INTERVIEW I

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INTERVIEWER: JOE B. FRANTZ

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F: When did you first get aware of Lyndon Johnson?

C: I became aware of Lyndon Johnson, I think, when I came back in 1958 to be the budget officer for the State Department. In those days, Lyndon Johnson was chairman of the Subcommittee on Appropriations for the State Department. And as a consequence, when they took our appropriations to the Senate, he had time to open the hearings. He didn't stay there for all the hearings, but he opened them and I was always intrigued, though at a distance. I was at a table making part of the presentation, but I was always intrigued with the number of balls he had in the air. He had George Reedy scurrying about with memos, and somebody else whispering in his ear; there were telephone conversations going on, and he seemed to be very much at ease handling four or five things at the very same time.

F: Did he do some querying of you as budget officer or was that perfunctory and he left that to other people?

C: No, no. I didn't see anything that he did, even in those days, as being perfunctory. It would seem to me that when he was involved, he really was involved, in those early days; it was during the last days of the Eisenhower Administration. And I found him supportive of

our budget. I think he felt and expressed his feelings that we were not putting enough action into our budget, that we really didn't have enough money in the budget to do the things that he thought were important. So he was very active as long as he was there, you know.

F: Now, any congressional official who sits on a committee that oversees you is a person to think about; I have been on the outer peripheries of some State Department activities, and particularly noted the concern over how John Rooney was feeling about some things.

Did you have anything like that with Johnson? Was he a factor in the State Department thinking in those days, as a stump we've got to plow around or something.

C: No, he really wasn't. He didn't impose as much of his personality into the State Department affairs as a Rooney did. I guess, in a sense, you would call him more of a statesman in the sense that he didn't get so personally involved.

F: You didn't feel that he was out to gut you at all?

C: No. We did have one item in the State Department budget. It was sort of a quirk in the State Department budget that we knew that Johnson had interest in, and that was in that irrigation program between the United States and Mexico on the Rio Grande. And by a quirk of it being an international agreement, it was in the State Department budget. So we always knew that Johnson would be interested in that one and found him to be helpful. But in terms of imposing, being picayune, being hurtful, I never felt that thing when he was on the budget process, the way we did with a Rooney, for

example, on the House. Well, I think that he didn't have the time of a Rooney, but he had a broader perspective than a Rooney. A Rooney had a narrow perspective.

F: Right, right. You never felt that he lived for the next time the State Department was going to come down to see him.

C: That's right. But I think in those days, in the senatorial days, he didn't loom as a big influence in the State Department. Now, when he became vice president, his influence became a great deal more, mainly because of his trips abroad; he did a lot of traveling abroad.

F: Did you get involved in any of those?

C: Oh, I went with him on almost every trip. Because of my job in the State Department, in the beginning, I worked more than anyone else in the State Department in sort of developing logistics and the programs, not the substance of the programs but what the program would be. Later on, I became more involved in making sure the logistics of the program would work.

F: Who briefed the work?

C: Well, he was always impatient with the State Department, and I think rightly so. He would look at those books and say, "There's not a damn thing in it. It's just a bunch of words. There's nothing new. There's no new policy. There's no new statement. There's no new reason for me to go." So we tried to get the desk officers first, and then later assistant secretaries of the area that he was going to, to brief him. But he was very impatient in what he called pap, you know,

the boiler-plate, the standard line, the equivocation of State Department positions, this and that. He was impatient always, very impatient, angry in fact, that some of the State Department feared that he would do the wrong thing, or say the wrong thing, or treat people the wrong way.

I remember once when we were going to the Far East, some State Department guy talked about the Asians being small people, and Johnson, I remember, said, "These State Department people think I'm going to go out there, and pat a little guy on the head and say, 'Little man, do this.'" He said, "They don't give me any credit for having any sense about how to treat people." But this was always a fear--that he would go out and say something, or do something, or commit to something--of the Foreign Service people. But I would like to make the point it was not the fear of Dean Rusk. Dean Rusk liked Johnson, trusted Johnson, appreciated Johnson, in those days.

For example, one time, well, just as a little bit of background. The Foreign Service would always take the attitude: "Don't let him out of your sight. Have somebody with him. If he sees a head of state, if he sees an important person, make sure that somebody's there to guard and write down." Rusk called me in one time and said, "Now, you're going on this trip"--I forget where it was--and he said, "I want you to make sure that one thing happens. I want you to make sure that he sees the heads of state personally and alone." He said, "There is no person in America that can equal Johnson in knee-to-knee conversation with another man." He said, "When the

Vice President is knee-to-knee with the heads of state, there is no one who is more convincing, more human, or makes a better contact for us." So he said, "I want you to make sure that he gets some personal, alone time with each of these people."

Well, now, this was very difficult, because the ambassadors, of these countries felt that they needed to be there and State Department escort officers [did, too]. But it shows, I think, the confidence that Rusk had in him.

F: Would Johnson sort of run people off sometimes when too many were gathered around?

C: Oh, he was very good at this, you know. I remember a time when we were in the Middle East; it was hot and dirty, and the hotel wasn't very comfortable. He was in a sort of an impatient mood and I remember Carl Rowan and I went through the room after everything was quieted down. We wanted to see about something. And in a very angry, impatient way, he ordered us to get the hell out. You know, "I don't want to see you. I don't want to talk to you." And then later on, he was always capable of saying to Carl, "Carl and Bill, I really need to talk to you." Said, "I don't want you to hold anything personal about that." He said, "People were just coming into my room. I counted eight or ten people coming in for this or that, and I just said to myself, 'The next person that comes through this door, I'm going to give them hell.'" And he said, "You all were just unfortunately . . ."

F: Right. (Laughter)

C: But on the other hand, a person in that position, there are ten Secret Service people, and their own advisors, and hangers-on of every kind [around]. The amazing thing to me is how many people attach themselves, out of their own needs, to a person like [that]. And then how much you have to put up with it. And he put up with a great deal before he would get too impatient.

F: On those vice presidential trips, you had the sort of opening travel over to Africa.

C: Yes, on that one John Rooney and his wife went along. I went along. But we first went to Africa. Bill Moyers was sort of the presidential aide on that trip. We came back through Paris. We went to Geneva, and then to Paris, when he had some NATO exercises to do; then we went on home. That was our very first trip that he had taken abroad as Vice President.

F: Did that work out without any great hitches?

C: Yes. An interesting thing happened on that trip: we went to Senegal. And the ambassador in Senegal was a Foreign Service officer, sort of an old-line Foreign Service officer. And the old-line Foreign Service officers' attitude was, you know, they dealt with officials, they dealt with the foreign ministry, and they were representing officialdom of America to officialdom there, and to hell with the people. The Ambassador and his wife briefed Mr. Johnson and our people on behavior, and one of the things they said [was]: "Don't get out among these people because they're dirty; they have disease and among everything else, don't shake hands with them unless

you wear gloves." Well, you know, telling Lyndon Johnson this was like waving a red flag at a bull. It was hot; it was dirty and it was dusty; but he went among the people. He shook hands with them, and really it just was fantastic the way he got among people.

F: When he got instructions like this that he didn't intend to observe, he didn't argue. He just went on and did, by his behavior.

C: Yes, but one thing he did. He was very angry with this attitude of seclusion, and I think I heard him brief [on the subject]. One of the things, after he became President, was that I would take the ambassadors over for him to brief. And one of the things that he always briefed out new ambassadors on was to get out among the people, don't live in your air conditioned houses, ride to work in your air conditioned cars and work in your air conditioned offices. Your job is to represent America to the people of that country. And it was interesting how Johnson, himself, how hard he worked on those foreign trips.

I remember in Taiwan, the airport was a couple miles from downtown Taiwan, and Johnson walked that distance in the heat from down there among the crowd. Now, he didn't do it just for his personal ego, though I think he got pleasure out of the crowd. He got some pleasure, but he had a bigger point in mind that he expressed several times to me and to others: that is, that he was trying to demonstrate a humanness of the politicians to the politicians of Asia. And then he said, you know, "One way to get that foreign minister and that prime minister out among those people is for me to do it, because

they have to walk with me. And if they walk with me, they're going to be among their own people, you know, and this may be the first time that they've ever done that.

F: A real exposure.

C: A real exposure. But I was always impressed at how hard he worked. You know, I would feel guilty. I would ride out through all those crowds in that air conditioned car, and then he would arrive at this airplane and just, well, not exhausted . . .

F: He was wrung out.

C: . . . but dirty and wrung out.

Another warm, warm memory I have of all that, though, is Mrs. Johnson's graciousness and love that she poured out, and dedication to him, her accommodation of him, her understanding, her help to him. You know, when he would come in in that exhausted state, the way she would support him and help him. I always kidded my wife about what a wonderful example she is for women because she did so much for her husband.

F: Did he take the varying travel conditions in pretty good stride?

C: Yes, he was amazing. He always frightened me because I always thought of his health being a little bit precarious after his heart attack. But he always frightened me at how hard he worked; he did rest occasionally, but he never stinted on what he had to do. So he took those conditions in stride. He was careful of what he ate, of course. He took people along to prepare the food he liked and to make sure that the food was prepared well, but he never complained about it being too hot, too cold, too dry. Now, certainly, he

expected his personal accommodations to be--

F: Plumbing ought to work.

C: Yes, plumbing ought to work and the air conditioning ought to work. As a consequence, he resisted, very firmly, ever staying or being the guest of a head of state in their house or in their guest house.

F: Did that ever cause problems?

C: It caused a bigger problem with the damned State Department people, again. The ambassador would say, "Well, the head of state will be offended if you don't." Occasionally, an ambassador would twist his arm hard enough, and he would agree. And every time he agreed, I was sorry that he agreed, because the conditions were bad inevitably in some of the guest houses and therefore, made my problems harder, you know. But it really caused no problem with the head of state.

F: Did you put him in embassy residences mainly, or did you put him in hotels?

C: The place that I liked best was in a hotel. Then we could fix it as we wanted to accommodate him. Often, he stayed at an embassy residence; and in some cases, we moved the ambassador and the family simply because there wasn't enough room. But we liked the hotel better; I think he liked it better because everybody was there together. He was there, his personal staff, the State Department staff.

F: Sort of more flexible.

C: Yes, and more independence. You know, he didn't like being a guest at somebody else's house. He liked to be in charge, and he had more flexibility of movement. It was much better.

F: Now, at most of those state dinners that you get in some of the countries that have entirely different eating habits, did you ever get into any real problems with food, something far too exotic?

C: Yes, often. But he was a good sport. He generally ate before he went, so that he really wasn't hungry, so he could play with it, you know, and he could nibble; he could mess it around and he did a very good game. You know, he never embarrassed the United States any place. He was a good symbol, I thought, of the good American overseas, honest, direct, but never did things in a petty way that would embarrass us. He could be petty sometimes with his personal staff, but I never saw him petty in an international way that caused any problems.

F: Did he have a temptation to, once in a while, when he was just out of sorts to turn to you and just put the whole onus of the State Department on you, and say, "Oh, you State Department types," or something?

C: He never did that with me because of, I think, a personal relationship that developed between us; also, because I was more administration and as an administrator, I was more of a doer. So he saw me as a doer versus the State Department man.

F: You were a man who moved things around.

C: I was a man who moved things; in fact, I think that I became sort of a superstition with him, that when I was on a trip things went well. I was lucky, and things did go well. He took a couple of trips without me where things didn't go well for one reason or another; not because

I wasn't there, but I--

F: You've got to get a combination of luck and . . .

C: Right. And I was very lucky with him. I remember, he went to Hammarskjold's funeral in Sweden. I had not planned to go. My wife had recently had an operation; she was all right, but I felt sort of obligated to stay at home. I remember he called in the afternoon of the day he was leaving, or the evening he was leaving, saying that he would like to have me go, that Mrs. Johnson wasn't going and Walter Jenkins wasn't going and that I was the only one he really trusted to sort of look after him without his own people being there. I got the feeling that he sort of looked at me as a lucky charm on those overseas missions, and I personally got a lot of ego satisfaction out of going. Lots of hard work, sometimes some abuse, not abuse because I was State Department, but abuse because things weren't the way we wanted them when we got there. And oftentime, they weren't the way I had tried to set them up or we wanted them set up.

He was interesting in his contrast of never having lost the need to save money, yet seemingly not worrying how much money was spent. For example, we would be in a big hotel. We might have taken a whole floor or a whole hotel, and he didn't complain about that, and it may have cost us an awful lot of money on the changes we made in the plumbing or the air conditioning. But, you know, he was capable of going around and saying, "Now, Bill, I told you to put everybody two to a room. I don't expect the taxpayer to pay for single rooms and all these guys traveling to live in style over here at the

taxpayers' expense. You know, I want every person to be two people to a room, you know, on this trip and I want . . ." And he was capable, then, of sort of abusing you if you didn't fulfill this. He was capable of getting up in the middle of the night and going around to see if: "Bill, did you put two people in a room like I told you to?"

F: Yes. Or, "Are they having too much room service?"

C: That's right. You were speaking of state dinners. One of the things that he always [objected to]. It was amusing. I think he got used to it, but he was very impatient with protocol. He was very impatient with stilted things that people did for form and there was no meaning. For example, he was very impatient to get to a country and there would be an honor guard and he'd have to go up and down that line. And he used to say, "That doesn't save a country. That doesn't keep a country from going communist. It doesn't help the people. Bill, I don't want an honor guard." Well, I generally couldn't avoid it, and he would jibe me a little in fun that, "You didn't get what I want done"; but he would do it.

F: With as long a stride as his, I imagine he had the other heads of state hurrying.

C: Panting, you know. Another thing he always objected to was signing the guest book of the president or putting a wreath on the tomb. Well, he used to kid about it, but objected on the basis, "Now, I'm the vice president, and you know what happens? All you other guys, you sit down at the end of the table and down there at the end of

the table are all the pretty girls and the young women. And I sit up at this end, and on one side is an old lady that's too doddery to be able to have any interest and on the other side is another old lady. You always put me with these old ladies." Well, he was kidding, but that's where protocol would seat you. But he always injected this kind of humor, and a personalized humor that was fun, I thought. He was really fun to be with in many ways.

F: Did he play a kind of a coach's role sometimes and room check to see who was out on the town in a foreign place? See that nobody got too much hanky-panky?

C: Right, and you know, he was fun. His expressions, I wish I could recall the exact expression, but they're all homey and earthy; but you know the meaning. For example, on our trip to the Middle East, he briefed all of us that went with him, and he said, "Now, I don't expect this to be a big buying spree. I don't want any of you to come home with a bunch of rugs over one arm and a bunch of camel saddles over the other arm when we get off this airplane." So he was careful in the image that we left behind and his staff left behind, in the hanky-panky, and in what we bought, and the way we behaved. He was very concerned about this.

F: He tried to keep down any kind of ostentatious spending.

C: Right. Occasionally, he liked to buy things, and I remember sort of a funny story in Rome one time. He had decided somewhere along the line that one of the things he might do on the visits to each country

would be to look at the art from that country. So we would have the embassies gather representative things from the artists in the country, indigenous art, at the embassy, and he would look at it and he would take a few pieces of each to take home. I don't know what he did with it, finally, but he'd want the history of it, and the history of the artist, the life of the artist, and so on.

But, in Rome, we had a very prissy ambassador in Rome. He, since, has died. But he was an effeminate kind of a guy, and a very, you know, one of those good family quote, unquote and had that image of properness. And sometimes that image of properness really caused Johnson to go the other way and become more earthy than he otherwise would. And I was riding in the car with him and the Ambassador in Rome. The Ambassador said something about art and all that in Rome and in Italy. And I could see that Johnson, I thought at least, he was really being revolted by this guy. And finally he said, "Well, you know, I'm collecting art. As I go through these countries, I always look at the art and buy some art. I was very interested in a painting here." And the Ambassador's interest picked up, you know. And he [Johnson] said, "Yes, I saw a painting the other day; it was a painting of a nude woman lying on a couch and there was a slim-Jim man standing by her, and I could just visualize that whole scene." And he said, "You know, I'd like to have that. It recalls a lot of memories." And he said, "You know, the artist wanted $250." He said, "Boy, that was a lot of money; we bargained and he wouldn't come down and finally, I said to that artist, 'I tell you. I'll give

you $250 for that painting if you'll take fifty pounds off that woman's ass.'" And you know, that Ambassador didn't know whether he was being put on or whether Johnson meant it, you know, and yet he swallowed it. I just knew that Johnson was saying these kinds of things just to sort of stick him, you know. But he was capable of doing that.

F: Yes. Oh, he loved that, loved watching the guy for effect.

C: I remember, on that same kind of thing, one time, we took a group of sort of prissy State Department ambassadors, Foreign Service guys, again, like this fellow, over to be greeted by Johnson and be briefed by Johnson. And he was talking about what he expected of them; he would say, "You know, I don't expect you to spend all your time in the capitol. I want you to get out among the people." He said, "You know, get out and see what the people are like." He said, "I'd like to have you get some hockey between your toes." And not a single one of them [understood].

F: They didn't know what he meant.

C: And finally, he saw that his words didn't go across. So then, he had to explain, in the Anglo-Saxon, four-letter word what he meant. But you know, he was capable of shocking people just to shock them, I think, when he felt that they were--

F: A little nicey.

C: Yes, a little nicey. A little artificial niceyness really put him off, I think.

F: On that Senegal trip, I seem to remember an incident of he and Lady Bird going out among all the tailors in the place and with a sewing

machine.

C: Yes.

F: Lady Bird moving in on a sewing machine, or something.

C: Yes.

F: Is that sort of thing welcomed, or was it looked upon as condescending?

C: You know, it could have been condescending by the nicey kind of person, but I never did see anything they did seen as condescending. I think that they were so genuine in their interest and so human in their contact with people that my personal belief is that it never came across that way. It came across as absolutely genuine.

F: Were you in on the camel driver incident?

C: Yes, I was in Karachi at the time. I was on that trip.

F: Did he speak as well--I'm talking about the camel driver now--as the word that got into the press back here, when he visited. Really sounded as if they'd come straight from the Koran or something.

C: Well, I think that they no doubt were dressed up a bit, but I think he had a lot of that same earthiness, that same natural sort of wisdom that comes out of people; that's what Johnson had a great deal of and he had a better articulation of it. But the camel driver had that natural wisdom that sort of springs from people from the soil, and I think they were fancied up a little bit, but basically, this was the kind of a person [he was].

As a result of that trip, he and Ayub Khan of Pakistan became fairly good friends. Ayub Khan came to the states, and then went down to

the Johnson Ranch for a weekend. I have two stories about that that I think are interesting. They just show this humanness of President Johnson.

My wife and I were invited to go to the Ranch, mainly, I think, because John Rooney had also been invited. Johnson sort of saddled me with the care and feeding of John Rooney, although Johnson liked Rooney, and they collaborated in many ways. They were different, but Rooney was a great admirer of Johnson's. Well, we went to the Ranch, but we went out to the Andrews Air Force Base to wait. Johnson arrived before Ayub Khan. And one of the things that Johnson did well was he spoke to the wives; you know, he would go around, and tell my wife what a fantastic guy I was and what a good job I did.

You know, he was very good at accentuating the positive, and my wife and I had taken our ten year old son, Bob, out there to see us off. And when Johnson saw Bob, he met him and he says, "Bob, have you ever been to Texas?" Bobby said, "No." And Johnson said, "Ever ridden on a horse?" And Bobby said, "Yes." And Johnson said, "Well, Bob, why don't you go with us to Texas?" And my wife, like a mother, was all, "No, No, Mr. Vice President, he doesn't have any clothes and he doesn't have a toothbrush. This is not a trip for a young boy." And Johnson just brushed her wishes aside, said, "Now, we've got clothes in Texas and a toothbrush"; and said, "Bob, we'd like to have you. You go out and get on that plane, and let's go to Texas." Well, you know, I was a small cog in a big wheel. There wasn't anything I could do for Johnson. And yet, he

looked into the little boy's heart and said, "Do it!"

F: He was kind of half pop-eyed, wasn't he?

C: He was pop-eyed. He went on the airplane. Midway down there, Johnson called him up to the front, had him meet Ayub Khan, had him meet some radio entertainer that was going down for that occasion; got an autograph, promised him a cowboy hat, a Johnson hat. Bob, I think, has in his memory today--he's twenty-five years old--but he thinks of that as one of the greatest occasions in his life. You know, that's what I like to think of as the humanness of Lyndon Johnson. He didn't have to do it. He got nothing out of it except maybe some pleasure in giving some pleasure to a little boy.

Well, on that trip, as a result of his trip around the world, early in his vice presidential administration, he gave some of us watches. It was a Bulova watch with an LBJ on the front and a motto: "Do unto others as you would have others do unto you," which was sort of his motto in those days; he had given me one. Well, on this trip, on this dinner in Texas with Ayub Khan, I was the host of one of the tables, and there were some Pakistanis there.

F: This was in the house.

C: At the Ranch. And he gave all of his guests watches. So he came over to my table, and he was like a little boy. I will always remember. He knelt down on my right and put his left hand over on my wrist. He urged the people to open the presents, you know, "Open your presents." And one of them opened it first and it was a Bulova watch, and he said, "You know, I've given a lot of these watches. I gave a watch

like that to Bill." And then he said, "Bill, you don't have on my watch! Don't you like my watch?" Well, now, this is the Johnson, you know, that you don't see and you don't often know about, but he was just to me a very, very human, interesting person.

F: I guess he and Ayub Khan get on rather famously.

C: I think they did because they were both much the same kind of people; much, I think, different in their educational background in the sense that Ayub Khan went to the best British military schools and all that, but still both springing from sort of the basics of the people, you know, without artificiality, without veneer. They were both sort of real people. The genuineness was there with both of them; I think they developed trust that they could believe each other, and trust and an openness that often doesn't exist in more sophisticated company. It's more guarded, more sophisticated conversation.

F: Where Johnson had to work with another national leader through interpreters, did he get impatient for himself to get translated and then get translated back? Oh, I'm sure he didn't like just long gaps between what he said and when he got a chance to respond again.

C: Yes, I guess. I'd have to rule myself out of that comment because often, I wasn't with him in the official side of the conversation.

F: Let me ask you one question on interpreting. On interpreting, you know, the State Department would supply someone who was beautifully bilingual.

C: Right.

F: What happens? Does the other country supply one, too? Do you have two sets of interpreters?

C: Yes. Generally the other person, and oftentimes the host country interpreter is the one that's really used officially and you have yours there to sort of make sure that the conversation stays honest.

F: Did you ever get a feeling that the interpreter is moving things his way?

C: Sure, right. And sometimes if the threat of the substance is pretty high, and your man is coming across strong and direct, you'll have the interpreter who is sort of getting afraid to tell his boss what's really being said. So you really need the second one; occasionally, that second one will help clean it up or amplify it a little more, you know.

F: I'm sure it's difficult, if you're the other head of state and I'm your interpreter, and the fellow calls you the equivalent of an S.O.B., for me to go ahead and say that.

C: That's right. And often, then, the other guy's interpreter will make that point a little plainer; that's the reason you really need two. But fortunately, a great many of the heads of state, prime ministers, spoke English. So you didn't have this much problem. They would often have an interpreter there also; but Ayub Khan was very fluent in English, basically his primary language. You often didn't have this problem.

F: Did you make that later trip around the world on which he kept on going and went to see the Pope?

C: No, I think he was president in those days.

F: Yes.

C: And I didn't travel with him as much when he was President as when he was vice president.

F: You came in--

C: I did travel with him in--the last trip that I went on with him was his trip to the Far East, when he went to--

F: Cam Ranh Bay.

C: And then, to South Korea; stopped in Alaska. That was the last trip that Bill Moyers was with him. Bill Moyers left soon after that. But I think that trip--I may be confused--was for the conference in Manila trip, perhaps.

F: Right.

C: It was a very difficult, rushed trip. Because first, we went to Samoa, and New Zealand, and Australia, and then to the Philippines. And he visited Australia as sort of a nostalgic occasion. The Prime Minister then, Holt, I believe, at the time was a very good friend of Johnson's, a very warm supporter, another kind of a person like Johnson, a Johnson kind of man. Then we visited northern Australia where Johnson was stationed when he was in the service. And that was sort of a nostalgic occasion. But that was a tough trip in terms of pressure of time; it was never as much fun when he was President, because there was a lot more pressure on every aspect of it.

F: On something like that, where the trip seemingly is improvised and they keep adding to and so on, have you gone ahead and made all kinds

contingency arrangements in case he wants to go this way, that way, or another?

C: One of the things that we didn't do in the early days that we learned that we should do is to go ahead and make all the plans and all the contingencies. For example, on that trip, Bill Moyers, Leonard Marks and I went ahead. We went out two or three weeks in advance. Bill Moyers laid on the substance of who he was to see and what they were going to talk about with the embassy and with the prime ministry, head of state. Leonard Marks would lay out with the information people for the publicity side of it and what would be done with the reporters. And I would do the administrative side, all the arrangements, where he was to stay, all the logistics. And so we'd get it in place, get it started.

Another thing that I would do is to leave in charge a person who was in charge of the arrangements there that I could look to. One of the things that we learned and we should have learned it earlier, because it happened when Nixon was Vice President and visited Africa, was that most of the embassies are just not staffed in a way that will accommodate a presidential visit. And so one of the things that we did then was to import people from all over the world; station them at these embassies to help with the logistics, help with the planning.

F: You hadn't had that problem previously.

C: No, we really hadn't that much.

F: You'd gone through the outer post.

C: No, and as vice president, you didn't need it. But when a president travels, it becomes a terrifically logistic affair, because there would be an airplane carrying just the cars, and an airplane for him, an airplane for staff, an airplane for the press, and there'd be seven or eight airplanes, an airplane for gifts and books that we took along. And there would be seven or eight airplanes to get to a place and accommodate for them, arrange for their arrival and stuff we needed off them.

F: On this matter of gifts, was there a standard gift or did you try to fit it to the person?

C: In the State Department, we would have liked to have had a standard gift. It made it easier and one of those standard gifts, a historic, standard gift, has been that beautiful, expensive crystal, Steuben glass. That was the Eisenhower gift.

Now President Johnson and Mrs. Johnson, I think, caused the State Department problems, but I think they did a very wonderful thing in trying to select gifts that would be meaningful to the recipient.

One of the things that we did: he liked to have the gifts engraved with a suitable saying relating to the experience, to the president or to the prime minister from him, or from him and Mrs. Johnson as the case might be. Well, there was no way, in advance, of getting that done. So we would get a good engraver to go with us. I could see the headlines in the press: "President carries personal engraver." And, you know, one of the things you couldn't afford to do was have those headlines. So we would hire the guy as a

baggage handler. His name would be baggage handler, but then we'd get him in and, boy, he would engrave like mad, spent more time with watches, clocks, silver, platters.

F: He worked on those trips.

C: He worked. But it made it a personalized experience, I think, for the people.

F: Yes.

C: Another interesting thing about the Johnsons on those kind of trips is their graciousness, their graciousness in the sense of what they gave. They gave things to almost anybody, everybody that helped, of the host government, or the hotel, or chauffeurs. Or, you know, they had a lot of books that we took, like a book on America that he'd [inaudible] or several other books of his. They would have to be personally inscribed with an autograph. So that little people were well remembered with things of the occasion, oftentimes autographed pictures. But another part of their graciousness, everything they got, and you know the things that they got, you had to sort into what was official kinds of gifts that went into the official archives and what was personal, but whatever it was, it had to be recorded.

They had a sort of an ironclad rule that we had to get a letter of thanks back to the donor before they left. So it was a logistical nightmare to get, not just form letters, but personalized letters that said, "So appreciate the silver cigarette case with the filigree." So that the people had a feeling that it was a personalized thing and not a form thing. They didn't like that form kind of relationship.

F: In my notes, I think I've got a list of just about every time, at least on the record, there's been some off-the-record times when you saw President Johnson in the White House. And what crops up over and over, "In the flower garden with Lloyd Hand and four American ambassadors." And in another letter, he'd say, "Oval Office with seven ambassadors." And so on. Did you take the new ambassadors in in bodies as a group, try to combine them?

C: Generally, we'd try to combine them.

F: As a time saver.

C: Just a time saver.

F: Was this pro forma, or did he really sit down and talk a little turkey with them?

C: Well, we would do it two ways. In fact, we generally had two occasions. One would be a sort of a social greeting occasion, where we would take a group of ambassadors, five or six, and their wives; and the men would meet with him, probably for half an hour, and the women would go with Mrs. Johnson upstairs to the quarters. And this would be an occasion for getting an official photograph of the President and the ambassador with an inscription. It was sort of pro forma, although he always talked about the larger aspects of foreign policy and what he expected them to do.

Then before each ambassador actually went to his post, he would go over for half an hour discussion with the President about that country, our policy there, what the President expected him to do. Now this would not happen if you went to a minor post, but if it was

a larger post. And generally, the ambassador that we took over, like there were several ambassadors going to what you would call minor posts, not the Germany, or the France or the Italy--they would be handled much differently, but these would be the minor. But he was gracious; he spent the time; he was interested. I think he was always terribly well informed.

F: Something else I wondered about. I'm going to Germany as an ambassador, I go to see the President. Has the President been briefed on what to tell me beforehand, or does this come off the top of his head?

C: No, I think two things. He has been briefed about you. The State Department would have given him a dossier on you, so he knows about you. He's been involved in a whole lot of problems there, so he has a personal involvement beforehand. But then he's been briefed on sort of what our next efforts should be, so he would not be speaking off the top of his head. I didn't find Johnson as a man that carelessly spoke off the top of his head about anything. I saw him as a man that did his homework, that really had his own ideas, which is not to say that he didn't inject his own ideas; but the injection of his ideas was part of a decision process and not an off-the-head statement, "To you, Mr. Ambassador, this is what you ought to do." I saw him as a very disciplined person in the way he injected his personal ideas and his personal philosophy into official conduct. It was not done whimsically or carelessly. It was done as a matter of a process.

F: Did he have strong likes and dislikes among heads of states?

C: Yes, he did.

F: Did he comment on it? I rather gather that he never trusted Harold Wilson completely.

C: I think I'm not the best one to comment. I know it, but I don't know enough substance to be authentic on it. You know, I know that there were some that he liked very much. He liked Marcos of the Philippines; he liked Holt of Australia; he liked Ayub Khan. And part of this liking was a personal relationship that got established. I think that he admired--and I was surprised--and felt friendly toward De Gaulle, as a strong man. He admired strength and openness, even though he disagreed with it. I don't think the disagreement--

F: Admired a man who was doing things.

C: That's right. He admired a man who stood for things, did things and didn't equivocate about where he was. But on the heads of state, I would have to beg off on that one, not because I wouldn't say, but I didn't know well enough.

F: Had Conrad Adenauer passed out of the picture before you came along?

C: Right.

F: I know he made rather successful visits there and to the Ranch.

C: I was not a part [of that].

F: This was before your time.

C: Yes. At least, it was prior to--

F: Right. It was before your time. Something else, in listings of White House dinner parties which you attended, you were almost invariably put at the President's table. And sometimes, I don't know why unless he liked you, where you go to a dinner, for instance honoring Vice President Humphrey and Chief Justice Warren, you're at the

President's table.

C: That's right. I was very pleased.

F: I can see for a state dinner or something. But why this? Just friendship?

C: You know, I think he had a superstition about me.

F: Things would go right if you were there.

C: I think he really felt this. As I told you earlier, I was very lucky with him. I just think that our association turned out right.

For example, in our visit in Korea, the big mix-up when they lost a favorite suit of his, and by luck, more than anything else, I was able to get it back. I retrieved it. There was a big misunderstanding. The local Korean boy thought that he had given it to him, instead of giving to him to have cleaned and we got it back.

F: (Laughter) I see.

C: And so I was a touchstone, I was a lucky symbol.

F: Did he know about the Korean boy?

C: Yes, he knew about the Korean boy.

F: Did he do anything to mollify the boy?

C: Well, he was very angry in the beginning, but, sure, I think we bought him a Korean suit after the President discovered that he was disappointed in not getting his. Well, he had us buy a suit at the PX.

F: He probably would have had to cut it down considerably.

C: That's right. But this boy, he had it in his own home; he had taken it. And I was convinced it was a misunderstanding and not theft.

The President was very concerned that the Korean police, you know, would do something bad to this guy after we discovered the President's suit in his house. But I was the lucky guy that found it. I was the lucky guy that found [tapioca]. When he wanted tapioca in some out of the way place, I knew a Foreign Service wife that had some tapioca. He couldn't find tapioca on the local market, but I found him some.

F: Bill Crockett could get you a good bowl of chili in Nepal.

C: That's right. And I was sort of lucky. It wasn't as if old Bill Crockett was necessarily smart or anything; he's just a lucky guy to have around. Things go right. Well, maybe I'm depreciating too much. I honestly tried to serve the President well, serve his needs.

So I noted myself at that head table that time, and it was fun being there, from my point of view. I don't know that I made a great contribution, intellectually or politically, but I had a good time.

I was interested at that occasion, that senator was there from the South, Stennis was there, I believe on that occasion or another, but I think then. And when we went through the line, we were behind Stennis and the President said to Mrs. Stennis--he'd gone through, and the wives come through second--"Boy, that husband of yours is lucky to have you. And he couldn't have made it without you." Then we went through and we were talking for a moment. She said, "I wonder if he means those kinds of things that he says to me like that? I wonder if he says those kinds of things to me so that my husband will be more accommodating to him." I said, "I don't know.

Did he say those kinds of things to you before he became president?" She said, "Yes, come to think of it, he's always been nice like that." I said, "Maybe that's your answer. Maybe it's Lyndon Johnson the way he is and not because of what he wants." And I tended to think he was genuine. That's part of what he [is].

But it was fun to be there at those kind of occasions and we went not frequently, but occasionally. Once we were privileged to go to their home when he was vice president for a party for Walter Jenkins, a birthday party, and they had Texas beans and Texas chili.

F: Cornbread.

C: Yes, and it was a great occasion. One of the things I admire about him was how he handled that affair. How he had the guts and the courage to not turn a man like that out or not be bitter about him. I never heard him say anything in bitterness or anger.

F: I always thought that was a good textbook performance on what do you do when somebody goes to pieces on you.

C: Yes. And part of that going to pieces may have been the man's devotion to Johnson in how hard he worked. I tell you, people served Johnson fairly well. He got a great deal of devotion, I think, and loyalty. I was always a little bit unhappy with George Reedy's book on the presidency and the President. I thought that was . . .

F: You were, too.

C: Yes. I'm sure.

F: You went down at the end of 1966 to a meeting with the governors.

C: Yes. Oh, boy. What was I doing there!

F: I mean, you show up at interesting places.

C: That's right, interesting places, interesting times. Well, that was at the end of my tenure, and President Johnson had an absolutely surprising [suggestion]. He called me and said would I come down, said he hadn't gotten to talk to me and see me, really, since the trip to the Manila Conference and he just wanted to see me before I left. So I went down, and, unbeknown to me, it was the governors conference going on. And he was busy all day long; so he asked me, "Well, you might as well sit in on the conference. You're here. Still have time to talk yet." So I was there for a personal reason: for him to see me and not as a part of the conference.

F: You really didn't have any business. You were just visiting.

C: The business was my exit; sort of the last interview we had, really the last time we were together sort of personally in my official capacity in the State Department. But I did have a chance to eat lunch and eat dinner with him. And he was very gracious in his exit, in his remarks to me about sorry for me to leave.

F: Did he ever try to pull you back in?

C: No, he never did. Never. I always had a little bit of a feeling that he was a little bit angry that I'd left, or disappointed that I left. Because it was before his decision not to run, so it wasn't a

part of that. But he couldn't attribute my leaving to that. But I always felt that he needed me in the State Department, that he used me; therefore, he was disappointed and maybe not angry, but a little hurt that I had left.

F: Back to those state dinners for a moment. Now, I only got in on one state dinner but a number of things at the White House, but the thing that always struck me was the fact that they were friendly affairs. When you're moving around with the Shah of Iran and people at that level, did you still manage to stay at that sort of almost a relaxation, as if you were just going to a nice party?

C: Yes.

F: Never too stilted?

C: And part of that was because of the Johnsons; uniquely, Mrs. Johnson and the President, and their daughters when they were there, their daughters were uniquely human people. And I attribute it mainly to them, to their humanness, to their naturalness, to their personal dignity, and yet not a stilted dignity at all, and their openness in terms of not wearing a role of President and the President's wife, but being human. And that's a rare quality that they had, of being human, of cutting through the officialdom. You know, he never was a phony in his humanness. He was a natural.

F: Johnson ever call you off to one side and say, "Now, Bill, tell me about so-and-so, or what the deal is on this guy," or something?

C: Yes, especially in the appointment of ambassadors. I was in on the appointive loop for ambassadors, and particularly people out of the

career service also on the non-career, but I was particularly involved, directly involved, on the appointment of people out of the service. He would often say, you know, "I want to know about this person. This is what the record says, but what is your experience with him?" He was not interested necessarily that he was a Johnson believer, but he was interested in, "Would he make a good representative of the United States?" Another important thing, that I think the record should state and I'm sure it states in other places, is that never in my experience were those appointments sold, never was an inquiry made of me, "Is the man a Democrat or Republican? Did he give anything to my campaign?" Never was that an issue, either in the career or non-career appointments. I never heard this point asked. Now, certainly, there was a consideration of their political belief in the sense of, "Do I support this program," but never in the sense of the partisan belief. Certainly, my feeling was that it was a high point in our nation's history of the kind of diplomats we had abroad. There were a great many career people, government people, ex-government people, out of the government service. It's a real high point.

F: Did he try to keep some sort of a ratio between career top diplomats and those brought in from the private sector?

C: I don't think so. I think he was interested in a high quality. He also was interested in supporting a career service and knew that a certain amount of people had to be appointed out of career service, but he was more interested in the quality of the people.

F: If a career man were available at that time, he'd use him; if he

weren't--

C: And we couldn't convince him that he--he always insisted that he had some options. He never would take, "I recommend so-and-so." He always wanted a couple of career and a couple of non-career, and our reasons for each, and the qualifications of each. Then we would recommend one out of the four. But he always let us know that it was his option to-- (Interruption)

As a guy from Hastings, Nebraska, I never got over being in my office in the State Department, and having the telephone ring, and finding him on the other end of it.

F: Let me ask you about that. There were a lot of telephone calls between you two. Could you get to him pretty easily if you wanted to?

C: I could. I had only a few occasions to do that. But mostly it was coming from him.

F: He called you. Called you at home?

C: No, I don't think he ever called [at home].

F: Didn't call on those late-night--

C: No. He often called to see how I was. "Are you all right? Are things going all right? Is there anything you need?" It was a friendship.

F: That's appreciated.

C: Right. Two interesting things I did for him that came out of calls: one, he got a letter. The State Department gets a lot of letters

and the White House gets a lot of letters from abroad, and the White House letters go to the State Department for answering. They come from all kinds of people, and the normal State Department response is a polite brush-off, you know. Then we would send over to the President in those days a representative sampling of those letters to read and the responses.

One morning, I got a call from him saying, "Bill, I was reading those letters from overseas, and I noticed this is a letter from an Italian about his son. I notice you all say there isn't anything we can do. And so I'll send this letter back to you, and then I want you to call me."

So he sent the letter back to me, and it was a letter from a minor official from a small town in Sicily. And this minor official had written to the President saying, "I have only one son. This son has a terribly bad heart condition. He has to live on oxygen. The doctors say that he can only get cured if he can come to the child hospital in Boston, and as President of the United States, I'd like to have you give me my son or a chance to have my son." And we had written a letter saying that the President was sorry, but he can't do anything.

And the President said, "Now, you read that, and see what you can do." So I called him back, and, "My God, I don't know what we can do. The guy might be a communist, and, you know, what can we do?" And the President said, "Well, I want you to do something. If that man isn't a communist--I want you to check that out--and if the case

is legitimate, I want that boy to have the chance of an operation. I want you to do what's necessary to get it, and I don't want to read about it in the newspapers."

So we had the father checked out and he was not a communist. We had the military check out the condition and it was legitimate. So we got the boy into the clinic in Boston. And I was busy and had things to do; I didn't go up there; I didn't check on it. I got a call from the President, "How's that little boy?" I said, "Well, he's in the hospital." And he said, "Are his parents there?" And I said, "No, Mr. President, you know, it's very difficult to bring the parents." Then he got angry. I don't know what words he used, but he said, "There's a little boy in America that can speak Italian, and you didn't bring his parents. How do you expect him to get well if you didn't bring his mother and father?" He said, "I thought you would have brought his mother and father. Now, get his mother and father over here." So, you know, "Okay, Mr. President." So I got his mother and father. A week went by, and I got another damn telephone call: "Bill, how's that little boy?" "Oh, we get good reports." "Have you been up to see him?" "No, Mr. President." "Now, Bill, I want you to go up and see him. I want you to take him a picture. You come over here and I'll get you a picture and we'll put an autograph on it. You go up and tell him that the President's interested in him. I don't want to read about it in the papers, now, but you go up there."

So I went up to Boston; I delivered the picture to the parents, and we all cried. It was an emotional time. Talked to the doctors; then I went back and I gave the President this personal report: they're trying to build the little boy up, so he'll be ready for the operation, a very difficult heart operation. And the parents are happy. So then they had the operation, and I reported to the President the operation was a success, the heart's doing well.

And in about three or four days, the little boy died because the whole system had been run down, and he couldn't stand that new heart. And I told the President about it, and he was sorry, but he said, "Now, you take care of that family, because they have bad trouble. You get them back home. I don't want any hardship." So I got the family back home. And he got a very, very beautiful letter from that father--I don't know where that letter is--stating the father's feeling of gratitude, the father's feeling of wonder that the President of the United States could take that much time and give that much attention to the needs of a little boy and a parent.

But this is the side of him that so many people didn't see.

F: He'd have a hard lifetime vote in Sicily, wouldn't he?

C: That's right. And the same goes right here.

F: Right, right.

C: But that's the human side. Another thing that I did for him was not so humanistic: there is a guy by the name of Abba Schwartz, who was a Democrat, but on the ADA side and liberal. He was put into this job by that group in the days of the Kennedy

Administration, and even their hand was forced when they had to take him. He was an administrator in Security and Consular Affairs. Something happened--I don't know exactly what happened--but I got a call from the President; he said, "You have to get rid of that guy. He's not loyal. He's not doing a good job. He's causing us trouble, and you get rid of him." He said, "I'll support you, but you cannot use my words to get rid of him. You got to get rid of him." Well, I succeeded in getting rid of him; but in the succeeding in getting rid of him, I brought the liberal House down around my ears. I was attacked in several newspapers. I was attacked in Congress.

Well, during this period, he called me four or five times, saying, "Bill, I'm reading about you. I want you to know that I know the reason, and I want you to feel good and secure. Now, don't worry about anything. You're not going to get any trouble out of it. I just want you to know I'm supporting you and you have to take the heat. And I'm sorry about that, but . . ."

F: Just bow your neck.

C: "Bow your neck and know that I'm with you;" and, you know, that kind of support. You'd do anything for a man that supports you this way. I had no problem in doing it for him, because I knew that the fact was the fact. This man was a bastard, sort of doing his own thing at the expense of programs, Vietnam particularly.

So I look back at those days with a great deal of nostalgia. It was a great learning experience to me about how to get along with people. I personally resent implications that he was a great

manipulator. I see manipulation as something that's sinister and done for bad motives. I think he knew how to work with people and help people and support people and get things done through people. And I see this as, I think, great human relations, and not as manipulation.

F: In the sort of the larger connotations of the word, he was more of a mover than a manipulator.

C: That's right. And, you know, you can only move things with people.

F: Yes.

C: And especially in the democratic process. It takes people working together, believing together, moving together. He was a great organizer of people, to get them to move together.

F: In my research there's some information that you may have done an evaluation of some overseas posts for the State Department.

C: Oh, yes. Right. Oh, this was a great time for me, but it ended in disaster in a way. One of the things that he became interested in--you know, he was interested in all kinds of things.

F: His eye was sometimes on the sparrow, all right.

C: Well, that's right.

F: But not detail to the omission of larger things.

C: But one of the things he was interested in is how foreign policy gets made and gets implemented, and does the policy that is made really get fulfilled in what people do overseas? My conviction is that the two are separate; our policy is one thing, and what people

do overseas is something else, and that there are as many foreign policies as there are agencies in the government doing business overseas. So he was interested in our putting together some kind of a system that would say all the foreign policy is going to be looked at by the State Department and thereby by the President; and the stamp is put on it: "This is our foreign policy." And then the budgets get developed that will implement that foreign policy, and then the people in those countries fulfill that [foreign] policy through those budgets. Well, there is no system for doing that, so we put together a system. He said, "Let's try it out in thirteen countries." So we selected thirteen countries to evaluate their foreign policy programs and their foreign policies, and what they were doing against what the policy was that we thought they ought to be doing.

F: Did you try to get both a geographical and size spread?

C: Right. Both were taken into consideration. We got a country like Germany; a country like England; a country like Pakistan; a country like Thailand; a couple of countries in South America. So we had a geographical spread, a size spread; also developed countries versus underdeveloped countries. So we got that kind of a spread. Foreign Service ambassadors versus political ambassadors, we got that kind of a spread.

The only problem was that most of the people didn't want this to happen. Busby, who at that time was one of the President's special assistants, and I wanted it to happen. The President and Rusk wanted it to happen. But hardly anyone else in the federal government

wanted it to happen. Certainly the Bureau of the Budget didn't want it to succeed because they saw this as a threat to their territory. The other agencies of government didn't want it to succeed because they saw it as a threat to their independence. The ambassadors didn't want it to succeed because they saw it as encroaching on them. So a great idea and a great plan, a great need, I think, did not succeed. But we had a lot of fun, a lot of controversy.

Another problem was that the President's appetite was bigger than his stomach, in the sense that he and Rusk didn't have the time to solve the problems that got that high. And some of the controversy between State and the military, or State and the CIA, or State and the other agencies of government over policies and programs, the way we evaluted them, could not be settled unless Rusk and the President got involved. And they had bigger fish to fry at that particular time with Vietnam. So it did not succeed.

Now, this is not to say that this was not a great idea. It needs to succeed, but it didn't succeed. I found the President all through my time there as very receptive to sort of fresh approaches and new ideas for making the bureaucracy work better. And I never had any problem getting a letter to the Congress, or a letter to a committee, to support something we were trying to do.

For example, one of the things Carl Rowan and I tried to do, when Carl was in the USIA, was to amalgamate State and USIA personnel. And the President supported it in a letter. In those days, Fulbright was anti-Johnson and anti-Rusk; therefore, we didn't get it through

his committee, but that isn't to say that the President didn't support it. I found him very, very supportive.

F: Did he and Rowan get on all right?

C: I think they got along great early on. Then it fell off in the days when Rowan was in the State Department as one of the public affairs newspeople. He traveled with us. Rowan was honest with the President, straight and direct. The President liked that. Rowan, because of his blackness, I think, had an attraction for the foreign press; he could do things with the press that a white guy couldn't do.

F: Yes.

C: And therefore, was helpful to Johnson. I think Rowan liked the influence of being a sort of advisor to Johnson. I think, then, he went as ambassador to Finland and that was a good experience.

I think as head of USIA, that was not a good experience. It sort of was where the Johnson-Rowan paths crossed. And maybe, I don't know all the reasons, I think one of the reasons was that the head of that agency always has had the feeling that they wanted to be in on policy-making and often wasn't, and were sort of seen by the President of being sort of an implementer, and tell him what has happened, or what ought to happen, and not a part of policy. And Rowan, I think, thought that he ought to be in on the policy-making and became less influential in the way, he felt, upon the President than he was in his other capacities. I think another thing, too, is the head of that agency, in every administration, has always felt that they ought to depict both sides: the good and the bad, the seamy as well as the

blossomy side. And this got him in some problem with the President, I'm sure. So there was a sort of a cooling off and a falling out, which I was sorry [about] because I think they needed each other and were helpful to each other.

But the President was very capable of--he could let his feelings, I believe, sway him in his personal relationships with people. He was a sort of emotionally oriented person and had a hard time sorting out whether a person was really loyal or whether a person by opposing him was also being loyal. I think this was a little bit of the Moyers problem, too.

F: When you more or less set up the Asian Conference in Manila, was Vietnam a problem to you, or was it an asset?

C: It was a problem. It was a problem because even in those days, there were large parts of the population in the host countries that we visited that were anti-Vietnam; in Australia, and New Zealand, and Manila; not so much in Korea. But all those leaders coming had dissident parts of their population that were, you know, very anti-Vietnam. So they were all having problems at home similar to the problems Johnson later had or was having even then. So that Vietnam was a problem. It was not a unifying activity or occasion at all. It was a problem to him and a problem to us.

You know, he believed in what was happening there. . . He believed in the necessity of our being there, and I do, too. I did, too, at that time, and I still do. And therefore, he sold, very hard, our policy and our involvement, wherever he went.

And in a way this was detrimental to him, too. Because it took off the edge of other things that might have been going on in those countries or should have been going on in our relationships with those other countries. It took so much of his time and energy to maintain the support of Vietnam with those countries that there wasn't time to build the other relationships or look at the other problems these countries were having. In those days, the Philippines were in bad shape.

F: Yes.

C: You could see the potential down the road.

F: He and Marcos understood each other.

C: Very well, I think. It would be interesting to me to see what President Johnson felt about Marcos' present behavior and take over, and being an authoritarian. On the other hand, the President might be capable of saying, "Well, that's what he had to do, and that was the way to save the country." Although I never saw him or heard him support an authoritarian kind of a governmental structure. He was a great believer in the people and democracy, certainly anti-communist and anti that kind of authoritarian government.

F: Did you get a chance to observe him with either Ky or Thieu?

CL Yes. No. No, I did not. I back off. The earlier one, the first one, Diem, I was there.

F: Yes.

C: I went out on that trip, and that was the second trip I went with him abroad.

The first trip was to Africa, as we mentioned. On this trip, I was more sort of a chief of staff and less administrative. So I went with him on all his official calls and on the meetings we had. I think he liked [Diem]. Again, this was a strong man, a man who rose, sort of, out of the people, although he came from a good background. I think he was impressed with the objectives of this man for Vietnam.

But I did not see him with the other two. In those later days, I was more arrangement and making the administrative machinery go, and less--

F: How about Syngman Rhee?

C: No, no.

F: Park?

C: Park, but not Rhee. And again, I think he liked strong men. He liked men that were strong in their convictions and strong in their actions for the good of the country. So he got along well, I think, with Park. He didn't agree with all the methods, but I think he appreciated the man. He appreciated strength and directness and action.

You know, that was one problem with the State Department Foreign Service is that they don't have that image; they're not that kind of people. He never really liked or appreciated the Foreign Service people for that reason. He saw them weak, and equivocating, and maybe a little bit slippery, and he didn't trust them very much.

F: Could you assess morale in the State Department during this period? Was it pretty good, or was it uneven, or what?

C: I think it was good.

F: I'm sure if I'm stuck off in Zaire or Togoland, I'd think that they'd forgotten me and the whole place, you know.

C: During the Johnson period, we did lots of things for the State Department people. We got a lot of good programs he supported. As the result of that bombing of the embassy in Vietnam, he strongly supported hazard pay for officers, better insurance programs, better health programs, where people are hurt and those kinds of things. I think we did a lot of things in the State Department for upgrading the service. I think that was helpful. I think his appointment of so many Foreign Service ambassadors, not just at the bad posts, but, in his time, we had a Foreign Service ambassador in London, in Paris, in Moscow, in Tokyo, in Bonn. So that we had the major embassies of the world in Foreign Service.

Now this had to be [felt]. The Service felt that they were being supported by the President. Frankly, I think the Service felt less support from us [State]. There was lots more unhappiness in the Service about Rusk, and his attitude toward the State Department, and use of the State Department than the President. I think the image of the President in the Foreign Service was very high; that he did support them and that we were aggressive in our policies in those things; that he did support the things that the Service needed.

Now, my personal opinion is that the Service didn't live up to this support. When he was trying to do this evaluation, the Foreign Service officers didn't support this. They didn't take advantage of

this occasion to rise to the top. For example, another thing that he, Rusk and I did, about the same time, was to put a foreign service person in charge of the foreign policy in the federal government. For example, there would be an ambassador overseas, and he was in charge and we really got through policies and regulations that made him in charge of all agencies in that country. He was the boss. But there was no equivalent in the States, short of the President. So the President said, "Well, let's appoint a person, kind of a country director, and he'll represent me. He'll be in the State Department, but he'll represent the president. And his job is to be the equivalent of the ambassador here in the United States. His job will be to bring all those agencies together and make sure that all of the recommendations that come to the President from all of these agencies are coordinated; he should look at the foreign policy as through the eyes of the President." We got a directive out. You know, I couldn't think of anything that would put the State Department [more] at the center of things, make them important.

Well, we got it all done, got the policy written, the policy was published. But the Foreign Service officers didn't see their jobs as being that, didn't want to do that. They wanted to be diplomats, you see, and not executives. And they didn't achieve. So in some ways, I saw the President's hope and desire for the Foreign Service as being greater and more positive than the Service themselves thought of being. They wanted to, of course, make policy, but they didn't want to roll up their sleeves and take

on the problem of making that policy work with all the agencies of government.

F: In Vietnam, this may not have become a real problem until after you left, but I have the feeling that being an ambassador there was difficult in the fact that you also had a military leader who was making his own decisions. You had someone like, later, Bob Komer and his pacification program.

C: So you really had three.

F: Yes. "Who's in charge here?" In other words.

C: "Who's in charge?" And I think the reality was that nobody [was]. Part of the problem, I think, of Vietnam was that.

F: Did this give you a problem with your own administrative duties?

C: Yes, it always gave that; that would give us a problem simply because the side of the equation that we had to support, the ambassadorial, embassy side, would be unhappy with the quality of our physical support because they never could match the Army or CIA; but they would be unhappy in the sense that we couldn't get the President to look only to them. We couldn't support them in the sense of making them the chief contact for the President, and we didn't want to, in the first sense; but you couldn't wall the President in like that. He had to have direct access to all three. So in reality, our ambassador there, the State Department person, would always be unhappy with his status and his influence; but he'd always be unhappy with us, because we didn't get that changed for him.

F: Yes.

C: So I was always in the middle in that kind of a situation, always being looked at as being ineffective because you didn't get the President to make him the boss, you see. And that administrative side would fall to me.

An interesting thing was the way Rusk and the President worked together. The President seemed always to support Rusk and have a high regard for him. The interesting thing was that Rusk sort of looked at himself above the State Department and as not a part of the State Department. He would be in the State Department and say, "Now, we want a policy on Vietnam." And we in the State Department would develop a policy on Vietnam. Then Rusk would go over and be a part of the President, and instead of being our advocate in supporting the policy we took over there, he would transfer himself over into a presidential advisor role; then he would look at our policy just like CIA and the military. And all the State Department people felt that they didn't have an advocate up there. The CIA guy would come over; he would advocate. The military would come with their advocate. We didn't have an advocate, because our guy had opted over to the President, you see. And that had a morale effect on the State Department, a very adverse morale effect because our people felt that our guy was a part of them, rather than a part of us. Now, this was, I'm sure, a good way to operate in many ways, but it was a little bit difficult for our people to see.

F: Well, Rusk, really, never was a participant in the State Department. He left that to his under secretary, or deputy under secretary or

somebody else.

C: That's right. And sort of to each one of us to do our thing. That's a good way to put it: he was not a participant in the State Department process, and you always felt that. He was always very detached, in a way, from what you were trying to do. He never really supported you in a bureaucratic battle, you know. And that's one way to look at it. I'm not criticizing him now.

F: No.

C: It's a matter of fact. President Johnson's graciousness, I think, was illustrated the last time we had anything to be involved in. We were invited to the dedication of the Library. And my wife and I were both very deeply touched at the fact that he arranged for us to stay in a certain particular place--I forget the name of the place. It had a touch that he had been interested enough in that he had at least remembered Bill Crockett, and he had the occasion to . . .

F: He had you back for a couple of state dinners after you quit.

C: That's right. Hey, your records are terrific! One of the things that impressed me about his administration is how well they documented things and kept track of things, how well they followed through on something. He must have been a master at organization himself to enable that to happen.

Yes, when the Shah of Iran was there, Mrs. Crockett and I were invited back for that dinner. And it was amusing that he made reference to the fact that I had left and that I used to be

the guy that he used, or could use, or was helpful to him, which made me sad. So I felt very mixed emotions about having left, the wisdom of it, you know.

F: Too many things aren't clear-cut.

C: That's right. That's right. At the time, I thought I was doing the right thing. You started to ask a question.

F: No, I was just wondering, how do you end a state dinner? Does the guest know when to go home?

C: Yes, the guest knows. Well, at the more formal ones and the more protocolish ones, you knew when to go home. Because on the more protocolish ones, the host, the President in this case, disappears. When the President disappears, well, then you know that's time to go. But Johnson broke all those kinds of protocol, because often he would have the most fun of anybody. He would dance and talk and he even bid the guests goodbye as they left. So that it was difficult to know when to go home. That particular dinner was a very unprotocolish one as I remember; in the sense that people stayed, they had a good time. Now, another cue as to when to go home is from when the guest of honor leaves; that's always another cue if the President doesn't disappear then, at least, if the guest of honor leaves, it's all right to go home. Then you have an option, a terrible option, you know, of should I stay around and join in the fun, or should I sort of think the President needs his rest and get the hell out of here. But I think those are the cues, and there were people that I'm sure always stayed simply because they wanted to.

F: I said you had some good years.

C: Yes. They were terrific years for Mrs. Crockett, for me. My wife refers to them as our golden years and they were golden in the sense of some opportunities for growth. You know, it's not very many people-- I'm not trying to put anything on myself, but--

F: No.

C: I'm trying to say that for a person in the Service to be associated fairly, not intimately, but somewhat closely with the President and his wife is a great thing, and--

F: --have your ten-year-old son go off and visit them without his tooth-brush--

C: Yes, that's right.

F: --and a pair of clean socks.

C: You know, another story about my ten-year-old son and Luci: when Luci was still a younger girl, the Johnsons had some parties for diplomatic children. The children of ambassadors and others were invited to the White House for a dance, for dinner, and they had some kids from the Johnson Cabinet there. My son went to the White House. I was very interested when he came back. He was so excited, but he was recounting to us how nice Luci was. Because he said, "You know, she just danced, she danced with everybody that was there. She didn't pair off with anybody." He was very impressed, you know, at how democratic, how nice, how gracious she was, as a younger person. Lynda traveled a couple of times with us, too, and she was, you know, absolutely proper. And absolutely did the right thing, said

the right thing. He has a remarkable family.

F: Did Johnson consciously use Lady Bird and Lynda to go off in other directions where he didn't have time for, or shouldn't, or something?

C: Right. And very well planned, occasionally, for this. But one nice thing happened that I [appreciated]. Whenever I'd get in trouble with him, you know, I would overplan or plan something, and he would agree to it reluctantly. Then we'd get out there and things would go behind or he'd get mad and say, "I won't go there. That's stupid. I shouldn't have agreed upon it." And I would be in a bind. She would always accommodate me. She would go. And this was always terrific. You know, she would graciously fill in and do the job; and it actually didn't mean that much for him to go. Another thing he always did on those trips that was helpful and sort of his idea was to visit the American embassy and do something for the staff, you know, have maybe a luncheon where he would talk, where he would try to mingle with the little people, not just the Americans, but sort of with the clerks and with the staff; see the people. And, you know, those people didn't have anything they could give him or do for him. It was a gracious gesture out of his own heart.

F: Were you on that trip to Norway when he didn't like the seating arrangements in the dining room?

C: (Laughter) No, I wasn't on that one. Thank goodness.

F: Got that from the National Geographic staff who were covering it.

C: And that was the reason I was more lucky, you know. I knew some

things he liked and didn't like, and I could get them done.

I learned that the hard way, though, from the first trip to the Far East--it was an around-the-world trip--when I gave in to some things that I knew he liked. For instance, I knew he liked the photographer's flatbed truck to be right behind his car in the procession, so that when he'd get out there'd be some pictures. I knew that because he'd told me. But in dealing with the host government, it was unheard of in Saigon that that's where a truck would be, you know, and I agreed to let it be ten cars back. So we got in the procession, and he saw where that truck was. The first stop, he, like General Patton, moved the cars back, had that truck come up and get in front, and that trip I didn't have to be told anymore. I knew. He didn't fault me. He didn't yell at me. He just did it.

F: He just directed traffic.

C: He just directed traffic. He got it done. After that, I knew where to put that truck. But my association with him, I never had him really get angry with me; I never had him do a hurtful thing.

Oh, one difficult time with him, later on, we were in Istanbul, and he was out of sorts. Things weren't going very well. He called me on the phone at night and he said, "Now, Bill, I don't need very much. I just need an air conditioner that'll work. I just need some warm water in my shower. I just need some peace and quiet around here. I just need it so that everybody isn't running into my place. I just need a little wall up here in front of where I am." And he said, "I need some food I can eat." He said,

"I would like not to have so many motorcycles running alongside of me with their sirens screeching. I'd just like to be able to go down the street in some peace and quiet. And you know I don't need very much, Bill. And, Bill, I don't think I ought to have to ask Dean Rusk if I could get these things or if you could get these things for me. Now, Bill . . ." You know, he didn't raise hell, but he let me know what he wanted.

I had to say to him, "Mr. Vice President, yes, I believe I can get those things for you. If that's what you want, now, I understand you."

But it was a great, great experience for me, personally, and for my wife and son. And one of my son's cherished possessions is that letter and the picture he got from the Vice President as a result of that trip. I'm sure the President didn't word it, but he had great people with him and the letter says, "Dear Bobby: Here's a picture of the trip"--and it shows Bobby doing something--"And Lady Bird and I think of all the guests we had that weekend, you were among the nicest. And we just hope that you had a good time. We're glad that you could come with us." You know, that's framed. He's twenty-five years old and that's the most important possession he has: that letter from the Vice President. And that's sort of the way I feel about it.

It was a terrific experience knowing the man and knowing Mrs. Johnson. We talked mostly about him, but I saw her as being a gracious, loyal supporter of his. Used to tell my wife when I'd get home, "You

know, you ought to be a good wife. You ought to go take some lessons from Mrs. Johnson. She supports him financially--that's what she says--and when he gets on that airplane, she rubs his feet, she rubs his hands, and she makes speeches for him. You know, you could just be a wonderful wife if you would take lessons from her."

(Laughter)

F: I don't need to ask your wife's reaction.

C: No, that's right.

F: You be president, and I'll do it.

C: Right. When you get to be president, I'll do it.

F: Right, right. Okay, we best [conclude].

C: I've enjoyed this very much.

F: Well, I've enjoyed it very much. Wonderful portrait.

C: One other last story about him and Dean Rusk, that says more about the kind of things that he could do. He came over to the State Department to do something for us. It was an informal affair and sort of a tribute to Rusk, too, but he was kidding Rusk in the group. He said, you know, "Now, how would you like to have a Secretary of State that culls all the good stuff for himself and sends you all the bad stuff?" He said, "You know, I've had to give fifty or sixty toasts and speeches on the visits of dignitaries, and the State Department always sends me some stuff for a suggested speech, and the stuff they send me is just awful. I haven't been

able to use any of it." He said, "You know, obviously the Secretary of State has culled it all out and got all those good things." He said, "I've listened to the things that Rusk says, and I say, 'Well, you know, if he hadn't have culled it, that's what I would've been saying.' But he speaks first, and he gets all those good things." Sort of joking, but also a little veiled stick there.

F: Yes.

C: And then Rusk has a wonderful articulation, as you know, and he said, "Well, you know, Mr. President, I understand what you're saying, I understand your problem and I understand your need. But I'd just like to have you know that there isn't anything in the State Department stuff that I've ever used either."

F: (Laughter) Nice, very nice. Good.

C: Well, I've enjoyed meeting you, and I've appreciated the time you've taken. This is a great opportunity, as far as I'm concerned. I don't know of any of it that's privileged.

F: Okay, we'll send along [a transcript].

C: Okay.

[End of Tape 1 of 1 and Interview I]

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