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~~transcript~~	~~oral history interview with John M. Cabot, pp. 8-12 (portions of pp. 8 and 12, all of pp. 9-11)~~ ~~possible classified information~~ open 6-8-84 per NLJ 84-142	2/28/69	~~A~~

FILE LOCATION

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INTERVIEWEE: JOHN CABOT

INTERVIEWER: PAIGE MULHOLLAN

February 28, 1969

M: Let's begin simply by identifying you. You're John Cabot, and you served in the Foreign Service as a career officer from 1926 until 1965, is that correct?

C: 1966. I was retired from Poland in '65.

M: And your entire service during the Johnson Administration was as Ambassador to Poland, where you were when he became President.

C: That's correct.

M: So you were originally appointed to that position by President Kennedy?

C: That's right.

M: I believe you mentioned a moment ago that your personal association with President Johnson is very minor.

C: Very minor. Whenever I was home from Poland--which I came home about once a year--I made a request to see the President. He was apparently too busy to see me until June '65. Then five Ambassadors went up together to see him. I had come down from Manchester in Massachusetts in a hurry--barely made the plane. They didn't have any warning at all.

M: The situation presented itself and you had to get here one way or the other.

C: Exactly. I did anyway. The President received us very graciously and explained to us his thoughts about domestic polity.

M: About domestic policy?

C: About domestic policy, yes.

M: In other words, your briefing wasn't really on the area of your concern.

C: No. He didn't give us much of a chance to explain our problems and what we thought about them. Then we were all photographed individually with the President. I forget where my photograph is. I think it's behind the photograph up there.

Then the President took me aside and said that he knew what a marvelous job I was doing in Poland, and he wanted me to know how much he appreciated it and so forth and so on. I thought it a little fulsome, but I was glad he felt that way about it, and left naturally pleased that he made his remarks.

And two months later I got a peremptory telegram saying "Ask Mr. Gronouski's agreement."

M: That's the first you knew about your impending replacement.

C: That's the first I knew about it.

M: Were you even given any reason later for this?

C: I think it's obvious that President Johnson wanted to get Gronouski out of the Cabinet and had to--because of the Polish vote--do something about it. So he decided to send him to Poland, and that naturally required my replacement. I'd been there three-and-a-half years, so it wasn't very surprising.

M: Rather typical for a career--

C: But I must say to be told to get the agreement forty-eight hours before--

M: Was a little bit unusual, to say the least.

C: And never a word of thanks after that. I was frankly a little bit miffed by it.

M: I can understand--as long as you had been serving the Foreign Service. In regard to policy in Poland, you served through the transition from the Kennedy Administration well into the Johnson Administration.

C: Yes, I was there from February of '62 until September of '65.

M: You were in a particularly good position perhaps to know or to have insight into the difference between the two--or a comparison between the two. Did the policy toward Eastern Europe generally, or Poland particularly, change markedly?

C: It did. But I think that it wasn't really thought out as a change of policy.

When I first got to Poland, we were selling the Poles substantial quantities of agricultural surpluses and doing it on very favorable credit terms. This policy had been inaugurated by John Foster Dulles in '56. I think the first shipments were made in '57. The hope was that it would lead Poland to pursue a more independent and friendly policy toward the United States. It did not work out that way. This went on for about six years, and there was no sign that the Poles were willing to give anything in return for what they got. They had a very good bargain.

So I began to question the wisdom of the policy just as soon as I got there. It didn't seem to me that we were going to gain anything from it and were giving up large quantities of valuable products, and I didn't see any point to it. The Poles weren't starving. These products were, in effect, strengthening their position--their military strength--and we didn't particularly want that. At least I didn't particularly want it, and it didn't seem to me wise.

I've forgotten the exact sequence of events now. I think it was in

'63--the beginning of '63--that we were arguing back and forth by cable as to what sort of agreement we should offer for that year; and suddenly, to my horror, I discovered that the State Department had offered the Poles a great deal more than we had recommended and what we understood that they were going to insist upon. The Poles screamed bloody murder and succeeded in getting a lot more out of us.

I was furious. This was before Kennedy died, of course. So I sent a personal message to Rusk saying what I thought about the proceedings and got a soothing message back.

Then I came home in June of that year and saw President Kennedy, whom I'd known for a good many years. I said to him, "The story I get in the corridors at the State Department is that you want these shipments to continue, and I would like to suggest to you that I am not sure that's the wise thing."

"Oh," said President Kennedy, "I always thought it was rather foolish. Of course, we'll never be repaid." Actually we have been. He was wrong on that.

M: So what you were getting from the State Department wasn't exactly what you got from him?

C: Not at all. I went back to the State Department and said "Your story is full of defects."

M: And did that result in a change then?

C: It did. The next year we put up a much tougher proposition to the Poles. It was still moderately favorable. As I remember they got sixty million dollars of agricultural surpluses, of which twenty had to be paid immediately; twenty paid in two years; and then only the other twenty was

C: No, on the contrary. I always agreed with that policy. It was my feeling, for example, that we should not put obstacles in the way of selling Polish ham, which is the biggest Polish export to the United States, to try to prevent its sale in the United States. It seemed to me that that was a healthy kind of trade, and one which benefited both parties equally.

M: It was the one-sided nature of the agricultural trade that you objected to.

C: Exactly. Just practically a give-away of agricultural products. That's all I objected to. I always used to quote in my speeches the case which occurred when things were getting a little rougher. This was before I arrived. Before they had gotten a little rougher, the Poles bought, I think it was three Convairs in the United States. Then, by some foolishness, when they wanted to get spare parts, they were refused. Of course, the Poles would never buy another aircraft from us again, and I certainly don't blame them. That strikes me as being perfect foolishness. I do believe in trade of nonstrategic items.

M: What about Mr. Johnson's broadening of the list of things that could be traded? Do you think that was a reasonable extension, a loosening of the Battle Acts as he did?

C: I think that was a good thing, yes. I don't think anything was put on the list which was going materially to strengthen the Polish military potential. So I was very definitely in favor of trade.

Another thing--. In 1962, Congress passed a law requiring us to denounce the most-favored nation treatment to Poland. Of course, you understand that the most-favored nation treatment really is equal treatment, because every free country gets MFN, as we call it. Congress,

despite the President's objections--it was then President Kennedy, of course--passed the bill. And he couldn't veto it because it was passed as a whole Trade Act, and he couldn't veto that just for one clause he didn't like. But he went back to Congress--he never did carry out the Congressional mandate--and asked that this particular section be repealed. Finally after I think it was two years, it was repealed. No, it was a year, it was just a year. The thing was passed at the end of '62, and it was repealed toward the end of '63, as I recall it. But it was just about the same time that Congress passed this law forbidding the surplus agreements in the same terms that had been held before.

M: Poland is one of what, two countries in Eastern Europe that has the MFN?

C: Yes, Yugoslavia also has it.

M: Does that put Poland in a really different position as regards the other countries in the area in your opinion?

C: It does. For example, the Poles, have, as I have mentioned earlier, a very nice business with the United States in Polish ham. It's good ham. They sell, I think, now it's up to about seventy million dollars. When I was there, I remember it was about thirty million.

M: So it's economically substantial amount, it's not just a minor--

C: You see, it pretty well covers the debts they now are paying on the agricultural surpluses agreements.

M: Do you think that, on balance for the whole term, that Mr. Johnson's Administration made or built significant bridges, or do you think it was more talk for home consumption?

C: I would say that there was some easing of the tensions. Of course, it varies up and down. But on the whole, I should say that the long trend

was favorable.

[Interruption]

M: Warsaw was the center for our contacts, such as they were, with the Communist Chinese.

C: That's right.

M: Were those talks going on while you were there?

C: Oh yes. I suppose I went to about twenty meetings. I've really forgotten how many it was.

M: Was, during the time you were there, any sign of movement in the relations that we have with that country?

C: If I tell you anything on that subject, it must be subject to its being kept confidential until the State Department releases it.

M: Actually the whole tape can be classified by them if you would like to have it done that way.

C: We had an agreement with the Chinese Communists, one of the few agreements we ever did have with them, in fact, that we wouldn't talk about what went on inside the meeting. I must say that the agreement has often been breached by both sides. But I do not want to be responsible for giving the Communist Chinese a chance to say that I violated the agreement.

M: Right. It will certainly be subject to your--

C: The rest of it I have no objections to being perfectly open, but I want to have this classified.

We didn't make any real progress during the time I was there. There was some negative progress. In other words, we progressed but largely as a result of negation rather than positive achievement. For example, in June of '62--of course President Kennedy was still alive--a crisis

was blowing up in the Formosa Straits. Both sides were pursuing a military buildup, and things looked a little ominous. Finally Wung Ping Nan, the Chinese Ambassador, asked me to come around and see him in a private meeting. This was not one of the regular series. I, having already received permission to meet with him privately, agreed, and sent off a hasty telegram to Washington. They acted with remarkable celerity, got me my instructions within forty-eight hours between Wung Ping Nan's call and the time set for the meeting. And Wung said in effect there was a military buildup going on in Formosa, and "It looks as though the Chinese nationalists are going to attack the continent with your help. I want to warn you that if you help the Chinese nationalists, you'll regret it."

I, under my instructions, said, "We have no intentions of helping the Chinese Nationalists to land on the continent. On the contrary, we have an agreement with the Chinese Nationalists by which they cannot make an attack without our consent."

M: That went back to Dulles, didn't it?

C: Yes, that's right. "However, there's a military buildup going on on your side of the straits, and if you attack Formosa, you'll regret it. We have a treaty with Formosa which obliges us to come to its assistance if they're attacked."

Then we sat down and had a perfectly cheerful cup of tea, and the crisis evaporated. In other words, each side, knowing that the other wasn't planning to attack, was satisfied and that nothing was going to happen.

M: That's what you mean by negative achievement.

C: Yes, exactly.

M: What about during the Johnson years--the critics have always pictured Secretary Rusk, for example, as being extremely rigid on the subject of China. Did you find that to be true as far as the talks, your instructions on the talks, were concerned?

C: Why, not particularly. We were always trying to find small areas of agreement. But everything broke down on one rock. The Chinese Communists would not accept our support of the Chinese nationalists.

M: As long as we did that, there was just no--

C: They wouldn't do anything. They just refused to listen to any propositions we might make. For example, we proposed exchanging newsmen. Of course, I think that Dulles was very ill advised to refuse that in the first place because the Chinese originally suggested it.

M: Yes.

C: We came around and started suggesting it, and they simply said nix. I don't know why they changed their view, but they did anyway. Then there were a lot of trivial little things. For example, the deportations of Chinese from the United States. These Chinese would go to court and try to avoid deportation, and we had to get permission from the Chinese Communists to let them land. That, of course, was trivial. Then the courts blocked these things. In other words, the Chinese would appeal to the courts and get an injunction against his deportation.

I remember one time a whole bunch of Chinese boats were driven by a storm over onto Okinawa, and we offered to return them. I don't think that ever resulted in anything. I remember there being announcements on that.

Then, of course, we were trying to get these four American citizens who were still held in Chinese jails released, but we never got anywhere on that.

M: Did you get the idea that the Chinese Communists were genuinely afraid of what the United States was doing in Asia, or were they just making those statements as part of their normal rhetorical menu?

C: I should say that they were just intransigent Communists and that they felt that they were going to take over the world some day, and that was that.

M: So most of their talk was just talk. Their fear of what we might be doing to them was a manufactured fear?

C: I would think so, because after all, we've been reasonably careful about giving them just cause for fears.

Of course, I never did quite know what was going on in some matters. For example, every time we went to one of these meetings the Chinese would complain bitterly about alleged intrusions by our airplanes and ships into their territorial waters. Well, one time I got one to admit that the ship in question had not intruded in the territorial waters, but had come near them and they didn't like it.

On other occasions the matter involved the flight of American aircraft over islands claimed by the Chinese but which were disputed The claim was disputed. They were islands between the Philipines and the Chinese continent.

Now the Navy always deny these things and I don't know whether they came near or provocatively close, or whether they actually did invade territorial waters or what the dickens happened. Of course, in the

light of the Pueblo affair, one wonders.

M: It becomes important when it gets to that state, of course.

C: Now if American destroyers did invade Chinese territorial waters, I can understand that the Chinese might feel somewhat nervous and justifiably annoyed. But I don't know. I never did know.

M: You were never advised in these cases that we had or had not definitely?

C: Generally nothing was said. Sometimes there'd be a flat denial that we'd done it. Yet, of course, on one occasion--this was after I left Warsaw--the plane was shot down over Hainan. You'll remember that.

M: Yes. There was a little argument that one conveyed then that it was over their air space.

What about Viet Nam? Later on Warsaw became sort of a center for various peace feelers that were started. Was that true during your time at all?

C: It was slightly. When I made my farewell visit to Rapacki, the Polish Foreign Minister, without instructions I suggested to Rapacki that they were in a very good position to help the cause of peace in Viet Nam. I pointed out that Poland was a member of the ICC in Viet Nam, and that they presumably had considerable influence with the North Vietnamese, and that at the same time we had at least tolerable relations with Poland. I recall that I was in very good form that day. At times I'm not quite so pleased with my form.

Anyhow, Rapacki seemed rather impressed by my presentation. This was in September of '65. It was only three months later that Averell Harriman came out to see the Poles to see if they wouldn't do something to promote peace in Viet Nam. You'll recall that.

M: Yes, I do. That was the Christmas pause of '65. So apparently Rapacki might very well have taken what you said seriously.

C: I gather that things were on the rails all right until something--I forget whether it was some attack by the United States on North Viet Nam--anyway, something derailed things to the point of apparently missed opportunities.

M: But it was just in its very early stages at the time you were leaving there?

C: Yes, that was the only thing. Of course the Chinese and I discussed Viet Nam, but mostly just vituperation. That was all.

M: Just one side arguing against the other.

C: Yes.

M: A general question on Viet Nam generally. One of the problems with it, by all accounts, is that many of the countries around the world have not particularly approved of some of the things we were doing there. The Foreign Service officers have been responsible for selling or presenting that policy to the various countries to which they are accredited. Has the career Foreign Service officer generally felt that what President Johnson was doing was justified and proper in your opinion from just your knowledge of the career group?

C: So far as I know, yes. In other words, I think that most career officers realize the catastrophic consequences of a withdrawal from Viet Nam. Joe Alsop had a good column in the Post this morning. You may have seen it. And I'm afraid he's right. If we scuttle from Viet Nam, Heaven knows where the rot is going to stop!

M: What I was driving at--so in your opinion, one of the problems in presenting

the policy has not been that the Foreign Service has had some questions about it generally?

C: I don't think so, no. I've never heard anybody in the Foreign Service arguing the side of a scuttle. Now maybe I just haven't heard the right people.

M: As long as you've been in it, I expect you know most of the people who are in it.

C: Yes. I suppose nine-tenths of my friends have never expressed an opinion to me about it. But the other tenth have unanimously favored a strong policy in Viet Nam.

M: Regarding the Foreign Service generally--on which you should be one of the most expert observers around, having been in for so many years--generally the accounts which one reads now--the modern analysis of it--holds the State Department generally in fairly low repute. Why do you think that is?

C: Who holds them in--?

M: Oh, the various analysts, if you want to call them that, who are writing currently about foreign affairs say the State Department is sluggish and rigid, and that they can't get things done, and that they can't administer it smoothly, and this type of thing.

C: You must remember that in the State Department you have the division between various bureaus, and then you have within the bureaus the divisions between the various country desks. Generally, when the question arises within a Bureau, some policy can be hammered out within the bureau. But when two bureaus start fighting, it has to go straight up to the Secretary and generally there's very conflicting advice given. For instance, say

between Europe and Africa, all these colonial questions which arose. There's an awful hassle because the Europeans argue that, after all, the Europeans are our allies and the Africans are just upstarts. And the Africans argue that Africa is the wave of the future.

M: Each bureau protecting its own in this case.

C: Yes. And the result is that, quite frankly, it does take quite a little time sometimes to reach a decision. And there will be all sorts of nuances in any solution which is offered. Of course, those who favor Africa or the African nations will say, "How can the State Department take such a namby-pamby attitude!"

And people who favor the European alliance say, "How can the State Department give so much to these wretched African nations!"

M: So both sides sometimes end up a little bit unhappy.

C: Yes. Everybody agrees that the State Department was wrong. That's what it amounts to.

M: And so you get this general impression of the State Department.

C: Yes. And yet I very much doubt that there is an abler body of men in Washington than there are in the Foreign Service, and I doubt that any career service attracts as intelligent and well-trained men.

M: That's a point that almost everybody makes, and yet they at the same time very frequently say, "And yet the morale of the Foreign Service is at an all time low." Is that accurate?

C: I wouldn't think so. Of course, I've been out of the service now for two years, so I don't get the bull sessions that I used to get when I was in the service. It certainly has been somewhat demoralized. In the first place, there were too rapid promotions. The result was a

terrible bulge at the top of the service which kept the younger officers down. That was trying for younger officers who just saw no real light ahead of them.

M: Particularly as competent as they were, as you mentioned--highly qualified people.

C: Then, for example, in the junior ranks of the service, most of the work is of the humdrum variety--for instance, issuing visas. I remember in Poland by all odds the biggest part of the Embassy was the visa section. I don't know what they've done now because Poland is now stopping emigration. So I just plain don't know.

Anyway, we had about six or seven visa officers out of a staff of only sixty.

Naturally, it was not a very easy thing for them to get all these fleabitten emigrants. Of course, the better class Pole just didn't emigrate. That's all there was to it. And they'd have to issue these visas all day long, and they were always being pressed--one thing and another. The result was there was a morale problem. For instance, I tried to solve it by taking one member of the visa section each time to these Chinese talks--each time they were held. And that pretty well enabled me to get around the visa section before the young men were transferred away. Then they could see diplomacy in a higher echelon.

M: And they could as if they were doing something important too.

C: Yes. Then we had a regular rotation system by which some more important jobs were given to an officer before he left Warsaw. It was generally a two-year period. That was pretty well observed.

There are other things which, I think, demoralized the service somewhat.

(telephone)

M: You had just said that there were other things that had demoralized the service.

C: For instance, President Johnson announcing loudly and clearly that he was going to make a lot more women and Negroes Chiefs of Mission. Now, a man goes into the service and if he's worth a damn, he remains in the service with the idea that he is eventually going to become Chief of Mission.

M: That's success.

C: Exactly. That's the goal of his life. If he suddenly finds that people are going to be chosen as Chiefs of Mission, not on the basis of merit, but on the basis they're women or Negroes or, incidentally, cronies of LBJ's, it's frankly bound to demoralize the service--not only the upper ranks but right down through. They see their path again being blocked.

I am not among those who believe that we should have only career chiefs of mission. The President obviously has a right to appoint whom he will and there are cases where a non-career Chief of Mission is better than a career chief. Cases, for example, where the President needs a person whom he is personally close to to carry out an important mission. But if you simply say Negroes and women are going to be appointed to jobs because they're Negroes and women, not because they're necessarily competent to do the job, you're going to get considerable low morale in the service.

M: Was that threat carried out then in the Johnson years?

C: To a certain extent, yes. I must say that the people I met who were appointed under that principle seemed to me pretty good people. In other

words, they might have made it on their own merit. But the mere thought of it is obviously demoralizing.

M: There's also a lot of talk about the so-called administrators in the State Department as opposed to the Foreign Service officers and the belief by some that the administrators have risen over the Foreign Service officers by comparison. Is there something to this as well?

C: Something, I think. Of course it depends on whether the administrator is a tactful man or not. If he's high-handed or anything like that, obviously he's not going to please the people who have to serve him. I think it varies from post to post in that respect.

M: Is it possible for someone who has the perspective that you have to make a comparison between the Foreign Service, say when you joined it in 1926 and the Foreign Service when you left it forty years later?

C: I think there were about seven hundred officers when I went into the service. There are about thirty-five hundred now as I recall it. And you had these small missions and separate consulates in the old days. Everybody knew everybody else, and you pretty well knew what to expect.

Now I'm really horrified to look over this State Department here. I don't know one in ten, I don't suppose. It has become impersonal. Of course, the Administration has become impersonal too. In some ways it's a comfort because you simply sling a miserable job at one of the administrators and let him handle it. For example, I can remember the agony we used to have every quarter preparing accounts in the old days. Not being ever able to balance my own checkbook, I was terrible at those accounts, particularly when people didn't keep adequate records.

M: Now that's done for you.

C: Now it's all done for you. Somebody else worries about it.

M: So, in some ways, the impersonality is an advantage.

C: Yes. Then for example in the old days, you went out and you fended for yourself. You didn't find commissaries and PX's and all these things that you now have got. You didn't have any allowances. You didn't even have a rent allowance, let alone a representation allowance or anything like that.

M: Just got along the best way you could.

C: When I entered the service in 1926 I got two thousand five hundred dollars a year, and that was all. There was no gravy added.

M: Wherever you were.

C: Yes. Of course, they did pay your transportation to your post, but there were no at-post allowances.

M: What about instructions? Did you have more freedom to operate on your own initiative thirty years ago or forty than you do now?

C: I don't think so, no.

M: The control is about the same.

C: Of course, the cables existed thirty-forty years ago, and you could get instructions quickly enough by them. I think there was probably less use made of cables. We didn't have the money. That was always a problem. There would be more of these instructions, "Sir, you are informed that..." and so on.

M: You had a lot of experience during your career in Latin America. I know none of it was during the Johnson Administration, but the claim is frequently made that for some reason Mr. Johnson had some sort of special interest in Western hemisphere affairs. Did you notice that this was

true or not true?

C: I don't think it was true. He went to Mexico and Punta del Este. Somehow or other the Alliance for Progress seemed to droop a bit under his Administration.

M: He had been in Brazil, was that it, right before the Alliance began?

C: That's right. They were actually coming through Punta del Este when I left Brazil.

M: And you think it declined then in the Johnson time to a certain extent?

C: I think so. Of course, the Alliance for Progress was a carefully thought out and amibitious undertaking--an idealistic undertaking. The Latin Americans were willing to take the money, but they weren't willing to take what went with it, which was reform. I don't think that much progress has been made in reform as might have been.

You can't change people in ten years. There's the graft and the inefficiency and the anti-democratic attitude, the rigid social structures and so forth and so on. All these things. You can't change them quickly, and you certainly can't change them by an outside pressure quickly.

M: And you can't just simply overthrow them because you don't like them.

C: Yes. For example, it's all very well to talk about how we want democracy in Latin America, but the fact of the matter is that three times out of four the democracy is inept, inefficient, corrupt, and not really democratic. And while I certainly don't like military dictatorships, though some are worse than others--Mr. Trujillo was a monster--but there are times when you get more done under a dictatorship than you do in a democracy. Though that be heresy, that's my idea about it.

M: You were involved in one of the most famous, I suppose, cases, where we

by all accounts at least tried to do something directly about a regime we didn't like. This is the Peron one in Argentina. Is there anything that's not published about that one that is important--the Braden Bluebook episode?

C: I think that the story is pretty well known. Braden came down there with instructions to root out the German influences in Argentina. He quickly came to the conclusion you couldn't root them out without rooting Peron out. At least I think that's what it amounted to. He never would admit it. He was also very much flattered by being made a lot of by all of the old-timers of all of the old parties. And he thought that the overwhelming majority of the Argentine people were anti-Peron. I'm not sure that even when he first arrived that that was necessarily the case.

So he got into this knock-down and drag-out fight with Peron. And at the climax of it, he was called home to be Assistant Secretary. Then he continued his attacks on Peron from Washington.

It's a tragic thing, but there is a great psychological difference between a man taking a courageous stance in a country where he can be booted out at any time the government really gets mad enough and a man doing the same thing--sniping from Washington. Because Argentina traditionally has not been very friendly to the United States. And Braden was the voice of the United States, not the voice of Braden.

So things began to go sour. Then the coup of October took place when Peron was booted out and imprisoned. And then the old parties all started quarreling among themselves as to who was to succeed him. They finally put together this simply miserable cabinet, and by that time

Peron was back. He had succeeded in gaining his release from--was it Martin-Garcia. And he swept into town with his hordes of followers and overthrew this military regime which was supposed to be handed over to a civilian cabinet, and that was the end of that.

M: That's an instance where apparently an individual tried to do something about a regime we didn't like with disastrous consequences.

C: Exactly. We undoubtedly strengthened Peron by the attacks on him. I'm certain that the Bluebook was a frightful mistake. As Braden said rather sorrowfully to me, "Well, I promised our friends in Argentina that we'd publish these things, and we did it."

As a matter of fact, the Bluebook in all honesty was a very unfair document. I have read the documents on which it was based, and they don't imply anything like what the Bluebook implies about Peron's regime, which is another rather shocking affair.

M: At least the Alliance has not tried to do that. It has not tried to go that far.

C: No. But on the other hand, we've tried to stop this age-old custom of the rich evading taxes. We've tried to raise the living standards of the lower classes at the expense, to a considerable extent, of the upper classes. The upper classes just aren't buying that and the lower classes just don't have the power to insist upon it.

M: As far as the Johnson Administration is concerned, I have no questions further that I have to go into that I can think of. Are there any regarding the Johnson years that you think important that we haven't mentioned? I certainly don't want to limit you on those. I could listen to you talk about your earlier career for a great number of hours without

any difficulty at all. I find them fascinating.

C: No. As I say, I think I've known Johnson least of all the Presidents I've served under.

M: I notice your four-in-a-row autographed pictures there on your wall--four Presidents. You've actually served under a good deal more than that.

C: These are the ones I served under as Chief of Mission and who gave me their photographs obviously.

M: Is it possible, it may even be perhaps impertinent to ask--the Secretary of State when you joined the Foreign Service was Frank Kellogg. Can you compare Secretaries of State from Kellogg through Rusk?

C: Of course,I didn't see much of Kellogg. He was much too highly stratified for my lowly position.

M: Even back in the small service of those days.

C: Yes. Though I met Stimson I never knew him well. Who came after Stimson--

M: Hull.

C: Hull--again, met him, but I never was intimate with him. Ellis Briggs know him much better than I did.

M: I just read Briggs' book.

C: Stetinius I saw a fair amount of. I went to the Mexico City and San Francisco conferences and so naturally I had a fair chance to see him in action there. I never even knew Byrns. Marshall, I knew somewhat, not very well. I knew Acheson fairly well. I knew John Foster Dulles fairly well.

M: You mentioned that you made a tape for the Dulles project?

C: Yes.

M: That's good.

C: Then Herter I knew quite well, and Rusk I knew quite well.

M: Do you think Dulles and Rusk--Rusk worked high in the Department when Dulles was Secretary, do you think--

C: No, they weren't there together.

M: That's right. Rusk left in '53.

C: He left just before that, I think.

M: Are they fairly similar in their policies, do you think?

C: There's a certain similarity of policy. There's not much similarity personality I wouldn't think. Dulles had his own ideas, and he carried them out without much explanation to his juniors. Rusk, I think, was a more courteous, a more mellowed man. I knew Allen Dulles better than I did John Foster Dulles.

When I was in the Department in '53-'54, I had most of my dealings with Bedell Smith because Dulles was always so busy with European questions that he just didn't have time to see me. I saw him, of course, when they came to the Caracas Conference. I saw a fair amount of him then.

M: You mentioned just in the course of something else earlier your diaries. I hope you'll make provision for those diaries to go some place that they can ultimately be utilized. They should be fascinating.

C: I'm supposed to be writing a book. I haven't gotten very far. I've got about 110-120 pages written. Now I've reached the point where I'm no longer writing strictly from memory, and these diaries are endless. I have over twenty years of material.

M: I'll tell you the easy way to write the book. You can just have me out with a tape recorded and dictate it, and then we'll transcribe it for you, and then you can take it down to the publisher. We've done that for

a couple of people and are quite willing to make that service available if you'd like to utilize it.

C: That's very kind of you.

M: Sometimes it's a good deal easier than writing it out or having someone type it out for you.

C: What I'm doing is, I'm reading over the diaries--being in my own handwriting and not too easy to read, my handwriting being thoroughly messy--and then marking the passages I want to mention in my book.

You see, I served successively in Argentina, Yugoslavia, and Shanghai; and those were three real lulus.

M: And in three completely different parts of the world--hot spots in Latin American, Europe, and the Far East in succession. I shall look forward with a great deal of anticipation to your completing that book.

C: I've made very slow progress on it.

M: It's very generous of you to have me out here this morning, and thank you so much for your time.

C: Not at all.

GENERAL SERVICES ADMINISTRATION
NATIONAL ARCHIVES AND RECORDS SERVICE

Gift of Personal Statement

By John M. Cabot

to the

Lyndon Baines Johnson Library

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

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

2. It is the donor's wish to make the material donated to the United States of America by terms of this instrument available for research as soon as it has been deposited in the Lyndon Baines Johnson Library.

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

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

Signed John M. Cabot

Date March 16, 1970

Accepted Harry D. Middleton - for
Archivist of the United States

Date _____

Preparation of "Gift of Personal Statement"

A. If you do not wish to impose restrictions on the use of your tape and transcript and if you do not feel the need to retain literary property rights upon the material, please sign the enclosed statement and return it to the Oral History Project.

B. If you wish to restrict the use of your transcript for a period of time beyond the date of the opening of the Johnson Library, a new statement will be prepared (either by you or by us) deleting paragraph 2 and substituting the following, with one of the alternatives:

It is the donor's wish to make the material donated to the United States of America by the terms of the instrument available for research in the Lyndon Baines Johnson Library. At the same time, it is his wish to guard against the possibility of its contents being used to embarrass, damage, injure, or harass anyone. Therefore, in pursuance of this objective, and in accordance with the provisions of Sec. 507 (f) (3) of the Federal Property and Administrative Services Act of 1949, as amended (44 U.S.C. 397) this material shall not,

~~for a period of~~ _____ years

or

during the donor's lifetime

or

for a period of _____ years or until the donor's ~~prior~~ death

or

~~for a period of~~ _____ years or until _____ ~~years after~~ the death of the donor, whichever occurs ~~earlier~~

or

~~for a period of~~ _____ years or until _____ years after the death of the donor, whichever ~~occurs later~~

be available for examination by anyone except persons who have received my express written authorization to examine it.

C. If you wish to have the restriction imposed above apply to employees of the National Archives and Records Service engaged in performing normal archival work processes, the following sentence will be added to paragraph 2:

This restriction shall apply to and include employees and officers of the General Services Administration (including the National Archives and Records Service and the Lyndon Baines Johnson Library) engaged in performing normal archival work processes.

D. If you do not wish to have the restriction imposed above apply to employees of the National Archives and Records Service, the following sentence will be added to paragraph 2:

This restriction shall not apply to employees and officers of the General Services Administration (including the National Archives and Records Service and the Lyndon Baines Johnson Library) engaged in performing normal archival work processes. OK

E. If a restriction that extends beyond your lifetime is to be imposed in paragraph 2, the following paragraph (appropriately numbered) will be completed and added to the end of the "Gift of Personal Statement":

I hereby designate _____ to have, after my death, the same authority with respect to authorizing access to the aforesaid material as I have reserved to myself in paragraph 2 and paragraph 3 above.

F. If you wish to retain the literary property rights to the material for a period of time, the phrase in paragraph 1 "and all literary property rights" will be deleted and either of the following paragraphs (appropriately numbered) added to the end of the statement:

The donor retains to himself for a period of _____ years all literary property rights in the material donated to the United States of America by the terms of the instrument. After the expiration of this _____ year period, the aforesaid literary property rights will pass to the United States of America.

or

The donor retains to himself during his lifetime all literary property rights in the material donated to the United States of America by the terms of this instrument. After the death of the donor, the aforesaid literary property rights will pass to the United States of America.