

INTERVIEW XXXV

DATE: September 20, 1988

INTERVIEWEE: JOE A. CALIFANO, JR., with comments by Marcel Bryar

INTERVIEWER: Michael Gillette

PLACE: Mr. Califano's office, Washington, D.C.

Tape 1 of 1, Side 1

C: After the report was issued, the management [of the airlines] accepted the report; the union [International Association of Machinists] basically rejected the report. The issue was whether the union would go on strike and whether we could get a law passed to extend the non-strike period. And we came head up against the problem that was built in here, which is while the strike was enormously disruptive of travel by businessmen, it didn't rise to the level of emergency in the sense [that] the whole country would be economically ruined.

G: Was the fact that it was during the tourist season matter?

C: I think that made us want to deal with it and the fact that it really did hurt, if you will, thinking, writing America. It was a bigger thing to the readers of the *New York Times* and the newspapers than it was to the average guy on the street. And that was the hardest substantive problem we had in terms of dealing with the Congress. We did--we had the Senate because the President put Wayne Morse on a--

G: Emergency board?

Califano -- XXXV -- 2

C: --on the board and because Morse was deeply involved in this thing.

G: One of the memos in the collection here indicates that the President did not want military planes to be used to fly members of Congress around during this time. Why do you think he . . . ?

C: Because he wanted them subjected to the same inconveniences that other people were so it would be easy to get their votes. That was classic Johnson. He knew how tough it was going to be to get votes, particularly in the House, and he wanted those guys subjected to all those inconveniences and inability to move around, having to take the bus for 180 miles and all that kind of stuff, so they'd be more likely to vote to extend the no-strike period.

G: Were there a lot of requests for members of Congress to fly?

C: Yes. I think we held pretty tight on that because of the President.

G: Let's talk a minute about the national defense needs. Did this impair the movement of troops?

C: By and large [Robert] McNamara took the position that he could go either way. If we wanted the emergency board, he could provide facts to support that. If we didn't want the emergency board, he could get along without it. I think that's in one of those memos, maybe not that explicitly, but that's my recollection.

G: Did the other means of transportation--rail, bus, trucks--have any influence in this matter at all or were they strictly on the sidelines?

C: I think they were on the sidelines. They had an influence in the sense that people could move. They just moved a little more slowly. But I mean, I'm just looking here, July 7,

Califano -- XXXV -- 3

1966, [Gardner] Ackley's memo to the President. "The airline strike will have an insignificant impact on the economy." (Long pause)

G: Now Wayne Morse issued a proposal to end the strike and LBJ was urged to step in and do something from the White House. He seems to have been reluctant, initially, to get involved directly.

C: We were reluctant to get involved directly because we didn't know whether we could settle it; we didn't know even with the President's clout we could settle it. Eventually, they did reach an agreement under enormous pressure, and that came--where's the presidential diary, what it said? August 21? I guess we're really up to there. Let me just digress and just say stick this in your records. I notice here this note from George Christian to the President saying, "Califano talked to [Cyrus] Vance and to [George] Ball about Whitney Young and they'd cleared the way. Talked to Young and was delighted [with] the speed with which his request was satisfied. He'll probably go next week." This was Whitney Young wanting to go to Vietnam. Is this it?

B: It's the twenty-first.

G: Why did he want to go to Vietnam?

C: I can't remember. The other thing here which I think is important, we really were fighting for the guidelines. I note here Wayne Morse--this is July 12, 1966--Wayne Morse is saying to me that his best judgment is that, "a settlement at or near the union's demands would make it necessary for you to request wage-and-price controls either in this session or the next session of Congress if Vietnam continues and the economy stays at the current rate of growth. I'll give you a report on [it] this evening at the end of the day's bargaining." That was very much a part of why we got so deeply involved as we did even

Califano -- XXXV -- 4

though the risks were incredibly high. Here I see us trying to get Morse out front again with NBC. These are statements I was clearly writing for Wayne Morse when the union went out on strike.

G: Morse did introduce legislation to declare a national emergency in which--

C: Legislation that eventually passed the Senate. We got--it really was in the face of that legislation that the union agreed to a settlement. You can really get a sense of this. This is a memo of mine on July 20 to the President with [P.L. "Roy"] Siemiller, the head of the airline union asking for 117-million-dollar package and the Morse board having recommended a 76-million-dollar package. Siemiller saying he'd reject any offer less than that that the airlines put on the table. [Willard] Wirtz and us trying to build up public support against the union and for a settlement. And then Wirtz coming in in July 23 with a recommendation that [if there was] no way to get an agreement, we go to Congress to end the strike with legislation. Interestingly, here on July 23, when I talked to Dave Ginsburg to get his views on the 180-day no-strike period, he's essentially in agreement with it, but I note here he says, I say, "Ginsburg just returned from an evening in Cambridge with Otto Eckstein the economist, [Richard] Caves [?] the economist, [Richard] Neustadt and [John Thomas?] Dunlop, all of whom believed that broad legislation will be needed in this area within the next year if we are to maintain economic stability." This is really just the enormous pressure of inflation. You might find out, my memo of July 23, 1966, what the President, how he answered that. I think that was the key memo. That was the one that laid it out for him. Then getting Ginsburg to retool the Labor Department proposal. [Robert] Kintner, what a . . . Is he alive? Dead?

G: Who?

Califano -- XXXV -- 5

C: Kintner.

G: He's dead.

C: Did you ever interview him? Did anybody ever interview him?

G: Yes, we have.

C: Then we got Morse to introduce the joint resolution. [Everett] Dirksen introduced something else; we got [Charles] Murphy to keep (inaudible). Murphy constantly telling the airlines there'd be no rate increases all throughout this process so they wouldn't put another proposal. And we were getting reports, Victor Riesel, note, has called me. This is Monday, July 25. This is the kind of thing that makes you think about Johnson's varied agenda. "Riesel wanted me to pass along his views that Horston [Herbert Holmstrom] [and] [Douglas] McMahon of the TWU [Transport Workers Union of America] are very much activists and that McMahon as an ex-Communist Party member has retained his belief in vigorous activity. Riesel also said that he thinks you"--you the President--"should stay away from any legislative activity on the Hill and that the entire labor movement including people like the Steelworkers and the AFL-CIO [American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations] are just furious with Wayne Morse." We looked at. . . . Well, no, let's see. Okay.

G: Now there was a meeting in your office on July 26.

(Interruption)

C: Who did these; what are these?

G: I think those must be Ginsburg's diary cards. This is a name index to that [President's] Daily Diary that you've got there.

Califano -- XXXV -- 6

C: Here's it. I have it at two-thirty. Well, I've got it at two-thirty; I've got it at five. Shit, the whole day was devoted to this. I talked to Whitney Young at ten-thirty in the morning. I don't know whether he was returning--returning from Vietnam. And then the whole day, Wirtz, the President, the cabinet meeting, then this group, then the President, then this group again. Out to home, 11:30 p.m. These were just meetings all, I'm sure, on the legislation, trying to put together ways to get the legislation passed. I noticed--I start the next morning at 8:00 a.m. with another meeting on the strike with McNamara and others and the President. I think this was just part of the whole--

G: Were the Machinists actively lobbying the Hill against the legislation?

C: Meaningless, the whole (inaudible). As a matter of principle they opposed legislation that would break strikes and . . .

G: Did you have any support in the labor movement?

C: None. And we didn't expect any. And then I noticed on the twenty-seventh the transfer workers' union went out; we put out an executive order to block them, to create an emergency board. Meanwhile, the work--Ackley's work and the other work continues on trying to find some way to settle the damned thing. "If John Flynt charged there at the White House"--"Democrat George (inaudible) denies existence of an air transport emergency is pressuring operating airlines to hold government officials even when this means bumping somebody else. Flynt introduced a resolution calling the CAB [Civil Aeronautics Board] to embargo airline reservations for all government officials including congressmen. If this is done I think the people who presently deny the existence of an emergency will recognize the true situation. Flynt's remarks were primarily about Wirtz's suggestion yesterday that Senate delay action on legislation to send striking airline

Califano -- XXXV -- 7

machinists back to their jobs during 180-day mediation period. Wirtz testified that the strike, 'against the (inaudible) created a national emergency for those heading in that direction.'" This was part of this very difficult problem of trying to walk the line between the labor movement and the legislation. But it's increasingly clear to me that we really left Morse out there to hang out and dry.

G: This is a UPI [United Press International] dispatch, July 28. How was the administration able to facilitate the travel of government officials? Did you get the airlines to prioritize--

C: I don't think we really did much for them. I'm sure that Larry O'Brien, when congressmen called him, called Charlie Murphy at the CAB or somebody and said, "Let's try and get on the airlines; let's try to get him a ticket or get him something." I don't think I did much--I don't think I did anything. I think I was very much--my recollection is that both--the President did order the end of all nonessential government travel. He didn't want military used for to transport even congressmen for the reason I mentioned and he also wanted to indicate that the military was taking care of military needs. He saw all that out there and I think we did not do much. I guess we then brought the union and the airlines in here. That's what all these meetings on July 26 are leading up to getting the union and the airlines to agree. At some point we made a decision that the President--that it was worth bringing them in to Washington. And my hunch is that that paper up front really--that paper we didn't understand before probably really belongs back here with a list of the people coming in.

G: Probably July instead of June.

C: The kind of nuances that the President got into really are indicated here with Marvin Watson sending him a note to ask him which rooms he wanted the union and the airlines

Califano -- XXXV -- 8

to go into, either the rooms he had as vice president or less nice rooms. Think about that, or think about the extent to which he wanted everything just so.

G: You're even telling him what the menu is for lunch.

C: Yes. I then tell him on Friday that we are making--well, he meets in the morning and tells them--he meets with them on Friday morning in the Cabinet Room and then sends them off to reach a settlement.

G: Were you there when he talked with them?

C: Yes, but I don't remember. I gave him talking points and I guess he followed them because his editing is on these talking points, which he says--I had said, "I'm going to be waiting for a report from Secretary Wirtz that you've done what now needs to be done, that you've reached a responsible settlement," and he changes that to, "I'm hoping for a report," and he strikes out, "from Secretary Wirtz," because by this time he's so pissed off at Wirtz for being pro-union, and not doing what he tells him to do, and what have you. "I'm hoping for a report that you've done what now needs to be done, that you've reached a responsible settlement in the national welfare." When I tell them what they're having for lunch he says--I can't--what is that word? Do you know?

G: Convenient? Looks like.

C: Yes. "When convenient." This is my memo of July 29 when I tell them exactly what we're sending them for lunch. "Fine," he says, "I'd like to go over and meet and five minutes before they're ready and they'll be ready with a settlement and then bring them back to the White House with me around the three or four [o'clock] period." We ultimately--

G: Did you sit in on the negotiations?

Califano -- XXXV -- 9

C: I was in and out over there. I did not sit in--I did essentially what I'd done in the steel strike situation in 1965. I was in and out trying to find out what was going on and trying to push Wirtz.

G: So did Wirtz and [James] Reynolds essentially chair the meetings or--

C: Well, they kept going back and forth from room to room.

G: I see.

C: I did write--we finally got a settlement. . . . Well . . .

G: Any insight on the individuals involved? You have a list?

C: Yes, just a second. Let me just look. (Long pause) Then we did the twenty-ninth with all the panoply. We had the media at nine; Moyers had his press briefing at nine-thirty-five, announced that the President had had the meeting and asked them to try and get together. It's all in his press briefing of that morning.

Okay. The day goes on--at some point--I was just thinking about Kintner. Here's Kintner having a staff meeting on all the minutiae of. . . . Okay. Now. That night, the agreement is reached, the President comes over, tells the press just before ten [o'clock] that there is an agreement, but he wanted to go on television. That was also the day--when he wanted to go on television and he wanted to do it at ten o'clock, right in the break between the shows, and he wanted a statement that was short enough to just get on the tube and announce it, which accounts for the statement I wrote. "We are pleased that a settlement (inaudible) prolonged disputes reach their free collective bargaining; the airlines appreciate the enlightening and constructive assistance of the President and Secretary Wirtz. (Inaudible)." The President went on live TV with his little statement here. Sorry. Okay? Between the nine o'clock shows and the ten o'clock shows, and it

Califano -- XXXV -- 10

was timed for that. When the President made some changes in his statement at the last minute--I notice Jim Gaither's here on my calendar--when he [the President] made the changes, we needed somebody to change--you know the story?--change the teleprompter so he could read it off a teleprompter, but everybody had gone. The teleprompter operator had gone. And I'm in the Oval Office and he's banging--he's trying to find somebody that can type the teleprompter so he hits the hotline for my office, thinking one of my secretaries would be there. Nobody's there except Gaither who's coming to work for me but whom I haven't had a chance to see because of all this.

G: This is his first day?

C: This is his first day on the job, or second day. He's been trying to see me for two--whatever day. Thursday. So he's sitting out there. He picks up the phone, and he says something like, "Joe Califano's line," or, "He's not here, Mr. President," and Johnson said, "I know goddamned well he's not there. He's here with me." He said, "Do you know how to type on a teleprompter typewriter?" Gaither says, no, he doesn't know. Johnson slams the receiver down and after that we got my secretaries trained in how to use that typewriter and I don't know how many other people, but I'm sure we didn't need to because I'm sure from that moment on [Marvin] Watson had within a minute's reach somebody available to do that. I do remember that. I don't think Gaither will ever forget that.

G: That's some initiation. Was there any thought given--

C: Now you really get a sense of how--this is a digression--but how relentless the life was over there because we finish this at ten-thirty, eleven o'clock at night and then the next Saturday morning at nine-forty-five we've got a meeting with Burke Marshall who we

Califano -- XXXV -- 11

made chairman, I guess, of the draft commission, which we had the first meeting of at 10:00 a.m. the next morning. Go ahead.

G: In an earlier memo you had observed the fact that the Machinists' membership had voted down a lot of settlement proposals initially. Was there any thought given to the fact that this announcement from the White House might be premature?

C: There was great concern--well, not that it was premature. That accounts for all those meetings in my office the day before. The President was in and out of those meetings all day long. The main issue being, do we really bring the President in full tilt? Suppose it blows up in his face? We decided that we would bring him in.

G: But you had two potential problems. First, that the negotiators, or the union and management representatives, could not reach an accord, and secondly, that even if they did the union membership would not go along. How much emphasis was put on the latter?

C: That was the big risk and it was related to the extent to which we could trust Siemiller. And we really didn't trust him, but we thought we had to take the risk because nobody short of the President could bring this thing to an end in some reasonable way related to the guidelines.

G: Did Siemiller offer any assurances with regard to the vote?

C: No. Did he offer assurances? He agreed to the settlement. When it ultimately went out for the vote--actually the vote didn't take place for about three weeks. If my recollection is right, part of the reason for that was hopefully to provide time to get the members to support it. What Siemiller did in that connection, I don't know but my sense would be

Califano -- XXXV -- 12

that he didn't do a hell of a lot. It's possible the Machinists--they're a difficult union.

Even as we sit here today they're difficult for Eastern Airlines to deal with.

(Long pause) The other thing about the settlement which--we had held to a 3.2 per cent guidepost that basically--that was the average increase in productivity, and any labor settlement that was 3.2 per cent or less was not inflationary because the productivity would make up for the gains. If it was more, it was inflationary. In the airline settlement, because we couldn't bring it in at 3.2 per cent, in the President's statement he indicated that very high productivity of the airline industry, high productivity increases, and that in this industry this settlement was not inflationary. You have to remember that the guideposts were enormously difficult, controversial with labor, and labor felt we were just holding them down. And a lot of people on the Hill were opposed to the guideposts: liberal Democrats, pro-labor Democrats. Ackley, after the airline settlement, wanted to put out a statement that said the administration is now going on an industry-by-industry basis for determining what's inflationary and what's not inflationary. We were faced with major negotiations coming up with the Electrical Workers and General Electric. Another area in which there was high productivity in the industry, high increases in productivity. And Ackley asked for an okay to do that from me. My recollection is that we didn't do that publicly; we just let that happen. We didn't do it as explicitly as Ackley wanted, but in fact the airline strike marked a very fundamental change in our economic policy on that piece of it.

(Tape 1 of 2, Side 2)

C: The union vote was to be Sunday, July 31. At some point early that morning the President calls me, 7:20 a.m., and obviously tells me, either that call or the next call, to

Califano -- XXXV -- 13

come on up to Camp David. I guess we flew up there in a helicopter, got there about one-fifteen. At some point we're starting to get reports that the union members are not voting for the agreement on the East Coast, and Johnson says to me, "Get on the phone and start calling people across the country. Get our people out; get the Machinists," whoever--I can't even remember who I called--to get people to support this contract as the vote in Chicago and vote in Kansas City and vote in St. Louis where all the airline hubs were. They weren't hubs then. And as I go to do that--we're at the pool at Camp David--I step on a bee, and my toe just swells up enormously, the size of a golf ball, my little toe. Johnson tells one of these Filipino mess boys to get some ice--forget about what their reaction was, just get some ice; put it on my toe so I can get on the telephone. So I went up to the house; we have to get some pictures of Camp David so I can understand it. I went up to the house. I remember just lying on a couch with my foot up and this ice thing over my toe, calling. As it all turned out, I notice I called through lunch because I'm not having lunch with everybody else, and as it turned out, to no avail.

They have to re-Xerox this day. They got it of the . . .

G: Let's see. What's the date?

C: It's July 31. You just can't tell what the times are. Actually, July 29, 30, and 31. The others are okay. 1966. I just can't tell what time the President talked to me and he talked to Morse.

G: What response did you receive on the phone during these--?

C: The people would do what they could do. The problem is I probably have no notes of any of that. We'll just have to go through those separately.

Califano -- XXXV -- 14

I noticed something about Bobby Kennedy and it reminds me of something. We came back to Washington. I guess we set it up the day before, and the first order of business is a meeting on the airline strike at eight-thirty in the morning. And I notice again I must have spent the whole day on this. I met with the President at eight-thirty in the morning, again in the middle of the day, and then, she has from eight-fifty-five to ten. Let's go to August 1 here. I had a wake-up service here call me at seven-thirty on August 1. These notes are marvelous, aren't they? [Reading from the President's Daily Diary] "To Joe Califano's office--backing out of Califano's office when he saw Mildred Stegall at her desk and went to visit with her briefly, then again to Califano's office to join the meeting in progress."

G: That is August 1? Must be.

C: This is August 1. Going right through until ending up with a meeting in his office. What we were faced with was having to now try and get the Morse resolution passed.

G: What was LBJ's reaction to the union vote?

C: I think he was frustrated, disappointed. I don't remember any particular anger.

G: Did he feel that Siemiller had let him down?

C: Yes. And he told him that at a meeting of labor leaders sometime down the road. We had them over for lunch, and we had a whole bunch of them in the East Wing for lunch. [Jimmy] Hoffa was trying to take over part of the Machinists and I get a call from Hoffa with a proposed idea about a suggestion to settle the strike. George Reedy comes in with a proposal saying we can't get a good bill passed and they ought to send an emissary that [George] Meany would trust to see Meany and get a thirty-day mediation period. Presumably, Reedy would be the emissary. I don't know. Telegram from the head of

Califano -- XXXV -- 15

U.S. Steel. (Long pause) We're still walking this fine line with Morse. There was Morse on the floor that Friday, August 5, saying, because the confusion in Wirtz's position, "The Secretary of Labor is authorizing a statement to the Senate that he thought he had made it clear when he was before the committee that although the administration's not taking any position one way or the other with regard to the passage of legislation, if the Senate is to pass legislation the Secretary of Labor would favor the Morse bill."

G: There was a question of whether the Congress or the President should handle this anti-strike mechanism. Is that--?

C: Yes, which was ultimately compromised? I think it was whether the--well let me get into it a minute. Who was getting married Saturday, Luci [Johnson]?

B: (Inaudible)

C: What?

B: Luci.

C: "... advised by an authorized spokesman for the administration at the White House (inaudible) on the floor saying, 'This isn't accurate.'" That's me. On the House side we're clearly going to have more trouble. [Harley] Staggers, who's chairman of the House Commerce Committee which would handle legislation, said he's going to have very extensive hearings. This is also bringing home to us the whole issue of whether we're going to need wage-and-price controls because I'm reporting to the President that Ginsburg is saying maybe we ought to have a price notification bill where you ask to submit any price increase in advance. (Long pause) I guess the bill passes the Senate. This is going to have to be reconstructed. What I'm looking at here--I guess the bill passes the Senate.

Califano -- XXXV -- 16

G: August 5.

C: Was the bill that passed the Senate one that just gave the President the power to end to the strike, or end it?

G: Keep them there for 150 days, my notes show.

C: What page is that?

G: Five.

C: Well, Morse would have the Congress order them back to work for sixty days and then the President, so, "the Senate votes to send the striking workers back to work for thirty days and give LBJ power to keep them there for 150 days."

Okay. Eventually, after a lot of back and forth, the House [Interstate and] Foreign Commerce Committee passes essentially the Senate bill. At that point, the Speaker [John McCormack] calls me and says that he'll get a rule--this is Saturday, August 13--he says he'll get a rule on the bill on Monday; he's not sure he can pass the bill on the floor of the House. I say, "Well, why don't you get the rule and then hold it for a couple of days and maybe we can hold the bill over Siemiller's head, and report that to the President." And I remember the President and the Speaker--because everybody wants a settlement. The Speaker's afraid if he can't pass this bill, he'll look like hell. Also, the way he transmits that to me is by telling me that, but also telling me if he doesn't [pass this bill] the kind of bill that's likely to pass is one that will dump the whole problem on the President's lap, give him wide discretion and force him to be the strike breaker, and the President does not want to be the strike breaker.

The union reaches a settlement that exceeds the guidelines but Ackley puts the best face on it that he can, saying that because the high productivity it's consistent with

Califano -- XXXV -- 17

them. And Wirtz proves Ginsburg is right by coming in to the President with a memo with a major assault on the guideposts, saying we ought to abandon them. Now, this may be the draft board. This stuff, early stuff, I don't know what date these notes are, but this is clearly related to the legislation with the President being very concerned about what stand we take on the legislation, Wirtz indicating to me that he didn't think the bill would pass the House, and Clifford raising a lot of amber flags saying what basis do we ask for a bill? The President--this is a meeting with the President. The President's saying, "We can establish that this has affected our defense needs. A lot of inconvenience but not much more." The discussion here--"These are not defense issues; largely tourists are involved. We can't make a case for the Morse bill." Evolving into a wider-ranging discussion of do we need a tax bill? "What other stabilization measures do we need or both? We know we're going to need thirteen billion dollars more for Vietnam," and then . . .

G: This is the President talking?

C: This is this group talking. This, I'm sure, is the President: "I'd rather fight eight men than fourteen," but I don't know what he was referring to. Because I put it in quotes; the only time I'd do that was if it was him. Management was clearly willing to take a strike. If this is before the twenty-eighth, this meeting--this must be the twenty-sixth with the President walking in and out. This first one. Yes, July 26. This is all a discussion of the wage-price guideline, I mean, what the cost of this thing is going to be. (Laughter) What I'm laughing at is here's somebody calling me, wanting to present something to the President with an assurance that it will be hung in the White House on Columbus Day. (Long pause) These numbers are all--this is the three-year contract.

Califano -- XXXV -- 18

(Long pause) I don't know what this is but this is the President talking to me. It's so garbled. It's got Vietnam and it's got. . . . (Long pause) This is the President talking to me about the statement he wants to make. I don't think that adds anything to what we've got, at least that I'm aware of. (Long pause) Jesus. I really kept notes, didn't I? This is all Johnson. This is not related to the airline strike but this is all Johnson on Kennedy.

G: What's he talking about?

C: Kennedy. It must have been something related to the cities and urban areas.

G: This is about the time of the [Abraham] Ribicoff--

C: I wonder if it is. When were the Ribicoff hearings? Go get your calendar. August 1966.

B: The first part of the hearings began August 15. There were three parts.

C: The President is talking to me. Obviously the Ribicoff hearings are going on. This is sometime after August 13 and before August 26. He said, "No one had formulated poverty programs until I had formulated them." We got to how much we did for the cities, estimate of what might be done under the rent supplement program, try to show what we have done with public building and low income groups. There's some criticism of Kennedy I can't follow here. What we've done with education and Social Security, what programs went into cities with over twenty-five hundred people, ten billion dollars more for the cities than the year Kennedy came into office. Get friendly members on a subcommittee to support us, get every quotation and every message LBJ ever made that would affect an urban area. What we recommended to Congress and what we got back from Congress--compared it with what Kennedy recommended and what he got. That was actually between August 13 and August 16, that conversation took place.

Califano -- XXXV -- 19

(Long pause) This really relates--we get into the investment tax credit. We should have these things when we deal with the broader economic stuff in 1966, because that's what most of this is about. Most of the August 13 to August 26, 1966.

This reminds me of something else that came up here. Did we have an almost rail strike or was this the last big strike? I guess it was here. I remember the President saying in the course of this that there was no way the Kennedys would vote for Wayne Morse's legislation--we'd have to find out whether they did or not; I don't think they did--in committee or on the floor. They would never cast an anti-labor vote because both of them wanted to be president, that they were very sensitive because Jack Kennedy in his first run for Congress had beaten a guy because he'd voted against the draft. The draft passed by one vote in the Roosevelt Administration and clobbered them, and they were very conscious as to what a vote like this could do. So then in all the head counts on the Morse bill--he kept telling me, the Kennedys will not vote, will never vote, for an anti-labor bill, that labor says this. He's also telling me that the initial order of back to work should come from the Congress, that that's a legislative decision that should not be delegated to the President, and then that was supposed to make the Congress the strike breakers. Here are just some notes of Bobby Kennedy trying to block the Morse legislation, trying to get a recess of [Jacob] Javits and [Ralph] Yarborough praising Morse. This is a meeting on August 1, I guess; they must have rejected the--August 1, would this be?

G: Yes. That's the day that they voted it down.

C: They voted down on the thirty-first. This is that meeting in the morning and this is the President saying, "Our lawyers tell us that no national emergency exists, that some cities

Califano -- XXXV -- 20

might be hurt. We can't have a law every time we have a strike. What we do depends on discussions in Congress on collective bargainings, on conditions at the time. We don't want to look foolish in pressing for this law and not being able to make the case. We don't want to be in the position of forcing people to pass it. I know--we'll have to find out how--the GE thing was very much in the back of our minds because I notice I'm talking to Joe Byrne [?] here; I'm talking to George Meany about General Electric and we're trying to figure out our position: endorse something, stay silent, or oppose anything. And we ultimately ended up saying what we said if Congress was going to pass a bill we wanted them to pass the Morse bill. You really have to understand that in the context of the fact that we basically drafted the Morse bill. We were drafting Morse's statements on the floor. Ginsburg was working on it; I was talking to Morse, so it was a very delicate situation for us.

G: The President really seems to have faded into the background after that initial union vote.

C: Well he didn't want to be out front on an anti-labor bill. He just didn't want to do it. And the more I--I don't know. With twenty years reflection, particularly the more I think about it, he had to know what this was doing to Morse. He just had to know. That doesn't mean he wished it upon him in the long haul. And I also remember--I can't put my finger on it. I just have a recollection of Bobby Kennedy particularly trying in some way to force us to publicly take a stand for Morse and against labor. These are just senators I'm obviously talking to: [Everett] Dirksen, [Mike] Mansfield.

End of Tape 1 of 1 and Interview XXXV

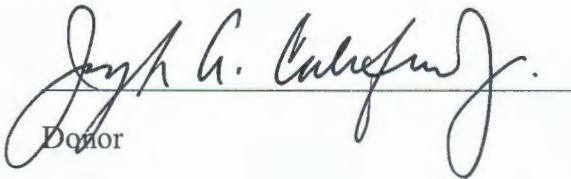
NATIONAL ARCHIVES AND RECORDS ADMINISTRATION
LYNDON B. JOHNSON PRESIDENTIAL LIBRARY

Addendum to the Legal Agreement Pertaining to the Oral History Interviews of

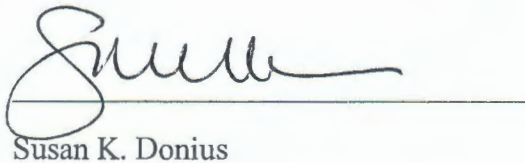
Joseph A. Califano

Interviewed by: Paige Mulhollan, Joe B. Frantz and Michael L. Gillette

I, Joseph A. Califano, hereby remove the restrictions on the use of the transcripts and recordings that states, "During my lifetime I retain all copyright in the material given to the United States by the terms of this instrument. Thereafter the copyright in both the transcripts and tape recordings shall pass to the United States Government. During my lifetime researchers may publish 'fair use' quotations from the transcripts and tape recordings without my express consent in each case." of the sixty-three personal interviews conducted with me by Paige Mulhollan, Joe B. Frantz, and Michael L. Gillette, currently at the Lyndon Baines Johnson Presidential Library. (see attachment for interview details)


Donor

5-28-19
Dated


Susan K. Donius

July 17, 2019
Dated

Director for Presidential Libraries