Florida to campaign, and you and Senator Holland stumped the state with him.

B: That's right.

recalcitrant position and join in the campaign as much as could be. He did a very effective job of it. Well, all over Florida he had fairly much that result where he was able to confront people.

F: Did he primarily focus on getting the Florida regional leaders, or was he working on the broader public? In other words, was he letting the people who know Florida and who have significance in Florida sort of carry the ball for him?

B: I can't recall right now. I can't recall how that was done. I could go back in old files, but I don't have that.

F: What effect do you think this Kennedy-Johnson ticket had? You got elected, of course, but what effect do you think it had on your election? Do you think it helped or hindered?

B: Oh no, the national ticket always weakens you in November. I got elected, as you say, but an unknown Republican got 500,000 votes, and he got them because of a disaffection on the part of the people.

F: Just a general anti-national party votes?

B: That's correct. Some people even today, if you associate with President Johnson or those other liberals, you're stamped.

F: Florida in a sense has a schizoid political personality, doesn't it? That is, it's divided between north and south to some extent.

B: Yes, it is. It's geographically generally divided that way.

F: The farther south you go the less southern it is.

B: Yes, to a considerable degree. Although in many areas of Florida further south Republicans who are not southern are the dominant force,

in Orlando for instance, Orange County. I didn't carry that in the general election of 1960. It's fairly far north, but it's dominated by Republicans.

F: I have a cousin from Illinois that lives in Orlando, and he equates all Democrats with original sin. I can't think of any kind of Democrat he'd ever vote for.

B: Miami-Dade County, however, is always a good Democratic community, although it's the southernmost of the large counties.

F: One question, because I don't want to be repetitious, has anyone from the Kennedy project, which is similar to this, interviewed you?

B: No.

F: All right, then I'm going to ask you some questions on the intervening years to fill in the gaps. Almost immediately you are confronted with the problem of Cuban refugees, which is both a state problem and a city problem, and also, for that matter, a federal problem. I'd like for you to sort of go over that a little bit on how you handled that, because I think on the whole Florida did it quite gracefully.

B: First of all, we recognized it had to be handled. I thought it was a federal problem. I made the point with President Kennedy and with Secretary Ribicoff of HEW that the influx of Cuban refugees was a failure of federal policy, not of state policy. They flooded our schools. It was more than numbers; they had a different culture and a different language, and yet we had to provide for them. The federal government took the position that, "Well, we're going to help the

state handle this problem."

F: Was their help primarily to be financial?

B: Yes.

F: No services as such?

B: No. They took what I thought was a very narrow view of the problem. For instance, they said, "We won't give you any capital outlay money for school buildings because they won't be here very long. And therefore--"

F: What did they think, they were going back to Cuba?

B: Well--

F: They didn't indicate?

B: This was a temporary problem, and "You may have to have temporary buildings, or you may have to double classes temporarily, but you're certainly not going to build buildings for these people." So they didn't give us any capital outlay. Then they said, "We'll give you," I think, "50 per cent of the cost." But they figured the cost, and they figured on a very narrow basis. Of course, each of these students was actually more expensive than one who was a native of the United States because of their different problems that I mentioned a moment ago. But the people of Miami, the people of Florida, felt very deeply about the Cuban situation and really welcomed these people. I think really one of the bright stars in the crown of Florida is the fact that we did accept these people.

The federal government then enlisted in some degree to help us secure relocation for the Cuban people. The National Governors

Conference, and the governors individually, were very willing to help. The trouble is you'd move Cubans, if they were willing to be moved, but they'd come back. You'd give them transportation somewhere and give them a stake somewhere, and after a little while they'd show up in Miami again.

F: This was next door to home, and that's where they wanted to be.

B: It's where other Cubans were. It's where there was a Spanish language. They were home, as near as could be. They were still thinking in those years of going back home pretty soon, so they wanted to be in Miami. And they came back to Miami. The welfare people set up their special offices to help them, and I think they did an excellent job. It caused a great deal of problem with our own people, though, who were out of jobs, because the Cubans were able to work very effectively and more economically. Here you've given all these special monies to Cubans and not taken care of similar problems of natives. It caused a real psychological problem, emotional problem. I think the Negro people in Miami and surrounding areas who were being booted out of their hotel and service jobs by Cubans, who were frequently a little bit better adapted to those tasks, really conducted themselves very well. I think under similar circumstances they might have been forgiven for a pretty violent reaction. But it was very good.

I did not feel that the federal government met its obligation to us. I felt that this was a problem that they had created by a failure in foreign policy; that they had opened the doors of this

country, not of this state, and that therefore if they imposed upon the state special burdens of welfare, of education, of housing, of hospital, of police, that it was a national problem, not a Florida problem. But Florida stood that burden in good part.

F: Did you get involved at all--you couldn't have been entirely unknowing about [it]--[in] the build-up for the Bay of Pigs fiasco?

B: I knew a good deal about it, of course, because we had to be sure that our own police forces and our own transportation facilities and so forth were available if possible for them. My closest identification with it came when the President came down on the eve of the missile threat, and I went up to join him somewhere in Georgia. I'm shifting subjects a little bit, but I relate the two things in my own mind pretty much.

F: Let's talk about that as long as we're on it. Florida in one sense was sort of a staging area for this missile confrontation, was it not, because of the location?

B: Indeed it was.

F: What were they doing, pouring things in from all over the United States?

B: It was popularly said if they sent any more down here the southern tip would go under.

F: Florida couldn't support the weight?

B: Literally, they had this place inundated. I went with President Kennedy when he flew into Homestead and then on down to Key West.

F: This must have made considerable problems for you.

B: Now, are we speaking of the missile problem or the Bay of Pigs problem?

F: Right now, I was on the missile. I suppose both of them, really, but the missile.

B: Well, there was no problem other than a simple operational problem. I was not of a divided mind. I don't think the people of Florida were of a divided mind. In both cases we wanted the operation to be successful. In the case of the missile problem I thought, and I had the temerity--and really it was temerity because of course I didn't have the background, but I was pretty close to the problem--to advise the President that although what he had to do at that time was very difficult, that I thought it would in the long run prove easier than not doing what he had to do as I foresaw it. I did not feel that he should back down from his demands. I felt that those were not inappropriate. He had the muscle, and when you've got the muscle is the time to move, in my judgment.

F: Did the average Florida citizen, and I know this is subjective, but was he feeling that he'd kind of been caught on the point of a historical spear here, that he might really be into things? Was he nervous?

B: To some degree, yes. I recall the instance of one judge in a minor judicial post in lower Florida who packed up his family and went to Oklahoma, or something of the sort. I'm sure that was, at least, not typical, but symbolic of the tension that did exist in many people's minds who didn't react in that way. But while there was a

feeling that we were on the point of a spear, I don't think there was any significant fear that the spear should not be used.

F: Does the long time Floridian sort of look on Cuba as as much his cousin as he does, say, the Georgian or Alabaman?

B: Oh, no.

F: He doesn't feel kind of a neighborly responsibility?

B: Well, yes, a very neighborly situation. But after all, you know, Georgia is--

F: You don't have to cross ninety miles of water to get to Georgia, that would make some difference.

B: Not only that, but you know, what is the old saying about--just an old feeling that Georgians pretty well dominated Florida politics and influenced Florida life for many, many years. The place is full of them. Senator Talmadge had a joke that I enjoyed on television; you've probably heard it applied to other states. They asked him what he felt about so many Georgians moving to Florida, and he said, "Well, I think it improves the IQ of both states." But we have a very friendly relation, and a personal relation, with Georgia. We don't have that with Cuba because of the difference in language and culture. But nevertheless [there is] a very neighborly feeling. We are interested and concerned.

F: Going back to the Bay of Pigs. Part of the effectiveness, if it's going to be effective, is to make this a surprise to the Castro government. Was it sort of an open secret in Florida that something was building up here?

B: I think so. I don't think there was any, so far as I know, great surprise. Nobody knew exactly what was going to happen.

F: They just knew something was going on and Cuba probably was involved?

B: That's correct. Cuba was involved. There was a general feeling of that.

F: This is a national enterprise in which Florida happens to be on the geographical spot, but did the federal government touch the proper bases as far as the rights and responsibilities to the state of Florida were concerned, or did they just move in?

B: I cannot answer you that from memory other than to say that I have no recollection of being bypassed.

F: You were kept informed?

B: I must have been, because I have no feeling that bases were not touched.

F: Along this line, during 1961 you signed a bill requiring high schools to teach "Evils and Dangers of Communism," and Florida sort of led the way in this. Did you ever have any sort of relationship with HEW on this? Did they show approval, disapproval, or unconcern?

B: No, we never thought it was any of their business.

F: This was a Florida [decision].

B: The effort was to see to it that schoolteachers by and large understood the nature of communism. We called it a cold war battle, and we had a number of cold war conferences into which we would call as many of the teachers as would come.

F: Did you have much relationship with Vice President Johnson during

this period?

B: Some, not a great deal. I was the host of the National Governors Conference meeting of 1963 in Miami. President Kennedy, as are all the presidents, was invited, and as in almost every instance at the last sent word that he couldn't be there. But he sent Vice President Johnson. So he came down at that time and was at the conference briefly, met with the governors.

F: Did you have the feeling as you went into 1963 that Florida could be held on a national basis in the Democratic camp, or did you have a feeling it was getting away from the party?

B: In 1963 I would say that it was probably a little worse than 1960, because I think the changes that had been hoped for with Vice President Johnson's presence on the national administrative scene had not occurred. Vice President Johnson, of course, had made a number of moves I can't enumerate right now to place himself in a much more liberal posture on racial matters.

F: He was particularly in charge of the equal opportunity procedures.

B: That's correct. So we felt pretty disenfranchised in Florida. It was pretty hard to go back to the public.

F: You were chosen in that summer of 1963 to be the next chairman of the Southern Governors Conference.

B: That's right.

F: How much clout does that position carry?

B: Not any.

F: It's honorific?

B: Yes, it really is.

F: Can you set the agenda to a certain extent, or control it?

B: Oh, yes. Yes, you can, but you must remember that--

F: You're dealing with some pretty independent minded people.

B: After all, the Southern Governors [Conference], or the National Governors Conference, has no policy power. As a matter of fact, if it wasn't for the press there demanding that we take stands on things that we really don't have anything to do with, those issues wouldn't come up. We'd be talking about revenue sharing, about welfare problems, school problems.

F: How you're going to handle your legislature?

B: Yes. Problems that are really indigenous to being a governor. But the presence of a couple of national candidates and of the national press in the public image warps the conference into something it really isn't at all.

F: It was understood that when President Kennedy and Vice President Johnson went to Texas and President Kennedy was murdered, that if he hadn't been they were coming on here?

B: They had just been here.

F: They had just been here, that's right.

B: President Kennedy was down here, and I'd spent a couple of days with him.

F: Was that to repair fences mainly?

B: You know every state is looking for the president, trying to get him into the state, and it was largely political. We appeared,

it seems to me the best I remember, in two places, Miami and Tampa.

F: You didn't have the Texas problem so much, though, of a party that was splitting down the middle as you did to keep the Republicans off the Democratic backs here.

B: That really was the problem. A majority of Democrats clearly would stay with the national party, but when you took the disaffected conservatives in the Democratic Party and added them to the Republicans, that's when you begin to have trouble. Our effort was to keep them as closely as possible, by personal contact where we could, in the party.

F: Did President Kennedy on the occasion of those visits seem pretty optimistic and confident?

B: Yes. By that time I had been with him on enough occasions that I had really become very fond of him. I never reached the conclusion that he was a great president.

F: He must have been personally very winning.

B: But he was a very charming, personable fellow, and he had done a lot for Florida. He had promoted the Barge Canal, which at that time was very popular and in which I was very much interested; we had Interama under way; he had his home in Palm Beach; he had established a lot of friends.

F: A semi-native son.

B: That's right. So that I had become really quite fond of him.

F: Did he give any intimation, as you can recall, that he was concerned about the Texas situation?

B: I don't recall any at all, and that was just in a few days. The only thing I can remember in that connection was that we had been in Tampa, and we had had a good crowd at the political gathering which we attended. We were leaving there, I guess it was, and we were in the President's car and were driving along the streets. The streets were not greatly lined with people; as a matter of fact, I'm quite sure that President Kennedy must have been somewhat disappointed at the turn-out. The Secret Service was concerned generally, I guess they always are, [and] they were moving the car much too fast for political purposes.

F: If you batted your eye the President was past.

B: Right. And the President said, "Slow this thing down. We're not afraid of anyone."

Now, where was I at the moment? I was in some sort of gathering when the word came that the President [had been shot].

F: It would have been about one-thirty.

B: I was at a meeting somewhere.

F: Probably some kind of luncheon meeting.

B: At a luncheon meeting. The word came through, and I got up and led in an impromptu prayer. We thought both John Connally and the President had been killed. As a matter of fact, the first word was that John Connally had been killed, and I got up and led a rather large group [in prayer].

F: Well, we can establish that place. Do you recall the events of the remainder of the afternoon as far as you're concerned?

B: Goodness, if I could just place that original situation where I was. No. We, of course, stayed glued to the media. I recall that the emotional impact was just beyond belief. Just one instance: a person that was close to me--I won't mention the name--who was not in politics at all, left his job, got in a car, started out driving, and ended up in Louisiana, Mississippi, spent a couple of weeks out there.

F: Just sort of moving blindly?

B: Yes, and then came back home. Now that was unusual, but the emotional impact of the death of the President under those circumstances was just beyond believing. It wiped out all American differences as far as I could see. I really feel, I felt at the time, that if this person who killed President Kennedy had been a conservative the country would have been torn apart.

F: Yes, I think so.

B: I think it would have been.

F: I think if you had chosen an assassin from the standpoint of the nation, probably you chose the man with the right leanings.

B: If he hadn't been of that philosophical bent--

F: I think they would have razed Dallas.

B: There's no doubt about it, no doubt about it. It would have torn this nation apart.

F: Did you go up to the funeral?

B: Yes, I did. In my home I have the brass cartridge that was fired in Florida's name at the funeral of the President. Yes, I was there.

F: Did you get to see the new President?

B: On that occasion, I did, yes.

F: Do you recall anything about the meeting? Where was it, at the Executive Office Building, or over at the Senate?

B: I really can't recall the circumstances of that occasion. I'd have to look back in scrapbooks, but I don't recall.

F: You didn't have any doubt, though, that he was in command of the ship at the time?

B: Never. I had a lot of differences with President Johnson, [but] I always thought he was one of the most powerful individuals I ever knew, entirely aside from any office that he held.

F: Before we move on to the presidency of Lyndon Johnson, during those many visits of President Kennedy to Florida and your relationship with him, did you have any opportunity to observe his relationship with his vice president?

B: I never saw anything to indicate that it was not good. I never heard President Kennedy say anything that would indicate it was not good. I will not say that I ever observed any great warmth, personal. There was never any buddy-buddy. They were never the poker playing type buddies, but I never observed any word or deed on the part of President Kennedy that didn't indicate a respect for Vice President Johnson. I might add at that point that I never heard President Johnson, or Vice President Johnson after he accepted the nomination, say anything that was not highly commendatory of Senator Kennedy. Now, prior to that time, I had heard. You've probably got plenty of records of

instances where they were very much opposed.

F: But once they teamed up, then they made a team?

B: I never saw anything to indicate they did not. After President Kennedy's death and President Johnson's problems, family problems, I never heard him say anything about Mrs. Kennedy or the President that was not commendatory.

F: Do you get a feeling that some of this Kennedy versus Johnson schism that in a sense haunted President Johnson's administration was the work of the adherents at the lower echelons, rather than anything at the top?

B: No question about it. It was the infighting, and I think largely on the part of the Kennedy people. They never really thought of President Johnson as being worthy to fill the shoes of President Kennedy, and they really were a government in exile. This uncouth westerner, as they viewed him, had no business being there. I always felt that they did a great disservice to the nation in that regard.

F: President Johnson made several moves under the impact of the time. One of them that, frankly, I've questioned was changing the name of Canaveral to Cape Kennedy. I judge that while nationally and internationally that was hailed as a tribute, that locally it didn't sit too well.

B: That's an understatement. President Johnson called me, and this was very shortly after the death of President Kennedy.

F: He announced the change in early December.

B: Well, he called me before that, and it was at nighttime. He said,

I don't remember what he called me at that time, Farris or whatever, "Mrs. Kennedy," or words to that effect, "has expressed the hope that Cape Canaveral, which President Kennedy put so much into and so on and so forth, could be designated after him. How do you feel? Would you have any objection to that?" My response was immediate and affirmative that I would not. I have never been a great one for symbols. I know to most people in Florida the name Cape Canaveral--somehow they attach a lot of significance to that.

F: It has a ring to it, I think, a rhythm.

B: That's correct. They felt very deeply that it should not have been done. Senator Holland approved of it, I approved of it, I assume Senator Smathers did, and it was done. I was unprepared for the public reaction.

F: The people at Canaveral just never paid any attention to it, really, did they? I mean, hadn't it been a sort of Cape Kennedy in the press and locally it remained Canaveral?

B: I think that's largely true. I always felt about it that I don't believe the President had the authority to do what he did. I don't know whether that's true or not, I never researched it, but it was my feeling that the president of the United States can't just enter an order and change a name. So I always felt like if you wanted to go on calling it Cape Canaveral, call it that, you know. Why get stirred up about it? But people did get stirred up about it.

F: Beginning in the spring of 1964, you had several problems that involved more than Florida, or more than Florida interests, certainly. One was Florida railroad trouble with your dynamite blasts and your strike of the non-operating workers. Did that involve the state-federal relations very deeply?

B: No. Now, let me think who was secretary of labor at that time.

F: Let's see, I guess Wirtz had become by then.

B: It was Wirtz?

F: Yes.

B: The only differences that I had, the only real contact I had as I recall with the federal government in connection with that was Secretary Wirtz had a very strong feeling that Mr. Ball, who was the moving force in the Florida East Coast Railroad, really should give in and settle this strike and that I should see to it that this thing was resolved on the basis of a settlement of the strike. I took the attitude then that it was not my job to settle the strike; it was my job to preserve peace, law and order. I would do everything that I could to see to it that there were not violence either way, but the settlement of the strike was not my affair. That's the course that I pursued. Secretary Wirtz was very unhappy with it. I think Mr. Ball was kind of unhappy with it. I don't believe it satisfied anybody as far as that's concerned, but I thought that was what my job was.

F: Because you have so much here in the way of federal defense installations, and of course Cape Canaveral and all of its missile operations,

does practically any sort of local dispute tend to bring on federal concern for fear it may affect the missile test range or something like that? In other words, are you more exposed than most states?

B: I don't think so. You see, after all, the missile range is pretty well isolated. Eglin, which is a huge base, is pretty well isolated.

F: You kept them away from the population centers?

B: Yes. Now, you've got Homestead, and you've got some other significant places that are more in population centers and more vulnerable to that extent, but by and large I have never been conscious of any fear that our federal installations would be adversely affected by local disputes. No.

F: Beginning in March, 1964, and continuing off and on through April, you have race problems here in Jacksonville and also in St. Augustine, including Governor Peabody's mother.

B: Yes.

F: Who at least got you some publicity, whether you wanted it or not.

B: We had two experiences that stand out in my mind. One was the freedom riders. They had come down the coast, came to Jacksonville and were coming across to Tallahassee. I had devised a plan which I called "massive isolation." Feelings were very high at that time, as you recall. I believed then and believe now that these people were looking for confrontations, which was the way that they could keep on the national headlines. That was the way to serve their purposes. Their plans were well known, that they were going to get on the bus and come across. So I got in touch with the mayors

of the little towns across the state and with the managers of the bus stations and with the highway patrol and the local sheriffs and so forth, and we devised a plan whereby we just kept local people out of their way. They were coming in on a bus, they were going out on a bus. They came in, and there was nobody there to bother them and nobody to scrap with or confront them, so they got on the bus and went on to the next town. They got to Tallahassee and no problems, and I was just jumping for joy, as it were. In the meantime, it seems to me that--was Bob Kennedy still attorney general?

F: Yes.

B: He had been in touch with me several times, concerned about these people, and I had assured him that we were going to maintain law and order in Florida. They were going to be allowed to do whatever they had a right to do, and whatever they didn't have a right to do they weren't going to be allowed to do, and that was it. So I was pleased. He kept calling. They would call him in some respect or call the Department of Justice, and then a call would come back to me. I'm not sure they would call him, but anyway a message would come back, something to be done in this connection. So then they got to the airport in Tallahassee and were to take a flight out, and the city council of Tallahassee couldn't stand it any more. Everything was peaceful, the same policy we'd followed all across the state had worked, but they decided at the last minute they had to close that restaurant. Of course that was all this group wanted. The fat

was in the fire. So they sat down: "We're going to be served." This went on, I can't remember, two or three days. In the meantime I preserved peace. I think we reopened the restaurant; I think everything was re-established.

F: There's not much you can do about these local intrusions.

B: No, but they were more belligerent all the time. Finally I told the Attorney General, "I've taken care of these people now as long as I'm going to. This is your job. You've been sponsoring this situation. Now, you get them out of here. We've had enough, and I'm not going to be responsible if you don't." "Well," he said, "where can I get in touch with them by telephone?" I gave him a pay phone number out at the airport. I don't know whether he called them or not, but they were called, and they got on a plane and they went out. That was the way that was done.

F: Did you get the feeling to a great extent this freedom rider gambit was being run out of the Justice Department?

B: I wouldn't think that would be true. I think the situation was that these people were doing it on their own and really sort of had the Justice Department by the tail. They were demanding their rights and demanding that the Attorney General preserve their rights, and they were putting him in embarrassing positions. He wasn't happy with the situation.

F: He was going to lose somewhere on this.

B: That's right. But there was a limit to what he could do, too, you know. But I felt that I had done a good job across Florida, and it

was time for him now to step in and do something.

F: Did the federal government put any pressure on you, or for that matter the state of Massachusetts, when you had the St. Augustine affair?

B: Well, of course you're speaking largely of Mrs. Peabody.

F: Yes.

B: Nobody put any pressure on me about that. Mrs. Peabody was an elderly lady, a zealot, down to make her point. I had forces in St. Augustine, but I took the position that I couldn't run somebody's restaurant. At that time the civil rights law had not been adopted. I could persuade, but I couldn't tell a fellow how he had to run his restaurant. They were complaining about these people sitting in there, and particularly Mrs. Peabody. She incensed everybody. I said, "Fine, just lock her up in there. If she wants to go in and sit down in a restaurant and closing time comes, close up. You can close your restaurant whenever you want to; it's your restaurant. If she wants to sit in there, let her sit. Lock her up. Don't put her in jail. That's what she wants." But they couldn't take the advice. They just had to arrest those people, and the fat was in the fire. If they'd done what I asked them to do, why they'd have just locked her up in the restaurant and let her sit there until she was ready to go home.

F: When you're dealing with two groups that are kind of incendiary, in a sense, it's just difficult to keep both of them quiet. One of them

is always going to break the traces.

B: Especially when you don't have any legal position to sustain. Now, everybody was giving me advice of things that I ought to do. They were fine if you are just sitting around your fireplace and say, "I think they ought to do so-and-so." But the governor has to work within the constitutional limitations.

F: Incidentally, did Governor Peabody get in touch with you personally about his mother?

B: I believe he did. I'm sure he did.

F: But it never got heated.

B: Oh, no, on the contrary.

F: You came to know him fairly well in Washington later?

B: Oh, yes. On the contrary, he was embarrassed. He had tried to persuade his mother not to do this, but she came. I told him I would do what I could. I would guarantee that she wouldn't be hurt, and I would do what I could to see that she was not put in jail.

F: Did you personally deal with Martin Luther King during all of this?

B: No, I stayed at least--

F: He was dead before I started on this project, so I never [talked to him].

B: No, I stayed at least one person away from him. I never talked with him by telephone or otherwise.

F: That's sort of to maintain your own detachment and freedom of action?

B: That's correct. I didn't want to be in a position of negotiating with Martin Luther King. He was a private citizen. He had the

rights of other private citizens and the responsibilities of others. I didn't feel that I should be in a position of negotiating with him, and I never was. As a matter of fact, most of the approaches from Martin Luther King came through Hosea Williams to somebody on my staff, to me. It would be worked in that way. I was real proud of what we did in St. Augustine. I lost all my friends in St. Augustine.

F: Including the mayor, I gather.

B: Yes. But when you look at the violence that has existed--

F: How did you cool it? Because it had all the potentialities.

B: I took the position that everybody could do what he had a right to do, and nobody could do what he didn't have a right to do. I was going to put all the forces in there necessary to achieve that. If they want to march, they could march, but only in a manner consistent with public safety. If they wanted to swim, they had a right to swim. And if I had to put troopers out in the water--which I did in full uniform--to preserve it, they could do it. On the other hand, if the Ku Klux Klan wanted to march, they had a right to march, and I let them do. Nobody was to bust any windows; nobody was to hit other people.

One of the interesting things occurred at the moment of greatest crisis. The civil rights groups would start at a church and march uptown. The streets of St. Augustine are narrow. In the daytime you could protect them; in the nighttime you could not in those narrow streets. So the sheriff over there had imposed a curfew. I don't know what his motives were, or what his power was as far as that's

concerned. In any event, the federal judge entered an order that Sheriff Davis' curfew had to be lifted, and it was. The civil rights group notified us, because I had established an emergency situation there under emergency powers given to me by the legislature, sort of a semi-martial law as a matter of fact, [and] they said, "We're going to march from A to B at a certain time. We want protection, of course." The time was at night. I said, "No, you may not do that. I cannot protect you at nighttime in these narrow streets. Let me know when you want to march in the daytime, great, you can do it. But at nighttime I cannot preserve law and order under those circumstances, and you may not march."

They went to court. I met the other day with one of the attorneys who was a civil rights attorney at that time. They sought an order for me to show cause why I should not be held in contempt for violating the judge's order. The judge issued the order to show cause. I did not go to the hearing. I did send the attorney general. But I made my position very clear to the judge privately and publicly: that I was governor of Florida; that I was convinced that I could not preserve peace and order at nighttime under those conditions if they were allowed to march; that if he was governor of Florida he could take over the job, but I was not going to withdraw my order under any circumstances, whether I went to jail or not. If he wanted to put me in jail he had the power to do that, I felt sure, not the right but the power to do that. I wasn't going to resist the federal troops, but I was going to be governor of Florida until my term ran

out, and I wasn't going to let him be. He fortunately backed down. They did not hold me in contempt.

Later on, just an interesting sequel for history, I think--Bryan Simpson was the judge, now on the circuit court of appeals. He has been my friend for all of my lifetime. I respected him highly, and he respected me. But we came to a head-on at that point. I was ready to go to jail, and he was ready to put me there, or almost ready. I guess he never quite got there. But later on after I was no longer governor, I think I was in Washington, I was home on a weekend. I walked in a restaurant at noon and the judge, whom I had not really seen personally, was sitting at a table by himself. He said, "Come and sit down." I sat down, and we visited together. I enjoyed the visit, and in the course of the conversation, he said, "Well, you know, Florida has been the luckiest of all the states in its racial climate, and most of the credit belongs to you." And I thought as a sequel to almost going to jail for maintaining law and order, that was good.

F: Yes, he was the right man to say it to you, wasn't he?

B: He really was.

F: Did President Johnson ever contact you during these somewhat harried days, personally?

B: No.

F: Your relations were almost entirely with the Justice Department?

B: That's correct.

F: Now, that brings us, I think, to something else, and that's politics

again in 1964 and Johnson's running. We'll let this tape run out and you can take a break and rest yourself.

Tape 2 of 2, Side 1

F: Let's talk politics, Governor. It's 1964, and Johnson is facing the end of his term. Was there ever any question in your mind that the Florida delegation would support LBJ?

B: No. There was a question of whether Florida would vote for him.

F: Yes.

B: But there was no question that the delegation would support him.

F: You headed the delegation?

B: I believe I was [choirman].

F: That was the one in Atlantic City.

B: I'm not sure whether I was chairman of it or not. I probably was, but I don't know.

F: Well, you were.

B: All right.

F: Tell me what you recall about the sort of maneuvering before the convention and at the convention. Did you have any idea or were you pretty sure it was going to be Hubert Humphrey to go with him?

B: My two impressions that I retain largely of that: one is the experience of these demonstrators outside, which was somewhat new at that time.

F: You didn't know it was going to be a way of life, did you?

B: No. we thought it was a convention experience. I think generally we were pretty much in favor of using strong measures to take care of that situation.

The other was somewhat of an irritation with the President that he would not say who his vice presidential nominee was--the business of Senator Dodd and various other things. We all knew that the President had already made up his mind, or we felt that way, and we thought he ought to go ahead and say so and let's get the thing done.

F: Yes, go ahead and be straightforward about it.

B: Yes.

F: You met with the other southern governors at the convention.

B: I'm sure so.

F: You must have known that Governors Faubus and Wallace and Johnson were going to back Goldwater.

B: No, I didn't know that. I don't recall that I did.

F: Were you ever in doubt that you would not stay with the Democratic Party?

B: No.

F: Before the convention, were you ever in doubt that Johnson would let himself be put up for nomination?

B: No. I don't think I had any doubt about that.

F: Shortly after the convention, in the beginning of September, you had one of those periodic hurricanes. This is Dora. This brings you

again into a relationship with the federal administration, because you've got a real emergency on your hands. Tell me how you work out that sort of thing, what happens.

B: Well, I was dealing with the Office of Emergency Planning, even though I had no relationship with it. Ed McDermott at that time was head of the office. He was a Kennedy appointee. Of course when this thing occurred, working through our local civil defense people, I think Colonel Tarkington [?] was our local man, I explored all the avenues of assistance, and a principal one was the national one. It was felt that the best way to get a proper focus on our problem was to have the President here, and since the election was coming up--I guess it was coming up, or had it already occurred at that time?

F: No, this was in September, and it was coming in November.

B: We felt that if we could get the President down here it would be the best way of getting the most money, and that's what we tried to do. So the President did come down, and we toured around this area and showed him the various damaged places. He went back on his way, and there was a declaration of a disaster and we got federal funds to some extent.

F: Do those funds feed in through the governor's office? How do they get dispensed?

B: Largely the funds we had [were] through the Corps of Engineers.

F: They come in and rebuild?

B: That's correct. No money is disbursed. Actually, the money at

that time under the law was limited to the reconstruction of public facilities. So it's a very limited kind of assistance, emergency assistance where you have to feed people, in which case Red Cross and so forth are involved, and the Department of Agriculture and whatnot.

F: Now, you've got a problem again over here at Canaveral, in that you've got some awfully delicate and expensive and massive pieces of machinery that have to be protected and even moved. I presume this is entirely handled by NASA.

B: Entirely.

F: Do you have to do anything toward making highways available?

B: We did at the initiation of the Kennedy project, we did have to, and did. We spent an awful lot of money over there, and sought and secured federal money to assist us in doing that.

F: Late in the campaign, in fact on October 27, President Johnson came down here and stumped Florida again with you. Does that stand out, anything particular in that?

B: I was looking at a picture--no, that was a 1960 picture. The thing that stands out about that--

F: Tell us about this 1960 picture as long as we've brought it up.

B: I was just looking at a picture. I'm sorry, it was really a Kennedy picture.

The thing that I recall was the experience I had, which was unusual for me, of a President pressing the flesh, as it were, how he was exhausted. Jack Valenti, it seems to me, and others of his

aides were in the car. We were packed in about nine in the limousine. The President was tired and he was irritable, but he would stop that car and get out, the Secret Service men to the contrary notwithstanding, and go along. He seemed to draw some great source of energy from greeting these people. He would do it ad infinitum. Every time there was a good group together he'd stop the car and go over and press the flesh.

F: Are you the type of person who worries about a schedule?

B: Yes.

F: The President must have given you lots of concern on this.

B: No, I didn't worry. I worry about my keeping the schedule. I don't like to be late, or to be early, but that was his problem. I wasn't concerned about that. But that's the main thing that I remember about [that trip].

F: Was he received rather well?

B: Yes, he was, especially in Miami. He did a good job.

F: How did you happen to get into the emergency planning office? How did that come about?

B: If I may reconstruct, Buford Ellington was the director; he was tired of it. He had told the President he was leaving. As a matter of fact, he left. He was somewhat ill, and he went down to Hollywood and was in a hotel there.

F: You're talking about Hollywood, Florida.

B: Right.

F: Let's keep our Hollywoods straight.

B: Yes. He was in a hotel there enjoying the sun and playing a little golf and recuperating, and the President was looking for a replacement. He was asking Buford and others who to get, and among those he inquired of was John Connally. What he was really looking for was somebody to work with governors. I think he probably looked upon the emergency planning as pretty much an administrative task, and he needed somebody who would do that job and take care of governors. John Connally, said, "Get Bryant." Well, the President and I didn't have a very warm relationship at that time. On the contrary.

F: Why not? You just didn't know each other that well, or had something bothered you?

B: I had been disappointed by his philosophical change, as I saw it, and I was just unhappy.

F: And he knew it?

B: And he knew it. So I think I could say we weren't friends. Our relationship was not bad, but we weren't friends.

So he called me one Saturday morning. My wife and I were just about to take a trip around the world that I had been promising her since about 1942; we were leaving the following Tuesday. He called me up. I was just sitting in my kitchen having some breakfast, as I recall, and the White House called.

F: You're a private citizen by now.

B: Right. The telephone call: "The White House is calling, the President." Of course, that was exciting.

F: Which will always make you sit up.

B: Oh, yes. He said, "Farris, I need you to help me with these governors," as I recall. This was a very personal call at that time, a very warm call. He said, "I want you to take an important job up here in the White House." And I said, "Well, Mr. President, I'm flattered, of course." Julia was sitting right there. I said, "Julia and I are leaving Tuesday, going around the world. If I may, I'll come see you as soon as we come back." He said, "I can't wait that long. I can send you around the world any time. I need you up here now. You come up here Monday. You be here Monday morning, and we'll talk about it."

So Julia was pretty upset, but I went.

F: Does she belong to that long list of women who have no great desire to live in Washington?

B: Yes.

F: I've often wondered if you put them all together if they'd make quite a lobby.

B: Yes, you really would. She never moved with me. But I went up, and I was there and went into his office, the Oval Office. We sat there on the couch and he in his rocking chair, and we talked for about an hour. He told me his problems with governors, and the importance of OEP and being a member of the National Security Council, and how he was surrounded by people that would tell him "yes" and he was cut off from sources of information, and how he needed me. I was telling him, "Mr. President, I've got an insurance company that I'm president of, and I've got a law practice. This

thing only pays, what--$28,000? I can't bring Julia up here for that amount of money. She won't come anyway." All the things. I wasn't being a reluctant person, but just real problems [were] involved. Finally he said, "I don't ask for your friendship; I don't ask for your political help; I do ask you for your service to your country." He has probably said that to a thousand people, I don't know.

F: It's irresistible, isn't it?

B: There's no way. There's just no way. When the president of the United States says that, you've just had it. So I said, "All right, sir, I'll come."

F: Your conference at that time, was it warm, or was it just pretty straightforward?

B: Straightforward. It was not personal. He didn't pretend any great affection or friendship, and I didn't pretend one either. I was in the presence of the President of the United States, that's always an awesome experience, you know.

F: He had a problem, and he was giving it to you.

B: That's right. So I agreed to do it.

F: Let me ask you one thing. How do you tell your wife?

B: Well, she's a wonderful girl.

F: I presume you called her.

B: And the President said, "I'll send you around the world sometime."

F: Did he?

B: I went around the world. He didn't send me, but I went.

F: Good. I'm glad you finally made the trip. How much time did he give you to get down to work?

B: He submitted my name immediately. The next day the governors were meeting in Washington, and he announced to them that I was going to be their man and director of OEP without ever telling the Secret Service or anybody else. I was never cleared, you see. I was cleared of course, eventually.

F: You didn't go through the regular routine.

B: It upset a lot of people, and he put himself in a really embarrassing position if they'd turned me down, if they'd dug up something. Because he'd announced that I was the man. That's the way it began.

F: You went right to work then.

B: Yes, I did. Julia never would move up there.

F: What did you do? Just suspend Florida operations, just walk off and leave them, in effect? You couldn't wrap them up in that much time.

B: I did. I got my board together, and I told them what I've just told you. They said, "Well, if you've got to go--" So I left.

F: One of the first things you did was to send letters to the governors urging that projects be delayed where possible to help curb inflation. Did you get the feeling that the President was really concerned about supporting both his social program and the war by this time as an inflationary sort of life?

B: He had a fantastic budget problem, there's no question about it. He was always fighting to keep the forces of inflation down, and yet still go ahead and do it. He had a conviction that this country

could do anything it wanted to do. That was his basic thesis, it was just a question of how. He was a pragmatist, as you know. He was that. I don't think he's a philosopher. I think he's just simply pragmatic. I've often expressed it to my multitude of conservative friends when I have a chance to do so. I rode with him on the ranch on one occasion and saw him radio in to "Fix that fence" and "Tend to that cow," you know the type of thing. I often expressed it this way: he was not a man who was a liberal or a conservative, really, he was a pragmatist. If he saw a fence that was down, he said, "Fix it." If he saw a cow that was sick, he said, "Cure it." If he saw a child that was hungry, he would say, "Feed it." If he saw a man that was out of a job, he'd say, "Get him a job." I really always felt that was the kind of man he was after I got to know him. So he wanted to win this war; he wanted to hold down inflation; he wanted to keep his budget balanced; he wanted his social programs to go forward.

F: He wanted to do it all.

B: He believed the country was big enough to do it all. So rather than really have a Keynesian philosophy or a Friedman approach or anything, he just did the things that he saw and thought needed to be done. With his tremendous grasp of the federal government, he could do many things, much more than any other President could do under those circumstances.

F: On this matter of inflation, and then we'll let you make your break here, what's your opinion of jawboning as a sort of practical way

of keeping prices and wages and the worth of money and so forth?

B: It should be done. It's one element of leadership. A president sets the tone of a country in many ways. I never laughed at turning off the lights in the White House. It got a message across to the nation. You could let everybody laugh, but the fact of the matter is the President was saying as best he could, "Let's save; let's cut down." I think he was tremendously effective in his jawboning. In the OEP I had a lot to do with, I was on the fringes, let's say, of his efforts to control prices.

F: I want to get into the status of the OEP, because it has always seemed to me like what they call in the movies a sleeper agency. I don't think the public is aware of it, and yet its possibilities are so widespread on the Security Council and all you can do on the inflation, I mean it can go into all sorts of things. Most people just think you wait for a disaster and then you rush out to correct something.

B: That's correct.

F: But it goes a lot deeper, and I'd like to have you elaborate on that. We probably don't want to take that time now, do we?

B: Yes, why don't I do it now. I've got about twenty minutes.

F: All right, let's do that.

B: Why don't I do that, about the OEP.

F: Yes, just talk about the office and its ramifications.

B: The Office of Emergency Planning is really the descendant of those World War II and Korean War offices that controlled the economy, the

problems that came up and the complexity of those problems of price control, rationing, wages, and so forth, allocation of manpower, that developed in those two conflicts. Of course, nobody was satisfied with the way it was done, and the OEP was the development of a plan to do that. The director of the Office of Emergency Planning was put on the National Security Council. Really I think initially because with his tremendous economic powers and with this being, as it were, the arsenal of democracy, and with our productive powers being our greatest weapon, the national security and the management of the economy were inseparable. Therefore, with the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and the secretary of defense, and the vice president, and the president, the fifth man was the director of the Office of Emergency Planning.

The general concept was that the Joint Chiefs and the military will run the war, and OEP will run the economy. So it got tremendous powers of emergency nature, to be activated at the will of the president. But it had vast money lending powers. Among other things we made plans for the management of the nation in all of its non-military aspects in time of war, all of it. We tried to have a posture such that if war came in fifteen minutes and the White House had to be vacated and the President go somewhere else, we were in charge of some of the places that were provided for him to go, we would be able to see that he was staffed and had adequate communications and operational plans, from the non-military standpoint, to tend to the war.

For instance, just to give you an illustration, if you get word that nuclear bombs have been exploded in eight places in Florida, or in the world, or in the United States, we had designed programs to be able to tell the President from computers what damage had probably been done long before you could get damage reports, because presumably you couldn't get any reports from the area; what it did to the economy, the transportation system, the power system, the productive capacities. [We could tell] whether or not, for instance, you have any longer any capacity to build tanks, or whether you no longer can get a special gear that goes into a tank, and therefore you've got to rebuild it somewhere else, or can't build it. You know, to try to provide him with all the information that he would need under any conceivable combination of circumstances to manage the nation. And also [we had plans] to establish communications, so that in all the capitals of the nation and all the media of the nation they would know that the President is still there, that authority is still being wielded. Whatever may have happened about the world or in the country, the national government had not fallen, the President was still in charge, our military forces were being supported, you see.

Because panic and hysteria would be a normal circumstance, and the greatest weapon against that is a feeling that, "The President is still in charge. I'm down here in this damned hole in the ground. I don't know what's going on, looks to me like the world's coming to an end, but the President is still in charge." We felt that

was very important.

Then of course we had the job of coordinating the non-military aspects of NATO with the other nations of the NATO alliance and trying to do in that international context the same things that we did in the United States. There [it was] complicated by visa requirements, refugees, different languages, a different situation. That also involved on a national level stockpiling, so we had at one time eight billions in materials. So that whatever happened to the nation or the world, we'd have the materials necessary to carry on the war and survive and get back up.

F: Do you disperse your stockpiling pretty largely?

B: Oh, yes. It had to be dispersed so that for any probable pattern of attack--

F: I presume that you also take into consideration, undoubtedly do, an interruption of the normal flow of supplies.

B: From other countries of the world?

F: Yes.

B: You see, we would have for that purpose periodic judgments of the Department of State as to what countries we could rely upon diplomatically. And then of the navy, of the Department of Defense, [judgments] as to what supply lines we could consider to be open and which ones were conjectural, which ones would be closed. All of our calculations were made with those judgment inputs.

F: And what do you do if Panama closes down?

B: That's the kind of thing you calculate.

F: Does that give you a feeling of confidence as director that you can deliver if something goes wrong?

B: When I went there, I spent many months--I didn't have a wife, so I'd go to work at seven in the morning and work until ten or eleven at night, because I'm not much of a cocktail party boy--and we redid the plan from beginning to end. When I left there, yes, I had confidence that we were ready to perform. We could do our job.

F: That must have been a real education of Farris Bryant.

B: Fantastic. I learned about things I didn't know existed when I went there. I felt that we got in a high state of readiness so far as our job was concerned. Of course, sitting in the NATO conferences I learned things there that I couldn't dream of.

F: In this matter of stockpiling, how do you handle that problem of obsolescence? Do you move things out periodically? Are you running a kind of constant inventory?

B: Yes, you do, and you re-evaluate, you see. Just as soon as you've completed a study, it's no longer any good; that is, it's no longer timely. So you begin again immediately.

F: It's valid for that moment, but not tomorrow.

B: That's correct. You keep studying the changing technological requirements and the changing materials conditions and the changing transportation and so forth requirements. For instance, the advent of titanium became a technological change of a very significant nature. There were worlds of changes. Copper became quite an item of controversy during the time that I was there. So you have

to stay up on [everything]. You sell those things that you can, that you don't need, and buy others.

F: In other words, you're running a big wholesale agency, too, aren't you?

B: That's correct, eight billion dollars worth.

F: Did you find the cooperation within NATO quite complete, or were there areas that you were sort of frozen out of?

B: It was complete except for France. I say that within international context, because you understand, I know, that in an international conference you're dealing with independent sovereign nations, and you don't have majority rule. If eleven want to go along and two don't, then two don't. The eleven have to decide whether they want to go along without the two, and that's basically what we did with France. We included France everywhere we could, but we went ahead, hoping she would come back in but going ahead anyway. We'd vote on many things, and she would be the only abstainer or the only negative. I say "vote," that's not really true, because there isn't any vote. My vote had nothing to do with what England could do, you see.

F: Did you get the feeling that French recalcitrance represented the real French mood, or was this an extension of De Gaulle?

B: No, it was really French. It was an extension of De Gaulle, but De Gaulle was France. No, the French people with whom I had contact were really quite emotional about it, had quite a different view of the world, and [were] quite sure that they were serving France's interests in doing what they were doing. And perhaps they were in

a narrow sort of way.

F: Were there sort of schisms within NATO within your experience with it, certain groups that just automatically would not work with others?

B: Well you had the Greece-Turkey problem, obviously.

F: Yes.

B: But even that was good. Portugal was sort of on the fringes. It was not in the mainstream basically, because of its geographic position and because of a different make-up of its government. But, no, I didn't find any. There was really a great effort to get along, to compromise.

F: Within their national viewpoints, they all wanted to get on with the job?

B: That's correct. Now after--let me see, what were those events? I guess it was the move into Hungary that gave a lot more enthusiasm to our European allies.

F: Czechoslovakia.

B: Czechoslovakia, I guess it was. Yes, it was Czechoslovakia. Up until that time the Europeans had been less enthusiastic, more perfunctory. They worked at it, but there was no real urgency about it. After Czechoslovakia we didn't have to persuade them any more, they were ready to go.

F: There's nothing like an enemy move to bring unity.

B: That's correct. Nothing else will do it, really.

F: I want to come back--

B: That's not all of OEP, you know.

F: I know.

B: It has many facets.

F: I want to get into some of that a little more specifically, and we'll do that.

B: All right. It also has the problem of, OEP did, responding to national disasters, to natural disasters for the federal government, a limited response. The President had virtually unlimited funds in the sense that when a disaster would occur we would go do what was necessary to be done, period; and then go back to the Congress and show them what we had done and ask them to replenish his funds to that amount. We never failed to secure those refunds.

F: How do you arrive at a figure?

B: Well, you don't really.

F: You send seventeen million dollars to Florida in a disaster--

B: You don't really send that much. You allot that much money.

F: That's what I mean.

B: You can change your allotment. You don't have to be exact. You give enough authority so that the Corps and the other agencies can go ahead and do what needs to be done now.

F: They do the job and then you just sort of figure--

B: We monitor it with people on the ground. We watch the expenses, and then adjust to fit it.

F: On something like the Corps, where it moves into an emergency, this is not planned work. You've got to take men off other jobs. How does the Corps compensate for that time lost, or is it allowed for?

B: No, we pay them out of these funds. How they juggle administratively within the districts, I don't know. I suppose they have no problem in getting equipment and things of that kind, just rent them locally, you know.

F: No, what I was really thinking of, presumably they have a number of men that need to do certain tasks, and you budget your time through the year. But when you take me off the job for two weeks or six weeks or whatever--

B: Something else has to give.

F: --so I've lost that, I presume they just sort of run behind on other projects then.

B: Something else has to give, I'm sure.

F: I wondered if, for instance, they maybe overemployed so they'd have people available.

B: I wouldn't be able to make that judgment.

F: That's their problem and not yours?

B: That's right. I just know that when we needed them they were there, and they do a magnificent job.

F: Is the OEP a sort of natural place for a man to conduct liaison with the other governors for the presidency, or was this actually just a separate activity? You're holding two jobs really.

B: Eight.

F: All right, eight then.

B: Many of them quite unrelated. No, it is not a natural place. It had certain qualities required. First of all, the director of the OEP

at that time was close to the President. If you're going to deal with governors, that is the sine qua non.

F: They have got to know that you speak to the president.

B: The man can speak to the man. Now you can be there, and if they don't feel like you can see the President regularly that's no good, even though you're supposed to. You've got to be such a person and your relationship with the President has got to be such that they know you can run across the street and see the President if you want to, if it's that important.

F: So that if I called Farris Bryant from my governorship in New Mexico, and I can sell him on the importance of this, I feel I've got my advocate in Washington.

B: That's correct. That's exactly what it is. It's not only important for the governors, it's important for the bureaucracy. Because when Farris Bryant calls HEW they need to know it's the President calling. Let's say a governor is worried about a university grant. Three million dollars is holding up his nuclear building. It's important. It's important to him. He has got the funds, and he has promised it.

F: Everything is ready to go except--

B: It may be small up in Washington, but it's important to him. He calls Farris Bryant, and Bryant calls HEW and he says, "You've got an application over there, number 4753281967430. Where the hell is it? This is the White House." The operator when she called said, "This is the White House calling," and then she puts on Bryant, see. Well, I want you to know somebody starts moving, and they come back and say, "Well, that's on so-and-so's desk." "When will that be

signed?" "Sir, it'll be out this afternoon." Then you call back New Mexico and say, "You'll have that. There'll be an announcement this afternoon, and it'll be in the mail in the morning." Then when you've done that for him once, he's your man, you're established. Then when the President has a problem in New Mexico--

F: Then you've got a credit bank.

B: Then he calls Farris and he says, "Listen, get these guys to go on this, will you?" And I call and say, "Dave, how about this?" "Okay." That's just the way it works.

(Interruption)

F: To resume, Governor, let's talk about in the fall of 1966, the trip you made to Asia with President Johnson.

B: First of all, I didn't have any real great state purpose in going. The President, I guess through Marvin, indicated that I could go, and of course I jumped at the opportunity.

F: Do you think this was in a sense sort of to educate you with some of the needs out there?

B: I'm sure it was. The President got to where he thought a good deal of my working ability. I don't know what he thought of me in other ways, but I worked hard and he was conscious of it. He depended on me in some respects administratively, and I always really felt like it was kind of a reward to be able to go on that trip.

F: This isn't a psychoanalyst's chair here, but my impression of you is that you don't stampede very easily.

B: I hope not.

F: And I wondered whether the President didn't appreciate the kind of steadiness.

B: Could be.

F: I mean, I'm right in the general summary of this aspect of your character.

B: Yes. I'll tell you. I think the President would have liked it better if I had been a little bit more convivial than I was. But I don't think I was a nuisance to have around. While I would speak my piece, I was not argumentative. And I think possibly that I was not--

F: You did your job.

B: That's right. But in any event, let me tell you two or three things about that trip that you might not have caught. I know you've talked to probably everybody else that went, and Marvin knew a lot more about it than I did, and Okamoto and so forth. On that trip were either two or three speech writers, I've forgotten their names now, and they were part of the White House staff. There were speeches to write for so many occasions. He'd be getting on and off planes and whatnot. I believe Harry McPherson went on that trip.

F: I think so.

B: I think he did. I think Harry polished the things up finally. But during the trip I had a chance to shoot the bull with these speech writers. One thing that interested me very much was that out of the four speech writers that I was familiar with at the White House--three of them were on this trip--I think three of them

were atheists, and one of them presumably was not. One on the trip was not. In talking with me, because when there was a speech to make the informality that develops on a trip like that [means] that all of us pitch in and give ideas and talk, they were always puzzled at any evidences of my faith. The thing that worried me was--and as I look back on the President's speeches they're not filled with Biblical or religious expressions. I'm not at all sure it wasn't because, in part at least, these people didn't feel that way.

F: I would rather think Biblical allusions would come naturally to him.

B: Yes. But as you reflect, and I've never done any research on it, there isn't any there. And, you know, it takes something like that really to give an inspirational quality to a speech. You have to ask a person to look above themselves and outside of themselves. That's religion, that's the spiritual, and that's not there. I think that was a great omission, and it disturbed me greatly that the people that were putting the words in the mouth of the President of the United States didn't have a faith.

F: Did you ever talk to them about this?

B: No, I never did.

F: This may have lost a certain amount of the positive emotional tug that you can sometimes put across.

B: Yes. But that was one of the things that I thought was . . . Then I thought the other highlight--there were many things that happened, and I'm not going to try to give you an itinerary of the trip--for

me at least, was his speaking to the gathering in Australia. This large room was so crowded with people that they all had to stand, and they were packed. It was undoubtedly the leadership and the elite of Australia there. There was a good deal of criticism in Australia at that time of our policies in Vietnam, and I loved the way the President approached them and said, "You know, you all have criticized this and criticized that. Between partners that's a good thing. You've said this, that and the other." He said, "There are two sides of that, though, and you'll forgive me, therefore, if I point some things out to you." Having set them up, he then laid into them. He just did a magnificent job, one of the best jobs I ever saw, to take this crowd of strangers who had never met this President and to have him just wrap them around his fingers. He really did. He did probably the best job I ever saw done.

F: Did he tend to start out rather low key?

B: Very low key.

F: And then built toward a crescendo?

B: That's correct, and I tell you he was powerful. Just standing on a little dais in front of this large group, and he really did one of the most magnificent jobs of taking a crowd that was strange and perhaps a little cold, admitting his own mistakes, and then saying, "But . . ." Then he laid into them. It was great.

F: What did you do at these stops?

B: I was in protocol the number two person, being on the National Security Council, but I had no real function. I would simply do what I was

told in the order of precedence, and whenever I could be by the President and help him or take care of [something I would]. For instance, I was with Mrs. Marcos some in the Phillippines. Whenever there was a number two person to be cared for or accommodated in any way, I tried to do that. I tried to be of assistance to Mrs. Johnson, because the President was occupied and concentrating, and sometimes wives are a little bit left floundering. Since I had no specific function, I tried to be useful in those areas.

F: When you met with the people in a country outside of the head of state, the people who were concerned with foreign policy and with U.S. relations, did you ever closet yourself alone with them, or were those people included with the President?

B: Always in with the President. I had no independent consultations with them, no. I was not that competent.

F: What was the atmosphere aboard the plane? Is it one of excitement over what they're doing, is it tense, or what in between?

B: No. All of us had a very delightful time in Hawaii, but that was no problem. We had dinner with Governor Burns and his wife. But when we got to the Phillippines, that was the first place, as I recall, we were uncertain and unsure. After all this was new for the President, and it was new for all of us.

F: Kind of like a salesman calling on his first customer.

B: That's about right. We didn't know what was going to happen or what was expected of us or how it was going to be handled, but the President was equal to those occasions. Everybody in the

Phillippines was trying to be helpful, so we had no problems. We enjoyed it.

F: Did you pretty well follow your original format, or . . . (Break in tape).

[End Tape 2 of 2, Side 1. Last portion accidentally erased during interview]

Begin Tape 2 of 2, Side 2

F: We just finished talking about this federal-state contact point. You had the problem of the Arab-Israeli War in the summer of 1967 and what it might have done to us in the way of a European oil shortage. That somewhat came, again, under your jurisdiction.

B: Yes, it did.

F: Or at least your concern.

B: That's right, from two standpoints. OEP has a lot to do with oil imports, and it has a lot to do with the strategic necessity of oil supplies.

F: I presume in one sense your office as much as any makes recommendations on the quota of import oil.

B: It does, yes, how it's to be handled and whether by quota or tariff, or whether at all there should be limitations. I personally thought that the import limitations were far too strict for the good of this country first of all, and this was pre-ecology days. Because the oil we were using from this country was high sulphur content oil, whereas we could get oil from out of the country that would have a low sulphur content and a low

pollution factor.

F: There's one time the southern governors made a proposal that they might sort of interchange their national guards in case of trouble. In other words, the national guard unit in Alabama might cross the state line into Mississippi. Did that get to be a concern of yours?

B: That never really got very far, as I recall. No, it never became a concern of mine. I don't think that's possible. I know I was attending the conferences; I attended them all at that time, [and] I don't think it's legal.

F: I think it goes against the concept of the national guard.

B: I think that idea died aborning because it just can't be done. It's just like I don't think you can bring Canadian troops into this country and say they're suddenly U.S. troops. You know, that just ain't so!

F: You resigned in the early autumn of 1967 as OEP director. Any particular reason?

B: October of 1967. My initial commitment to the President was to be there a year. When I was talking with Clark Clifford for my orientation he said, "You won't be any good to the President for a year." I didn't believe him. There's a lot in there. It takes a long time, really, to learn enough. For instance, just sitting in the National Security Council, coming green from the pastures of Florida, the only thing you can do wisely is to keep your mouth shut. I studied very hard. I read everything that I could get my hands on to equip myself, but there's just no way you can learn enough about what has been going on. So I stayed.

I'll tell you an interesting story, which is a great sidelight on the President, on how I left there. I had told my wife I would come on home and told my company that I would come home. I had written a memorandum to the President and gotten no response. I had gone to Marvin and asked Marvin to please see that I got an answer, but I got none. So there was a flood out in Texas, and we were on our way to Texas, the OEP. The President was going; it was his state. I stationed myself in Air Force One, you know how that round table of his was, so that when he faced the table I was right across from him. There were the congressmen and the senators and various people around, and the President was holding forth, as he does. In a lull in the conversation, I said to him, "Mr. President, I've got to go home. I told you I'd stay a year. I've been a year and a half. I think I've got a successor lined up for you if you're willing to accept him, and I'd appreciate it if you'd give me permission to resign." He looked at me just as you're looking at me now. He turned away and ignored me entirely, and I could not get his attention again during the trip. He would not answer me. Now that was on the way out there.

All right, on the way back I put myself in the same spot, and when opportunity presented itself I went through the same spiel in abbreviated fashion. This time I said, "Mr. President, unless you tell me not to, I'm going to resign."

F: He has got to answer that.

B: So we began talk, not then, but about a successor. I had in the

meantime contacted and cultivated Price Daniel, who was a great friend of mine and a great friend of the President's--[he] served with him as a senator you know--and got Price to consent. Price always says I sold him a bill of goods, blew smoke at him and what-not, but anyway I got him all excited about the job, and it is an exciting job. The President said, "Yes, Price would be fine." So I got Price up there, and I left.

F: How much had you gotten home during that time?

B: I tried to get home. I'd go out to the airfield--

F: Where was home at that time? Was it here?

B: That's right. I'd try to catch a military plane coming this way, but the schedules weren't very good [and it was] a pretty poor way to go. Actually, you see, protocol wise, I outranked just about everybody except the Secretary of Defense. I was a member of the National Security Council in the eyes of the military. So it made it an awkward thing for me to be calling. I didn't want to send a special plane for me, that obviously would be wrong. On the other hand, it's just an awkward situation. I guess I got home every two or three weeks, but mostly by private plane.

F: You must have felt lots of time that you just stayed packed.

B: Yes, that's right.

F: But now then you have resigned, but there's only a short hiatus before you're right back working on intergovernmental relations.

B: I was all the time. You see, he appointed me to the advisory commission almost immediately after I went up there. Then shortly

later, no, at the same time I guess, he appointed me to be chairman. I remained chairman until October, 1969. But I had the two tasks at the same time.

F: Was there any essential difference in the way that his administration approached this problem and the way that the Nixon Administration approached it?

B: Yes. You mean intergovernmental relations?

F: Yes.

B: Well, Vice President Agnew attended every meeting of the advisory commission while I was still there, which was ten months. He had an intense interest in it personally. They were interested in revenue sharing. But Vice President Agnew, coming fresh from a governor's chair and having been a member of the Advisory Commission--

F: And Vice President Humphrey never having been a governor.

B: That's correct. So they had a very great interest in it, and we got a visibility on the advisory commission. In addition to that we made some recommendations then that were rather startling. One of them had to do--it's about to come to pass now--with the assumption by the Congress of the entire welfare burden. As a matter of fact, I made that proposal first, and two congressmen said that if this body ever adopted that recommendation the Congress would cut off our appropriations. That's right. Al Ullman of Oregon said, "Ways and Means, those fools, this kind of foolishness, we'll just cut off their appropriations." Now they're about to adopt it.

F: Is this to a great extent not only the burden of welfare, but the fact

that there's such a multiplicity of programs that states don't have the staff to handle it?

B: Assuming welfare is in lieu of revenue sharing. It's a form of revenue sharing. Our complete proposal was this, briefly: that the federal government assume the welfare burden, relieving the states; that the states then assume the entire educational burden, relieving the local government, the property tax. Therefore, instead of the federal government trying to feed money where it thought was wise, simply assume burdens that it could pay for itself, and let the cities and the states spend their money where they ought to be spending it.

F: To shift to one other thing, the convention of 1968 and the nomination of Vice President Humphrey, was there a fairly strong attempt to get southern delegates to back LBJ for another run on it?

B: I wasn't aware of it. I was in touch with the President during that time and with Marvin.

F: Did you have the feeling that the President's word on March 31 was basically incontrovertible?

B: Yes.

F: No turning back?

B: Yes.

F: Had you had any intimation that March 31 was coming up with that final paragraph?

B: None. I was on a committee of four people that used to meet regularly, Marvin, Jake Jacobsen, myself, and Leonard Marks. We used to

meet regularly to review the President's position politically, that was its purpose. It wasn't set up by the President. I say it wasn't, I know that I was not aware that [it was].

F: As far as you're concerned, it just started.

B: That's correct. We had been meeting regularly, and I had no intimation that this was about to happen. If anybody knew about it other than Marvin and Lady Bird and the family, I don't know who it was.

F: Did you ever talk to the President about it afterwards?

B: No. You see, I had come home then. That was just after I came home, wasn't it?

F: Right.

B: When did that happen?

F: That happened on March 31, 1968.

B: Well, see, I had come home.

F: You had come home the previous fall.

B: That's right. I was in Washington that day, too, just by accident.

F: Did you watch his speech?

B: I watched it on television.

F: That's what I mean.

B: Yes.

F: Then you were just like all the rest of us, just sat there with an open mouth.

B: That's correct.

F: Did you ever have any doubts that he could be renominated or

re-elected?

B: I was positive he could be renominated, I thought he could be re-elected.

F: One final question, and again, one of these sort of wrap up questions. You've been a governor and you know the importance of a good staff. What would be your sort of assessment of the President's staff during the period you were associated with him? How good a staff work did he have?

B: Not very good.

F: What was the problem?

B: I think he tried to do too much of his own. I think that he was so involved in every program that there really was no opportunity for a staff as such to function. An individual could function. Califano could function because he could run in, and he and the President could talk it over, and he could go back and do something. McPherson could function; or somebody on that kind of a basis. But so far as the President having a staff meeting, let's say, "What kind of problems have we got? We've got three categories. You take these, and you take . . . ." It didn't happen that way, and I think the reason was that the President generated so much himself, initiated so much himself.

F: He got emotionally involved, really.

B: That's right. Really, if that man, with the mental capacity he had and the knowledge of government he had, could have used a staff properly, wow! Just fantastic! We can't all do everything.

F: Did you get the feeling sometimes that he didn't think things through, programs, that he just sort of rushed into them to get them done? In a sense that he just liked to see, I suppose build up the statistics would be a good way to put it?

B: I don't think his nature was to be an administrator. I think he had had many years in Congress in which he had been generating ideas and programs, and I think to a degree he continued to do that. I think that accounted in some degree for the prolific nature of his programs. He could generate them, but I never observed him in the kind of administrative follow-through. One of the reasons that I think that he liked me was that I am an administrator, perhaps more than anything else. He didn't have to worry about the things that I was doing. If he gave me a job, it was done. If I gave him a memorandum on a subject, it was complete and it was concise.

F: Now, Farris Bryant would be happier back in Florida, so consequently he has got an independence. What about the remainder of the staff? Did you get the feeling that they could oppose or plead or bend, or whatever seemed necessary on various programs, as you did?

B: Very few. I don't want to overstress my own independence that way, because I always stood in awe of the President of the United States. It restricts you in spite of all you say and do.

F: I don't think you can ever go in the Oval Room, I don't care if Rin-Tin-Tin were president, without feeling that here is something special.

B: That's correct, and that never leaves you. It affects you, there's

no question about that. But most of the staff were pretty subservient, and that's no criticism of them because he was the kind of a man that would just run over you, I mean mentally run over you. He was a powerful, powerful man. When you add the office to it, you've just got an overwhelming combination.

On the other hand, some of it he brought on himself. Let's take a little job I did for him. He had this civil rights committee, headed by Califano, and some of his HEW people and Department of Justice people and so forth, about eight or ten of us. He asked me to go sit on that committee meeting. I said, "Mr. President, I've got no business [there]." He said, "I want you to present the southern viewpoint. They're not going to listen to you, but they need to hear it." So I would go to these meetings and listen to what I thought was trite for the most part for a couple of hours, and nobody wanted to hear me, but at the end of it I'd give them my viewpoint and the meeting would break up. That's about right. Howard Howe was one of those there. I don't know whether you're a Yankee or not, but usually a Yankee, when you start talking about this, has a glaze come across his eyes. He no longer sees you. You suddenly sprout a couple of horns, you've got a hood over your head, and he no longer sees you as a Farris Bryant. Something happens to him. I never got through to anybody, but I always told them what I thought and enjoyed most of them.

F: Do you have the feeling that Johnson's sort of historical star is going to rise, fall, stay even, or what?

B: I have to believe that he was a great president. And believing that, I believe that after a time his star will rise. Right now, Vietnam colors everything. But if you're going to measure the man on a basis of some moral input, I would have to say, no, I don't think he provided any great new moral leadership. But if you measure him as his impact on just developing society, you'd have to say that it was really possibly the most outstanding of any president, just fantastic. His imprint will be forever marked.

F: Even if it were all dead wrong, you'd be another generation unravelling it.

B: Exactly.

F: Thank you, Governor, very much.

B: I've enjoyed it.

[End of Tape 2 of 2, Side 2 and Interview I]

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