INTERVIEWEE: MILTON EISENHOWER (Tape #1)

INTERVIEWER: JOE B. FRANTZ

F: This is an interview with Milton S. Eisenhower, in his office in Baltimore, Maryland. The interviewer is Joe B. Frantz.

Dr. Eisenhower, very briefly, let's run through your career from the time you were born in Abilene, Kansas, until, oh, at least bring it down to when you came to Johns Hopkins.

E: Very briefly, I got my bachelor's degree from Kansas State University. During my senior year there, I took the Foreign Service examinations, partly as a lark. At the end of my senior year, when I had received my degree, I was appointed as a youngster to the faculty with the privilege of taking graduate study. I had no sooner started this when I got a telegram from Charles Evens Hughes, the Secretary of State, offering me the appointment of Vice Counsel to Edinburgh, Scotland. I was in a dilemma, so I went to see my good friend, the president of the college, Dr. W. M. Jardine, and told him about my indecision, and he fired me. He said I could come back in two years if I wanted to. So I became Vice Counsel at Edinburgh and took some graduate work at the University of Edinburgh while I was there.

Then Mr. Jardine became Secretary of Agriculture and wanted me to come back and become his assistant, and I refused to do so in a political appointment, so a civil service examination was given and fortunately I passed first, and thus became the first career assistant to a cabinet member in the history of the American government. After some years as assistant to the Secretary of Agriculture I became Director of Information of the Department and then under Secretary Wallace was both Director of Information and Coordinator of the entire Department--which Secretary Wallace had appointed me.

F: You got to see two different types of secretaries.

E: Oh yes, oh yes. Three or four different types. I served under Secretary Jardine, Secretary Hyde, Secretary Wallace and then Secretary Wicker.

In the meantime I had become quite well acquainted with President Roosevelt and had done a number of administrative studies on a government-wide basis for him. As a matter of fact, how it happened I've never been quite sure, but I became sort of an administrative troubleshooter for President Roosevelt.

F: Troubleshooting for whom?

E: For the government. Doing studies government-wide for the President on governmental organizational problems.

F: Not focusing exclusively on agriculture?

E: Oh no, no. Quite the contrary. In fact, after Pearl Harbor he asked me quickly to make a study of government information for war purposes, and I did the study that led to the creation of the Office of War Information. And later--I'll come to that in a moment--I became its Associate Director.

I scarcely finished this subject when the President called me over and without asking my permission, said your war duty is to set up a war relocation authority to move the Japanese off the Pacific Coast and to take any other persons into custody who might have to be taken, such as Germans.

So I did this. I had no choice in the matter.

F: This is something you did without any guidelines.

E: It was very distasteful, I may say. Then after 90 days--and I had moved 120,000 people in 90 days--I became Associate Director of War Information and stayed in that position until I became President of my alma mater, Kansas State University. I was there seven years and then I was President of Penn State from 1950 to '56, and President of Johns Hopkins from 1956 until two years ago.

Interestingly, I did more high level work for the government, including many presidents of the United States, after I left the government than I did when I was in it. In other words from that day to this--from the day I left government until this, I have been running chores all over the world for Presidents of the United States.

F: When did you first come to be aware of either Congressman or Senator Johnson?

E: I became acquainted with Mr. Johnson when he was a youngster in the House of Representatives when he first came, and we became good friends. In fact he often has remarked about the fact that I personally put him on a nation-wide network for the first time. I was then, I suspect this must have been when I was still Director of Information for the Department--when did he first become--

F: He came up in '37 as a Congressman.

E: '37. I think that would have been when I was still in the Department of Agriculture because I was, among other things, running a nation-wide network of television and radio.

F: One of his first activities was in the field of rural electrification which was, of course, tied in with Agriculture.

E: I don't remember the incident but we've often laughed about it. You see, we became very good friends during his service as a Congressman and then as a Senator. And this continued on into his Presidency.

F: You first began to make trips to Latin America for the government right at the beginning of your brother's inauguration.

E: No, much earlier than that. My work took me into Latin America, as well as elsewhere, under President Truman. In 1946 the President had appointed me the first American permanent chairman of the United States National Commission for UNESCO. I became the Vice Chairman of the delegations to the annual conferences

and on the Executive Board of UNESCO in Paris. And the second meeting of UNESCO, as I recall, was held in Mexico City--thought it was '46 but I think it must have been '47, one of the two--and I spent six weeks there, and this is what aroused my curiosity and it was then that I began my studies on Latin America, reading everything in sight and conferring with the State Department and other people. So by the time my brother became President in 1953, I'd already been studying on the matter for some six years.

F: I know you made a journey to South America that first year of his administration, July of '53.

E: That's correct and kept this up throughout his administration.

F: Right. Did you see much of Senator Johnson during these years of your brother's administration?

E: I saw a good deal. You see, as you will recall, he was the Leader in the Senate during 6 of my brother's eight years. Not only did I see him in a friendly, informal, wholly non-official way in Washington, but on several occasions we found ourselves traveling together.

For example, I remember when I accompanied my brother on the official airplane to Acapulco, Mexico, to meet with President Lopez Mateos, then-Senator Johnson wanted to go to Austin and he rode with us from Washington to Austin. My brother was still suffering from the ileitis operation, as I recall. Certainly he wasn't feeling well, and he went to bed as soon as we got in the air. So the Senator and I devoted about the next two and a half hours to reminiscing and talking about many things. So, yes, I saw a great deal of him.

F: Did your brother have very close relations with the Senator at this time? I know later they developed, but had they already begun to draw together?

E: Certainly from the time that he was leader of the majority party in the Senate their relations were necessarily very close. The meetings in the White House

were not just by the President with the members of his own party but with the Democratic leadership as well. And I think this is essential whenever a President has a congress of a party different from his own. So the official relationships were close from the very first.

F: Without getting unduly partisan, at least Democratic partisans have always claimed that in a sense Mr. Johnson and Mr. Rayburn were two chief lieutenants of President Eisenhower on the Hill. Did you ever hear your brother express himself along this line.

E: Let me first tell you this. It's interesting and quite true. In 1964, during the campaign, I invited President Johnson to Johns Hopkins to speak. We had such a large crowd, about 15,000, that we had to have it outdoors so we erected a little stand. Only the President and I were on the platform. After I presented him, in making his talk he expanded what he had to say from his written text. He had about 18 minutes on his teleprompters, but actually he spoke nearly 55 minutes. And he kept kidding me all the time, and the audience loved it, of course, because it was among my friends at the University.

And I remember his kind of half-turning toward me and saying, "You know, during the time that President Eisenhower was in office and I was leader of the Senate, I voted for his proposals 92 percent of the time, and my opponent in this campaign voted for his proposals 12 percent of the time." Well, you see, this was a true statement, so that it must be said that Senator Johnson and also Speaker Rayburn really put aside partisan considerations, I think, and worked with the President in the spirit in what is good for the country.

F: Your brother really felt that he had some people there he could work with, that they might see things occasionally from a different vantage point, but they weren't going to try to make political capital out of every situation.

E: Yes. I think history has recorded the fact that there was extraordinarily good cooperation between the two branches of the government--Congress and the White House. After all, President Eisenhower only had two vetoes over-ridden by the Congress in eight years, which is an unmatched record. This would not have been the situation unless there had been fairly close cooperation.

F: You felt the lance of Senator Joseph McCarthy several times. Again we don't want to get too deeply into that on you, but you were accused of being a part of a dangerous palace guard for the left and so on and your relationships--well I think just being from Johns Hopkins itself probably damned you to begin with, and the fact that Owen Latimore was here, etc. Did you ever have any occasion to observe Senator Johnson's behavior during this McCarthy era?

E: I don't believe I did.

F: He never talked with you about the problems you were having.

E: No, I had plenty. I don't think I ever discussed those with Mr. Johnson.

F: Now when your brother was ill in'55-'56--'56-'57?

E: The first illness was in '55. This was the heart attack in Denver.

F: And then later the ileitis. So far as you know did Senator Johnson call on him or do anything just beyond common courtesy at this period?

E: Let me say that while the President was in the hospital in Denver courtesy calls were absolutely discouraged by the doctors. Persons went out to Denver only if it seemed imperative in getting decisions on governmental matters. However, once he was back in the office, I think that Senator Johnson was very helpful, far beyond the mere call of duty or courtesy.

F: In what way?

E: I mean his visits to the White House, his steering of legislation through the Congress, took on, I think at that stage, a particularly helpful atmosphere

because he was being considerate not only of the country, which he always had been, but of the President personally.

F: I've had the feeling that the two men were able to sit down and map out legislation and programs with a fair amount of congeniality and understanding, I presume you would confirm that?

E: Yes I do. It's interesting what happens to people in different positions, though. If you don't mind I'll give you two examples.

In my work for my brother as Special Ambassador to Latin America, I was particularly concerned about our relations with Mexico. And after long, long talks with President Ruiz Cortinas and later President Lopez Mateos, I proposed a formula for the solution of the so-called Chamizal Dispute. My brother found that this would be strongly opposed by the leader of the Senate of the United States because this would affect Texas, and it was felt at that time that the political attitude in Texas would be unfriendly to the solution that I had proposed. Later President Kennedy proposed a specific solution which was almost word for word what I had--

F: Did he confer with you on this?

E: No, no.

F: Did he take up your recommendation?

E: As far as I know it was independently arrived at.

F: It must have been logical if two of you came to the conclusion.

E: And finally you see, at that time Mr. Johnson was the Vice President of the United States and interposed no objections. By the way it was he as President of the United States who implemented the agreement. That everyone finally arrived at the same conclusion is perhaps not surprising, because there was an arbitration award in 1911 which if one recognized its validity, everything

else flowed rather logically from it. This is what I suggested and got turned down for political reasons; later it was effectuated.

The more serious one had to do with civil rights. The first civil rights act after the Civil War was passed in 1957. Interestingly, it was greatly weakened in the Senate as contrasted to what passed the House, in order to get the support of Senator Johnson. Now I have no doubt that at that time Senator Johnson was doing what he felt his constituents in the State of Texas would have him do. There is no question that when he became President, he became the most militant civil rights leader in the history of the country. He was now obviously doing what he felt the people of the United States wanted done or that he felt the people of the United States ought to want to have done.

I merely cite these two incidences to say that what one stands for at any time in his life depends a good deal upon what his responsibility is. And I think that this is no condemnation that his basic philosophy. I suspect sometimes, you know, if I were an 18 year old student today I might be marching in some of the confrontations. I hope I would be a peaceful confronter, but as one who spent 25 years nearly as a university president and realize how delicate these institutions are and how easily they could be harmed, and even destroyed, I can't look with favor on what is now going on.

So, what I have said about this change of attitude is not meant to be critical.

F: True. A senator who is a defeated is no senator at all then.

E: Certainly.

F: Getting to be Vice President freed Mr. Johnson from Texas.

You went in '59 with Vice President Nixon to USSR and to Poland. So far as you know did Senator Johnson get involved in this at all from a standpoint of any legislation or any recommendations?

E: As I recall, two things--first an Act and then a fairly substantial appropriation--certainly the appropriation had to be enacted by the House and the Senate, which was done with no difficulty whatsoever in authorizing the United States to put up its rather expensive exhibit in Moscow. And a group of us went with Vice President and Mrs. Nixon. I was his right-hand man and, frankly, everywhere he went, every conference he had with Khrushchev, I was with him. But to the best of my recollection, Senator Johnson had nothing to do with it other than getting the appropriation through the Senate.

F: Now the same year, you went back to South America, Mexico, and so on. You came back and recommended to your brother policy changes in Latin America. How have those been realized through the years? It's hard to change a policy!

E: First, let me say that I think there were more changes in policy toward Latin America by the United States during the Eisenhower Administration than in any Administration before that or since. I have enumerated these in writing. They have to do with such things as reversing a hundred-year-old policy of opposing the development of common markets to an open policy of advocating them; of throwing over other historic policies, such as opposing the formation of an interAmerican bank, actually bringing one into existence. Previously we'd had the policy of refusing even to discuss the possibility of stabilizing the prices of the primary commodities that Latin America ships to the United States whereas in the Eisenhower Administration we set up the study groups trying at least to find a solution to a very knotty and very difficult problem.

Interestingly, a fact that was never recognized by President Kennedy but [that] President Johnson in his public statements recognized at once, is this: The basic legislation for the entire Alliance for Progress was not passed in the Kennedy Administration, but in 1960 under Eisenhower. All President Kennedy

did, very candidly, was to get it a new euphonious name. He called it the Alliance for Progress. But the Domestic Act of September 1960 and the International Compact in the Act of Bogota of 1960 laid the whole legal and philosophic foundation for the Alliance for Progress.

When President Kennedy called the Latin American Ambassadors to the White House in the East Room and made his statement about the Alliance for Progress--and fostered the meeting at Punta del Este which was simply the ministerial confirmation of what had already been enacted at Bogota and gave a name--it was then assumed that the author of the Alliance for Progress was President Kennedy. But interestingly, whether it was out of his genuine affection for President Eisenhower--and President Johnson and President Eisenhower did become very affectionate friends--whether it was that or whether it was simply his desire for sheer accuracy, I was interested in noticing that President Johnson always in talking about the Alliance for Progress spoke about the Act of Bogota of 1960, as well as the Charter of Punta del Este in 1961, which was the correct thing to do.

F: Now, then, you started this action in 1960--

E: Actually, we started before then. The Alliance for Progress, the first major decision that led to its development was in 1957. I had long talks with Secretary Robert Anderson of Treasury about the need to develop an interAmerican bank--not that we needed another bank from the financial point of view, per se. We didn't. And, incidentally, we'd always opposed it because we said it would simply increase administrative costs without making more funds available. But we needed it in order to have a multinational agency which could attach conditions to loans--conditions demanding social change, conditions which if the United States unilaterally insisted upon them would bring against us the charge of intervening in their internal affairs.

So at the economic conference in Buenos Aires later in 1957, Secretary Robert Anderson announced that the United States was now prepared to discuss with them the formation of an InterAmerican Bank. It was an agency through which, instead of our engaging in a unilateral intervention, made possible what you might call collective intervention by the Latin American nations themselves against one another in laying down conditions for loans.

So that was the first step. Then the second step was a year-long work in writing, almost chiseling out the provisions that went into the Act of Bogota of September 1960. And if you read the Act of Bogota at the same time that you read the Charter of Punta del Este of 1961, you'll see that the language is almost identical. It's almost word for word. So I would say that when you think of the historic development of the Alliance, you must think from really 1956--and let me mention that in a moment--up through 1961.

In 1956 the Presidents of the American republics met in Panama. My brother was there. He was just getting over the ileitus operation. I went with him to take his place whenever he felt he couldn't attend, and it was a proposal that he made there--and I won't go into detail unless you want me to--that led to the formation of an interAmerican body of presidential representatives of which I was chairman. It was out of that that our changed attitude came toward the formation of the bank and things began rolling and led up to the Punta del Este Charter of '61.

F: Then do you think we pretty well progressed in a straight line on the ideas that evolved in the Act of Bogota, or do you think that this has been diluted or diverted in the two Democratic administrations since?

E: I don't think that there has been any basic deviation from the American policy, the American philosophy, or the American attitude. The lack of progress on

achieving the purposes of the Alliance cannot be laid to the fault of the United States. You see, too many people think of this Alliance as purely a declaration for economic advance. That isn't so. As you well know, it's first of all a promise to bring about social change, to discard the anachronistic social policies that were inherited from Spain and Portugal and to put in a socially conscious system that would benefit all the people, and then also to work for economic growth. Now, we can't make the social changes for them. Only they can make the social changes, and their failure to do so must be levied right at them and not the United States.

You know it's an interesting fact that the people of the United States are the most self-critical in the world. Whenever anything goes wrong with a foreign policy we tend to search for the mistake on our part. Well, good relations require proper action by two or more nations. Sometimes it isn't the United States at all that's at fault and in this one I think it isn't. So to sum up, the progress has not been what it should have been. But I think it is not due to any changed attitude on the part of the United States.

F: 1960, of course, was also an election year and the last year of the Eisenhower Administration. Did your brother express to you at any time any interest, more than just casual citizen interest, in whom the Democrats might nominate? Did he talk to you at all about Johnson's potential candidacy?

E: I don't recall, but I can make an awfully good guess. You see, at that time, we all felt that Senator Johnson was a middle-of-the-road moderate who gave first attention to what he believed would be in the interest of the United States. Most of us around the White House felt that Senator Kennedy might be farther to the left, less experienced in statecraft, and, indeed, a reading of his speeches in the House and in the Senate left one at sea as to what his

position might be. So, not out of partisanship but out of a belief that Senator Johnson would make the better president, I think it's fair to say that, according to my recollection, most of us hoped that he would be the Democratic nominee. Now if you talk in pure partisanship, I'm not sure that we didn't hope it would be Senator Kennedy, because we thought he would be easier to beat!

F: Right. Did you take any particular role in the campaign of 1960?

E: No more than working with my brother on some of his addresses. I certainly wouldn't say I wrote his addresses. Nobody could ever write an address for President Eisenhower, and I don't know that anyone can write for any other President. I know this, that my brother rewrote every speech he ever made twelve times and he rewrote it himself. But I did work with him on the speeches that he made in the campaign. I wasn't particularly active otherwise.

F: In this year 1960 you resigned from two rather important commissions. One was the Presidential Advisory Commission on Government Organization and the other was the National Advisory Commission on InterAmerican Affairs.

E: Yes.

F: Was this just the fact that you were up to here in work or was there some more compelling reason?

E: Oh no. Candidly I resigned shortly before my brother went out of office because--I would have done this even if another Republican had been elected.

F: You just wanted to give a free hand to a successor?

E: I think any successor--by the way, I am now chairman of one Presidential Commission and a member of another. I got in touch with President-Elect Nixon immediately after the election and let him know that I was prepared to offer my resignation. He asked me not to. So, no, I just thought that was the normal thing to do.

F: Right. One of the first things that the Kennedy Administration ran into was of course the Cuban problem. As a Latin American expert were you consulted by the Kennedy Administration on this and their activities or not?

E: I was not consulted until after the disaster of the Bay of Pigs. Then I was personally called by President Kennedy to join with Mrs. Eleanor Roosevelt, Walter Reuther, and Joe Dodge in trying to free the 1200 Cubans who had been captured as a consequence of that awful fiasco. May I say the only unpleasant experience I ever had with a President of the United States was in my effort to be helpful. When the President called me he made it clear that he would notify the American people that the decision, the policy decision to try to free the prisoners was a governmental decision, and that what we were asked to do was raise the money to buy the tractors to trade for the prisoners. He didn't do this, and the first person to criticize us for an apparent violation of the Logan Act, which forbids private citizens to arrogate foreign policy to themselves, came from Speaker Rayburn and other Democratic leaders! And once they got started the Republicans, who had up to then still were in the honeymoon period and felt they couldn't criticize the Administration, took off not only against the four of us, but against the President. I got very, very angry because a promise had not been kept. So I sat down and wrote a bitter letter to the President. Two days later I got a call from my very dear friend the Secretary of State.

F: Rusk?

E: Yes, Rusk, whom I had known for many years--saying "I'm glad you wrote that letter because the President has referred it to us and has turned the problem over to us. This is the first we've known about it, and if you will not resign as you threatened to do, I'll work with you."

I said, "I'll stay on the committee then and see what we can do, provided that you approve every step we take."

F: So from that time forward the tractors for Freedom Committee did work hand in glove with State. But until then you were just left free floating.

E: That's right.

F: Did you get fairly good help from the State Department?

E: Oh yes, everything was fine from then on. Now, we failed because Castro kept increasing what he wanted to free them. About a year later Donovan, who had previously been head of OSS during the war, got these prisoners out. When we started it was assumed it would be 12 million dollars to buy the tractors to trade for them. What he finally did, I have been told, cost about 80 million dollars. It was really the government that paid the bill, a fact that very few people know. And it was done by a very interesting method. Castro wanted primarily pharmaceutical products, so it has been reported to me that leading pharmaceutical concerns of the United States donated the products and were permitted to take a deduction from income at the retail value of those products. Now, you see, since the corporate tax was 52 percent, it follows that a deduction of the full retail value would give them almost as much benefit as selling it wholesale. I have no objection to this. Certainly I do not imply any criticism of Colonel Donovan or anyone else. I am simply saying that not many individuals in the United States know that the ultimate cost to get those men out was about 80 million dollars.

F: What happened to your committee in this case? Did it just sort of peter out?

E: Yes. I think in the end that we probably sent in letters of disbandment. You see, in a way we didn't even have a paper from the President appointing us. He just called us on the phone and asked us to constitute ourselves into a committee to raise the money to do this chore.

F: You had no budget or anything?

E: No. We paid all of our costs out of our pockets.

F: It's sort of a frustrating experience.

E: Yes, it was indeed.

F: Did Vice President Johnson show any interest in these activities at all?

E: I don't think he was in on the matter at all. There was a young man in the White House, 29 years old--I've forgotten his name at the moment--who worked with the President on this whole matter, and no one else was consulted, not even the Secretary of State, and I'm sure not Vice President Johnson. Then when the problem was turned over to the Secretary of State there was no reason for the Vice President to be involved. No, I'm sure the Vice President wasn't in on the matter at all.

F: Now in '63, you brought out The Wine Is Bitter which was widely reviewed and discussed and made quite an impact. So far as you know did Vice President Johnson ever see this, or comment to you on it? It's a policy making book.

E: All I can say is this, because I don't know that he read the book, but I do know that the moment he became President--well not the moment, within a month--he began sending his helicopter for me and I went to the White House on numerous occasions and spent many hours on many problems including problems affecting Latin America. We often would sit not in the big Oval Office, but in that little tiny office he had next to it which was I think a bath at one time, but they took the bath out. During the Dominican Crisis I was there with him. So I don't know whether his wish to discuss these matters with me was simply based upon our general friendship over a long period of years and his knowledge of my work in Latin America, or whether he had read the book.

F: Let's talk a little bit about your Dominican experience. Do you think he overreacted?

E: I told him so. You see, interestingly--

F: How soon did he call you, do you recall?

E: Yes, I can spot it almost to the moment. It was just as Ambassador Bunker and McGeorge Bundy were there following the decision of the OAS to assume responsibility for the military operation.

That was a very interesting experience. Keep in mind the three countries in Latin America where I had never personally made studies were Cuba, Haiti, and the Dominican Republic. But the President sent for me and the minute I arrived at the White House by helicopter he said, "Would you mind walking on the back lawn."

I said, "Not at all." And for half an hour, we just kept walking around that circle. I have a picture he sent me. I have many pictures of Presidents, and this one, you see the two of us walking away from the camera, and the President liked it and autographed it and sent it to me. For thirty minutes as we walked around he told me the message that came to him, message or messages, that came to him every day in order, whether a telephone call or telegram, whether direct to him or through the Secretary of State, the decision that he made and brought me right up to the moment. He said--and it took him thirty minutes, and didn't have a note that he referred to--

F: He had this etched in his mind.

E: It was all right there. So he said, "Let's go in and sit down in the office now, and then you tell me what you think." We went in and sat down and said, "How would you like a root beer?"

I said, "Oh, I love root beer."

So we got two glasses of root beer and he said, "Now you tell me what you think."

I said, "Well Mr. President, the initial action of sending a few thousand troops, marines, in to save the lives of Americans and other foreigners was wholly in harmony with traditional international law. No one could possibly criticize you for having done that. Your next decision to enlarge the force and have them intervene directly in the civil war, believing on the basis of evidence presented to you that a new Castro-type activity or danger was here, was a judgment that you arrived at that I think was wrong. I do believe that had you waited a few days more you could have undertaken this entire operation through the Organization of American States and not unilaterally by the United States. But it does no good to second-guess now, the important consideration now that the OAS has agreed to undertake this responsibility is to get McGeorge Bundy out of there at once, to get Bunker out as fast as possible, to put the commander of the Organization of American States forces in the foreground and see to it that all the publicity to the world is in the name of the Organization of American States and not the United States--not the United States negotiators."

Now the reason I'm giving you these details is not just to recall it, but as I talked, he would get up once in awhile and walk around the room and once in awhile look at the ceiling and I had the feeling that he wasn't listening to a word I said. But he had asked me to say what my judgment was, and I take these things seriously so I finished. And I must have talked twenty minutes.

But when I finished he said, "Let's go over to the residence and have lunch and would you mind if I asked a couple of the staff members to come along."

I said, "Mr. President, it's your residence. I'm agreeable to anything you want to do." So we went upstairs. By the way after my brother left the White House they built a kitchen and a dining room up on the second floor which weren't

there before, and this was the first I'd seen them. So while they were getting lunch ready he introduced me to Mrs. Johnson, this was the first I'd met her. Finally we sat down to lunch, and there were about eight of us. Just as we started to eat, McGeorge Bundy came in from the Dominican Republic and sat down.

As we were eating, the President said, "I want all of you to know that I've had a long talk with Milton Eisenhower about the Dominican situation and this is what he told me." And he repeated almost word for word what I had said to him over a 20 [minute] period and, "He makes the following recommendations!" Well I was absolutely astounded. Quite contrary to having been indifferent to anything I was saying, every word was registering and his repetition--I couldn't have done it, and his doing so was both revealing and exceedingly surprising.

F: And a little flattering I'd say. Do you think it had real impact?

E: The things happened that we had talked about. Whether he would have done them without my advice is something I'll never know.

F: But he accepted your criticism?

E: Oh yes, oh yes.

F: You were also concerned in the Panama situation. You went down there to work on a new canal route and so on. Can you tell us about that?

E: Yes, I will--be glad to. I started the study on Panama in 1958 and when I came home I was convinced that we were in for serious trouble. So I submitted to the Secretary of State a series of recommendations--higher wages for the Panamanians, the purchase of supplies and equipment only from the United States or from Panama, not buying anything from Australia and other countries in violation of the Treaty of 1955, training more Panamanians for high level jobs, paying the American rate for the high technical jobs, and the beginning of

a low-cost housing program in Panama for the employees of the Zone which would be amortized by deductions from their pay. They had already indicated to me that they would be delighted to have the deductions made to pay for these low cost houses.

The Secretary of State approved what I recommended and asked me now to see the Secretary of the Army who is the direct supervisor of both the President of the Canal Zone and the Governor of the Zone--that is the administrator of the Canal company. He was not friendly to my recommendations.

I then made a mistake. I should have gone to my brother. But I had so believed during my brother's administration that I would hurt his relationships with his Cabinet if I went directly to him--everything else that I did I got the approval of the Cabinet members concerned and either went with them, or with their permission, to the President. But this was once that I adhered to that too slavishly because I might have stopped the trouble.

Well, about October 1959, a year later, the Secretary of the Army asked me to stop in to see him. He said "Trouble is about to break loose in Panama, and I think the following things should be done." It's amazing how history can come back to you. They were almost identically the nine points that I had talked to him about just the year before. I said, "Well, Mr. Secretary, I'm staying in the White House this weekend as I so often do. Do you want me to tell what you just said--"

F: Was this Mr. Herter?

E: No, this was [Wilbur] Brucker. And he said, "I wish you would." So I recounted now to my brother what I had done in 1958 and what the Secretary of State wanted to do--it was Dulles--and what Brucker thought then and what Brucker thought now. Well, he kind of chastised me for not telling him in 1958. Anyway

that was a Saturday night. On Monday morning he had every agency head, in the least concerned, all the way from the Ex-Im [Export-Import] Bank and State and Army and all the rest, and knocked their heads together, saying they were going to get a program underway. Well before he could get the program underway came the great difficulty in November, Independence Day, when Panamians burned the American flag.

I kept studying this problem. By the way, after the thing died down we put most of the recommendations into effect, but not at a time when they could say that through discord you can get Uncle Sam to do things you can't do through negotiation.

Now later, you will recall, serious trouble broke out early in President Johnson's administration. It was very unfortunate because we didn't even have an Ambassador there. Farland had resigned, there hadn't been an Ambassador for six months. At this time in '63 I became chairman of the Republican Critical Issues Council and published a paper. That document is available. It's in the libraries, so I won't repeat what I said there. Later, I had nothing to do with the negotiation of the actual draft treaties which were developed with permission of President Johnson, but his Ambassador in those negotiations was Robert Anderson, Secretary of Treasury under my brother and chairman of the Commission of which I am a member, namely the commission to determine when, where and how to build a new sea-level canal. So therefore, I have been perfectly aware of the provisions of the draft treaty.

F: Did President Johnson talk to the canal group before--the new route group--before you started work on this, or did he just give you a charge by letter or mail and let it go at that, or phone and let it go at that?

E: I never undertook an assignment for President Johnson without talking to him personally. You see, I did many things for President Johnson. You may have

forgotten, I even was the first chairman of the group he set up to grant the presidential scholarships.

F: I was going to come to that next.

E: Then I went on the Canal Commission, and the one I reluctantly undertook I'm still on--Chairman of the Commission on the Causes and Prevention of Violence.

F: On the Presidential Scholars Commission, how significant an operation do you consider that? Did you give it a high priority?

E: I gave it a high enough priority that even though I was still terribly busy--because I was still actively president of the Johns Hopkins University--I was the first chairman and got it organized and systematized, and I think we did a good job, and I think it is worthwhile. You know, we in America don't give as much recognition for achievement as we should and it's the nature of the mass communication media that they discuss turmoil and dramatic things more than they give attention to individual and group achievements. And here was recognition by the President of the United States to youngsters simply on the basis of scholarship. I thought it was a good idea, and I still think it's a good idea.

F: He went along with it with enthusiasm?

E: Very well. As a matter of fact when we sat down there in the Fish Room on a Sunday for the original discussion with him, he didn't have a paper before him and he outlined very beautifully why he thought this would be a good idea, how he thought it ought to be done, how we would select them, the aid that we would have of the merit scholarship organization under Stallnecker and so on. So it wasn't something that he just put his name to that someone else developed.

F: Now, as an educator of considerable experience, did the President utilize you in his work on Federal Aid to Education and his work on integration in the schools, etc?

E: President Johnson?

F: Yes.

E: I don't remember ever discussing that subject with him, with the exception that after I became chairman of the Committee on the Causes and Prevention of Violence, I did discuss with him student disruptions and told him that one of the serious studies we would make through the Commission would be on this subject. You see, he had hoped--vainly I assure you--he appointed us on June 10--before he left office he would have the final report. Well, all I could give him--and it's right here someplace--was a progress report, and we're still not through. As a matter of fact when we finish on December 10, when we go out of existence, there will still be phases of the problem on which we cannot report and on which there should be a report written.

F: You cannot report simply because the research hasn't been done?

E: Simply because as a Commission we haven't time. I hate to leave things hanging. Let me just give one example. I think many of the problems on the campuses could be stopped without calling in the police if injunctions could quickly be obtained from the courts. I know of examples where this has been done, the students at once realizing that this would put them in contempt of court if they continued with their sit-in or whatever they were doing so very disbanded. That solved the problem. They didn't have to call in the police.

Unfortunately, judges vary and laws on the injunctive process in the state courts vary a good deal, so there has been a proposal which appeals to me, that the Congress amend the Civil Rights Act indicating that whenever an individual's rights are interfered with, such as by a group interfering in classes that would deny the access of that class to others, that the federal courts would have the right immediately to issue injunctions. I think this merits the most careful

consideration and if we had time I would want to call in some of the great legal scholars of the country and discuss this at least for a full day. We would then want to write the paper with care and then submit it for criticism by a dozen scholars before we put it into final shape.

I simply describe this as one thing I'm sure we're not going to get done by the 10th, because I still have about six papers I know I have to get out and, believe me, getting thirteen people to agree to a paper is something. You see, when we put out a document like this, we read it aloud sentence by sentence and it is edited by thirteen people in a group.

F: Thirteen people can't agree on the topic!

E: I have heard an hour taken over a thing as trivial as the insertion of a comma. But the reports we put out, the four--and we've got six more to put out--have been prepared this way.

F: Okay. Then President Johnson was an ardent civil rights advocate and the blacks rioted. He was, I think, thoroughly committed to the broadening the base of education for certainly the younger and older citizenry and the students rioted. He worked anti-poverty programs and the ghettos rose. Did he ever express any disillusion or bitterness on this, or did he think this was part of the growth process? Do you have any clear-cut memories of this?

E: I'm sure he was disappointed. But I don't recall any specific discussion. It's sometimes hard to recall specifics out of many, many visits.

I have felt, myself, using the civil rights matter only out of the three that you mention, that sometimes if one is willing to take a longer period and proceed more cautiously that over a period of, say, ten years you will have achieved more than you will if you move in an almost revolutionary spirit. In some of my discussions with President Johnson I gave expression to this, but

even if he had agreed--and I don't know that he agreed or disagreed--it was too late because the expectations among the black people of this country were raised to a great height during the Kennedy years, and anyone who had tried to dampen them would have been in even more serious trouble. So it was too late then.

I still feel, and partly based upon personal experience, that if we had not passed that Omnibus Act under Kennedy--I'm sorry--it was written by the Kennedy people and passed under President Johnson after Kennedy's assassination, if we hadn't done that but had taken each point one at a time and had had it accepted, and then had passed new legislation and gained acceptance as we moved along, we'd be farther along today than we are.

One should never generalize on the basis of his personal experience, but let me mention one university where I became president. There was the most ghastly discrimination you can imagine. The black students couldn't play in intercollegiate athletics; they couldn't have an intramural team; they weren't housed; they couldn't swim in the swimming pools; they were discriminated against in the honor societies. At the end of six years there wasn't a trace of discrimination left in the institution; there had never been a story in the newspapers; there had never been a sit-down strike, and everybody was happy. And the problem was solved. I say that merely to indicate what I think is the better process.

But obviously, you don't lose your feelings, you don't lose your sensitivity, merely because you live in the White House and are the President of the United States. And it unquestionably must have been very much on his mind and must have hurt him deeply, that in his leadership he was trying to do the best that he could and then have these things happen.

F: While you were chairman of the Republican National Citizens Committee, you supervised getting out a number of position papers, I suppose, on such things

as agriculture and NATO, and we've mentioned Panama, the whole fiscal policy and so on. Did President Johnson that is, pay any attention to these or did he pretty well leave that to the Republicans. Did he ever discuss them with you?

E: The only time I remember discussing those was in a jocular mood. He had never called me or criticized a thing that I was doing. You see, at that time, he was very much the President. Things were marching toward the 1964 convention. But I think he knew, and this amused him, that Goldwater was opposed completely to what I was doing, and matter of fact, wrote a scathing criticism to Miller, who was then Chairman of the Republican National Committee. So I think the President was amused and I believe we joked about this back and forth.

I'm pretty sure that he read some of them because when I later discussed the Panamanian situation with him he obviously had read the one on Panama. You see I did not advocate in that Panamanian paper a revision of the Treaty of 1903 until after the sea-level canal was built because I felt we would lose our bargaining power if we revised the Treaty first. I wanted to raise the payments to Panama, raise the tolls to get the money and amortize the cost of the present canal and so forth and then enter into a new treaty for a sea-level canal. I'm not even sure that he disagreed with me. But again you know, it's one thing to sit on the outside when you're not responsible and say that this is the ideal thing that should be done; it's quite another when you're the President and must make that ultimate decision and you have to negotiate with the other guy and find the middle ground that he will accept and that you'll accept.

You know, so few people in the United States recognize this. 57 percent of the people of the United States want the war in Viet Nam ended and so do I. I've been against the war bitterly from the very first and I've never said a

word publicly because not for the world would I make it harder for the President of the United States with my small voice. But when these young people pour into my house and pound the table--they're against the President simply because he doesn't stop the war tomorrow--and you press them and say, "If you were the President of the United States you just tell me how you would stop the war tomorrow," they flounder all over the place. It's quite a different thing when you have to make the responsible decision.

F: In the campaign of "64, I suspect you were much closer to the Democratic candidate in your thinking than you were to the Republicans. Just what sort of position did it put you in?

E: I felt that those fourteen papers we published in late '63 and early '64, would have been a very good moderate-liberal program for the Republican party in 1964. When Senator Goldwater was nominated over Governor Scranton, whom I nominated in the convention, I felt that my work was wasted. Frankly, I simply withdrew.

F: Quiet summer and fall.

E: I had a very quiet summer and fall. I took no part in the campaign. I did invite both the President and Goldwater to speak at Hopkins. The President graciously accepted and couldn't have been nicer. I'm sure it was partly--not only did he think it was good politics but also I think maybe it was a personal compliment to me, because I had worked a lot for him and we were dear friends. Goldwater accepted and then canceled so, you know, one has to maintain a high level neutrality when you are president of a university.

F: Johnson made a major address here.

E: Oh yes.

F: Did he confer with you in advance on it?

E: No, no. I think I've told you in the early part of this interview that he had eighteen minutes on that teleprompter and talked fifty-five, and then scared the Secret Service people to death by plunging right out in among those 15,000 people and starting to shake hands. Oh, it was one of his great days. He was feeling fine.

F: Did you get the feeling that President Johnson ever sort of used his friendship with your brother for political gain? Now, I'll grant you that it's quite agreeable, to say the least, if I'm friends with you for us to advertise the fact that we're friends, but over and above that, that he used him, and I think it is the right word.

E: Let me give two answers to that.

First there is no doubt in my mind--never has been any doubt--that his friendship for my brother, his admiration for President Eisenhower, was very genuine. The statement that he gave to the press right after my brother died was one of the most moving, earnest, brief statements that I have ever read about anybody. I know it came from his heart. I was so moved that right in the midst of the funeral services, I was prepared to sit down and write him a personal letter when lo and behold he and Mrs. Johnson came up to the hotel where we were staying, and I ushered him into Mrs. Eisenhower's suite, had a nice talk with him and thanked him in person.

Now both President Kennedy and President Johnson made one serious misstatement so far as my brother is concerned with respect to Viet Nam. When President Eisenhower was in the White House there was absolutely no commitment, verbal, written, public, or covert that promised our use of our military power on the side of South Viet Nam. The only commitment was a SEATO commitment,

and SEATO has never to this day expressed a judgment on the Viet Nam conflict. So the decision to put American troops into this war was strictly a decision initially made by President Kennedy in 1962 and then greatly expanded by President Johnson in 1965. But both of them said at times "We are carrying out the commitment made by President Eisenhower," and even my successor at Johns Hopkins said the other day, in expressing a personal judgment, "I am opposed to the decisions made by Presidents Eisenhower, Kennedy and Johnson," and I had to take him to task because it historically is not true.

Whether President Johnson's statement was made in a misleading fashion, in an effort to appeal for the support of the American people without regard to partisan considerations, or whether he actually wasn't thoroughly informed of the circumstances, I've never known because I've never discussed this particular question. You see there is a complete book written by a lawyer, Arthur Larson, on this subject that makes it perfectly clear that the 600 American troops who were in Viet Nam when Eisenhower left office were there for only one purpose, namely, to consult and train and not to fire a shot. So I hope I've made it clear. You asked me "Did he use his friendship" with my brother. I've tried to make it clear that the friendship was very sincere from the heart, that he did make what I consider to be misleading statements, but I can't say whether it was intentional or due to lack of information.

F: Or poor research. Every time there was a first-class crisis, President Johnson went to see President Eisenhower, called him, or did something. Were you ever present at any of these?

E: Yes.

F: What sort of form did they take?

E: Several times my brother was feeling well enough to be up out of bed and in a robe, and on these occasions they would have a very spirited back and forth

conversation.

F: A give-and-take proposition?

E: Oh, very much so. Both. Normally it would be the President bringing my brother up-to-date on the latest developments and then they would have discussion on what the possibilities were in the light of these facts.

F: Was it kind of like contending lawyers? Kind of a adversary thing?

E: No, no. I'd say quite the contrary, quite the contrary. You see, my brother had one terribly deep conviction. The Constitution of the United States makes the President exclusively responsible for foreign affairs, and commander-in-chief of the armed forces. No one else has the same information that the President has. It's therefore, my brother thought, almost unAmerican to try to out-guess the President unless you are damned sure that you've got precisely all the same information that he's got. So instinctively he wanted to uphold the President on all international affairs and not enter into a public quarrel under any circumstances with the President. If he's going to do any quarreling for partisan or other purposes, it would be on domestic matters. Now that was a general conviction, but they understood one another. It wasn't an adversary kind of discussion at all.

F: Yes. You were rumored in '66 to be a Republican candidate for the Senate from Maryland. Was this just somebody else's idea?

E: This is very interesting. I have been offered three times in my lifetime a real opportunity to enter into elective politics--one as governor of Kansas; the next, governor of Pennsylvania; and third, the senatorship from Maryland. The senatorship was offered--the Republican nomination was offered--by the way it wasn't '66, it was--'62 it must have been, because the race would have been against Brewster, and Brewster went out of the Senate in '69. So it was the election of '62, I believe.

F: I picked up the rumor in a '66 New York Times which is where I got that date.

E: Anyway, let me say yes, I was offered by the Republican leadership of this state, and all of them, to have the nomination without opposition. My obligations to Johns Hopkins were such that my conscience wouldn't permit me to give up the post. One has to live with himself. I was in the midst of what I considered to be almost a renaissance at Johns Hopkins University. We tripled its income, doubled its endowment, started new programs, built 75 million dollars worth of buildings, and really brought Johns Hopkins up from a fairly low level to where it ought to be as one of the great institutions in the country. And if somebody else had been doing it all the time, it would have been fine. But since I was the one that was providing the leadership I couldn't give it up. Now that was the specific. But I have always shied away, partly because I felt I had a contribution to make in other directions, on the basis of having worked for six presidents, and partly because I think, very candidly, because I can't quite bring myself to offering myself before the people and seeking their votes for anything. I think I would find this distasteful.

F: Yes. Did President Johnson ever talk to you about a possible political career?

E: No, not that I remember, no.

F: All right, let's move on to this last year of office. Tell me about the circumstances surrounding your being named chairman of the Presidential Commission on Violence.

E: This is, no fooling, the most reluctant one I ever took. The President called me at about 9:20 on the night following the assassination of Senator Robert Kennedy in California. And he said, "Milton, I have thought and thought what I could do that is justified that will make a real contribution, and that will be reassuring to the American people following this horrible assassination."

Which simply calls to mind the terrible record we have in the late 60's in the field of violence. He said, "So I feel I must set up a Presidential Commission to inquire into the causes and what we might do to reduce the level of violence." He said, "And I want you to be chairman, and before you say anything, let me tell you the persons that I intend to ask to serve with you." And he ticked them off.

I said, "Mr. President, I have retired. I'm under orders from the doctor to take things easier. I don't really feel that I am as well qualified for this job as I hope I've been for others I've undertaken for you and other presidents. If you want me to be a member of the Commission--one member--I'd be delighted, but please don't ask me to serve as chairman."

He said, "I say this to you not in flattery but in sincerity. You have a reputation such as is almost unmatched for objectivity and fairness and the person who is head of this commission has to have that kind of a reputation. And I can find all sorts of people who will make a great contribution, but I can't think of anybody else who will give it the kind of objective leadership that I feel it needs."

Well, you know, all my life I've gone on the theory that no one has the right to say "No" to the President of the United States if you can conceivably do what he asks. Because it's not only the toughest job in the world, it is the most impossible job in the world! No man can really redeem the responsibilities the Constitution, the laws and tradition place upon the President of the United States--and some day I'm going to write a book and tell you why.

So anyway, I said yes, and I've been at it since. In some ways it's the hardest and most heartbreaking job I've ever undertaken, and at a time in my life when I ought to be taking it easy instead of working as hard as I am.

F: It's a job without clear-cut solutions, isn't it?

E: Yes.

F: Did you get as members the list of people he read you?

E: Yes. But here I must say one critical thing of President Johnson. He selected the thirteen members of the commission and he selected the Executive Director, Lloyd Cutler, though he got my permission for the Executive Director. But as I looked over the members of the Commission and their talents, I felt that we ought to improve the intellectual level. So I formally asked through the proper White House staff, Califano, that the President appoint Professor James Q. Wilson, the famous political scientist who has devoted most of his professional life to a study of this field and Robert Goheen, President of Princeton University, to the Commission and he wouldn't do it.

Since I can later require that this be confidential, let me say that it's not been a terribly happy experience. The President wanted some Republicans and some Democrats on the Committee. He wanted two Senators, two Congressmen. He wanted some geographic distribution. He wanted several black members. And he wanted a couple cronies he could absolutely depend upon keeping him informed what this group was doing. Well, the consequence is that the creative thinking is done by about six out of the thirteen. Some of the others don't do their homework at all. Of the four congressional members, one Senator--a Democrat--is great; the Republican is never there; the Republican congressman is great; and the Democrat is never there from the House. So--

F: How did Mrs. [Patricia] Harris work out?

E: She's wonderful. She's one of the best. One of the most creative, one of the most reasonable, and even on problems of civil rights she's great.

Judge Higgenbotham is also black and helpful!

Menninger makes a contribution of a kind because he really is good on human reactions. Jenner the lawyer from Chicago is good when he's there, but he's so busy as a trial lawyer he's not always on hand.

Anyway, we're going to finish in an honorable way! The four reports that we have put out, in my judgment, have been good state documents. The one on television violence has already affected the entertainment aspect of television. The one on student disruption was accepted by many universities in the country. Even students who have studied it have accepted it and I think we've made a contribution. The one on fire arms is right.

I have received more abusive letters as a consequence of putting out that report than anything I ever did in my lifetime. I've been called everything from Lenin to Hitler, which is quite a span you know. I've been called stupid; I've besmirched the Eisenhower name; I don't know what I'm doing; I'm a fool and all the rest according to these letters. And interestingly, in a way the report made a lot of sense because we did not advocate even a registration system for long guns. We said most of the people who have long guns love those guns; they are hunters; and they are not misused. The real culprit in this picture is 24 to 25 million cheap handguns, mostly imported from abroad, which are concealable and are simply used to murder and conduct robberies and all the rest and that we have to put in a system of restrictive licensing--which means taking them away from most people and leaving them in the hands of only those who need them.

Well, even my only living brother wrote me and said this is unconstitutional because the Constitution guarantees the right to bear arms, and second, the good people will obey the law and give up their guns and the bad people won't. By the way, that was the only reasonable letter I got! The rest were all cussing me out.

So I wrote my brother, who's a lawyer, and said "You'll be interested to know that as early as 1876 the Supreme Court, long before the Warren Court, which you don't like, came into being, decreed that this provision of the Constitution only pertains to the militia and not to the right of the individual to bear arms, so that is not true as you seem to think." I said further, "I think it is true that the good people will turn in their arms and the bad people won't but that will make for the very success of what we have recommended, because thereafter using modern electronic equipment the police can spot the arms on the body of the would-be criminals and catch them before crimes are committed." I said, "Now you,"--I'm still writing to my brother--"You've been crabbing that the Supreme Court has made decisions which makes it almost impossible to convict people." and I said, "You may be right on this, I have no judgment on that question, but I do know that only one and a half percent of those who commit crimes in this country are incarcerated because you practically have to have two eye witnesses who will go to court and testify against the man to convict him. But here all you have to do is to catch him with the physical evidence. And you can put him in jail for as long as you want to provide by law." Well, I say this, I don't know whether I convinced him but he's laid off my back on this question.

F: You hushed him anyhow, right. Did the Commission develop some real strong differences?

E: We had four members write a very mild dissent on the firearms.

F: Who were they?

E: Senator Hruska, Mr. Jawarski, Congressman Boggs, and Judge McFarland, primarily, they said, because they thought the question should be left to each of the states. Now the majority of us, nine of us, wouldn't agree to that because New York now has the perfect law, the Sullivan Law. It is completely ineffective because people simply go into neighboring states and buy the guns and bring them into New York. So unless you have uniform legislation in all the states, it just won't work.

Now we have about six more papers to put out. We're just about to put out a superb paper on law and law enforcement. We have one on assassinations, individual acts of crime, group crime, youth and juvenile deliquency, and maybe one or two others.

F: Did President Johnson name the Commission and then sort of walk away from it, or did he show an active interest for the remainder of--

E: On the contrary. He most certainly did not walk away from it. I went to the White House; once I took a couple Senators with me; other times I went alone; sometimes I'd talk to Califano; most often I'd talk to the President direct. He really hoped very much that we could give him a final report before he left office. Among other things, he was terribly concerned that we should give him our report on violence in television programs before he left office, because since he --or his wife--owned a television station, he certainly didn't want it thought that he was being at all protective of his own interests. So I remember one time he talked to me for about an hour, things he had personally seen on television and in the movies that he thought were contributing to a bad attitude in the United States on this whole question. He thought we ought to condemn them.

What has taken us so long is the following: If thirteen of us had simply gotten together with a little staff help and coordinated our pre-conceptions, we could have completed this task in a couple of months. But if that's all the President wanted it would have been better for him to appoint people from his own Cabinet to do it, or to ask a Congressional committee to do it. The fact that he set up a special group seemed to me to require that we needed to get the kind of scholarly research done that these other agencies or groups couldn't, or normally wouldn't, do. So we got more than two hundred of the leading scholars of America working for us. We've held public hearings. We've had very serious research done on this as you know.

F: When this was set up, where do you get a budget?

E: Our money came from several sources: one, a direct appropriation from the Congress which the President requested; second, an allocation from the Safe Streets Act of the Justice Department; and third, an allocation from a relevant part of the National Institutes of Health. The Budget Director put this all together. Our total public cost for the year and a half will be a million, four hundred thousand dollars, and we have had one grant--I think it was a hundred and fifty thousand though I wouldn't want to be held to this--from the Ford Foundation to pay for certain research costs that didn't seem proper either for one reason or another to charge to public funds.

F: The National Rifle Association didn't contribute anything?

E: No. We will have spent less than half as much as the Kerner Commission spent. As I recall the Kerner Commission cost about three million dollars.

F: Has this tied in at all with your work as a director of the Public Broadcasting?

E: It compelled me to resign from that. I'm all for the public broadcasting thing. It was President Johnson who asked me to go on it. And before he left office

I explained to him that I wouldn't be able to stay on but he said "Well, I think it would be better if you let my successor do it"--by that time Nixon had been elected--"to let him take care of this." So I resigned after Nixon became President, and he named--I've forgotten--someone I suggested.

F: Did President Johnson seem satisfied with the way you were approaching the problem, the depth and the time you were taking, allowing for the fact that he is impatient and would like to have seen something final?

E: The time I took the two senators with me, Hruska and--

F: Boggs?

E: No, Hart, he had been very faithful--was to explain to him why I could give him nothing but a progress report before he left office. He accepted this manfully and with beautiful grace. He said, "Look, I know you've done the best you could. I accept what you say." Now every time we come out with a report I send a special letter to Austin and send him a copy. He has written me nice letters of acknowledgment. And the last time I wrote him I said, "For goodness sakes, I'm going to be sending you six or seven or eight more of these, so please don't bother to acknowledge them." The last one I sent him was on television and I am sure he was pleased with that one, because he had expressed such an interest in it.

F: Have you had any contact with him other than at your brother's funeral?

E: Not personal, just my brother's funeral, then by correspondence.

F: When you had your flurry following President Eisenhower's funeral did he get in touch with you?

E: I had a telegram from him. You see actually it was my worry--I had been working night and day and worrying like sixty over this. My brother's death itself wasn't the cause. I think that was the climax. On top of these months of

worry, a terrible thing occurred during the funeral period. Two thousand telegrams were sent out and the people getting them were told, "If you are coming, phone a certain number," and the number was wrong. All of our closest friends, to say nothing of the VIP's, didn't get any sleep for a couple of nights trying to get things straightened out and it just proved too much.

F: Were you in on any of the discussion--maybe this will be the last question--you've been very patient--any of the discussions between President Eisenhower and President Johnson over the escalation of Viet Nam?

E: I never participated. I listened in once.

F: What was the tenor of advice that President Johnson received from President Eisenhower?

E: In order to make this historically accurate, I think I have to make a statement first. I don't actually know whether, had he been President throughout the whole period, President Eisenhower would have put troops into Viet Nam to engage in the shooting war. Further, I do not know that had the initial decision been his to make that President Johnson would have. President Johnson had a factual situation on his hands when he became President and while he greatly increased our military endeavor, including the bombing of the north, nonetheless, he didn't have the freedom to make the decision not to engage at all--or to go in.

Now, I wanted that clear

Tape ran out

MILTON EISENHOWER (Tape #2)

F: All right.

E: Once the decision was made by the President, namely Kennedy and later of course continued by President Johnson, that we should engage in the war, my brother no longer gave any attention to whether we should have been in or not. The question was solely--

F: You are there--

E: What do you do not. I know that his strong feeling was, and he so advised President Johnson, that we should use all the power quickly, short of atomic power, at our command to bring the war to a conclusion as quickly as we could. As a military man, he said, "It does not do to build your forces up gradually; you must throw in everything you've got and get the quickest victory possible." He also said that he wouldn't even let the enemy actually know whether he would use atomic power or not. He said, "Always keep your enemy guessing." He said, "Obviously the whole world moral and political situation is such you wouldn't use it."

So his advice to President Johnson that I listened to was "Use everything at your command to get this over with."

F: Did he feel that President Johnson had a grasp of military necessities, or did he feel that this was just a kind of political amateur.

E: No, no, I never heard him make any such suggestion or even intimation. As you know, time and again he publicly spoke up in favor of the decisions being made by the President and I think this was an honest statement.

F: Thank you.

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to the

Lyndon Baines Johnson Library

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

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

2. It is the donor's wish to make the material donated to the United States of America by the terms of the instrument available for research in the Lyndon Baines Johnson Library. At the same time, it is his wish to guard against the possibility of its contents being used to embarrass, damage, injure, or harass anyone. Therefore, in pursuance of this objective, and in accordance with the provisions of Sec. 507 (f) (3) of the Federal Property and Administrative Services Act of 1949, as amended (44 U.S.C. 397), this material shall not, for a period of fifteen (15) years or until ten (10) years after the death of the donor, whichever occurs later, be available for examination by anyone except persons who have received my express written authorization to examine it.

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

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

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

Signed Milton S. Eisenhower

Date June 14, 1972

Accepted Harry J. Middleton

Director, Lyndon Baines Johnson Library
for Archivist of the United States

Date March 3, 1975