

INTERVIEWEE: ALFRED B. FITT (Tape #1)

INTERVIEWER: DOROTHY PIERCE

October 25, 1968

P: Today is Friday, October 25, 1968. It is about 2:30, and I am at the Pentagon. My name is Dorothy Pierce, and I am interviewing Mr. Alfred B. Fitt, who is Assistant Secretary of Defense for Manpower and Reserve Affairs.

Mr. Fitt, you were appointed Assistant Secretary of Defense by President Johnson and approved by the Senate on October 6, 1967, which is just over a year ago. Prior to that time, from '61 to '63, you were a Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense working in the civil rights area and from '64 to '67 General Counsel of the Army with additional duties as special assistant on civil functions. Is this background on you correct?

F: Not quite. I came over to the building in July of 1961 as Deputy Under Secretary of the Army for Manpower. I served in that post for two years, so that it wasn't until 1963 that I moved to OSD and took up the civil rights job which had not hitherto existed. That was one of the by-products of the Gesell Commission which looked into the subject of equal opportunity in the Armed Forces in 1962-63. I served in that post for a year and then went back to the Army as General Counsel.

P: Would you just briefly outline for me your responsibilities in Manpower and Reserve Affairs?

F: That's hard to do briefly. The Assistant Secretary at this desk has the function of worrying about the standards for entrance into the Armed Forces, how we procure the people to meet those standards, and then how we treat them in all respects other than their disposition throughout the world in

pursuance of our military policies or strategies. I don't have anything to do with that, as to where they go, but what I do have a great deal to do with is what they are paid; how they are treated in terms of promotion, educational opportunities, medical care, the general category of morale activities, recreation, and service clubs and other elements of morale; how many stripes are appropriate for a sergeant--which is a subject I don't like to get into.

P: Is there controversy over that?

F: Oh, yes, the Army had a ten-year battle internally over just that question, which was recently settled.

P: What was the settlement?

F: Some six or seven thousand men who hadn't been promoted for ten years were required to take one stripe off. It's a controversy that is terribly important to them, but in the larger sense was not very important.

I don't want to overemphasize how much time I spend on matters of that kind. I spend a great deal of time on endeavoring to establish policies for the admission or recruitment of men for the Armed Forces that will result in a fair selection or cross section of our society entering the Armed Forces and having a fair opportunity for advancement while they are in the Armed Forces--and to have an experience while they are with us that will be of value to them when they leave us. That's a glittering generality. But basically those are the things that motivate me, always accepting the fact that you've got to get people in who are qualified to do the tasks we ask them to perform.

P: Have you personally met President Johnson?

F: Yes.

P: On what occasions?

F: Not very many occasions. I've seen him at bill-signing ceremonies and a few social functions such as, you know, the retirement of a Secretary of Defense or the appointment of a new one. In a business way, though, I've bumped into him perhaps half a dozen times, not on Defense matters, but during the period that I was General Counsel of the Army and in charge of the civil works program. Do you know what the civil works program is?

P: Only generally.

F: Okay, that is the river and harbors program run by the Army Corps of Engineers. There is a good deal of congressional and presidential interest in just how that program is operated. It's one that is an early target whenever there is a need to reduce executive branch expenditures or to seek to reduce inflationary pressures on the economy. As I say, there are about half a dozen times when I was in meetings with the President in connection with problems associated with that program.

P: Does one of these stand out in your mind?

F: Yes. It must have been in the spring of '67. The President the preceding fall had ordered a halt to new construction projects, not only in the Army's civil works program but highway construction. I think the Bureau of Reclamation over in the Department of the Interior, its program was affected too. There may have been some others, airport investments. All this was a part of an anti-inflation campaign.

It was a very painful program, though, for many members of the Congress because it upset schedules that had been agreed upon. After years of agonizing debate, we are going to start a dam at such-and-such a time. The civil works program reaches deeply into local communities and there's a very close relationship between the engineers and the people in the communities where their projects are being built. So any interference with the speedy

completion of an agreed schedule for a particular project soon results in protests to Congress.

In any event in the spring of 1967, after the freeze had been on for four or five months, a delegation from the Congress called on the President. These were senior members from--I've forgotten just what the makeup was, but I know that two of them were Randolph and Byrd of West Virginia. Of course, Randolph is chairman of the Senate Public Works Committee, and Byrd has gained more and more of a role over there in the Senate. They were interested in some dam. I've forgotten the name of it. I'd been identified to them as the key man in this situation.

So I waited in the Fish Room--well, no, it isn't called the Fish Room anymore, but anyway it's the room right off the Cabinet office--while the senators and congressmen got a lecture from the President. Then he brought Byrd and Randolph in to see me. Both of them are rather short men and the President, of course, is a very tall man. And they really aren't up to the speed of Lyndon B. Johnson. They were all sort of sycophantic and awed, or at least gave this appearance. I guess most of us do when we are in the presence of that gentleman because he is so overwhelming.

I can't even remember, you know, what he said, except that he sort of gave them a lecture on the importance of wise decisions in government and how important it was to him to have their support for his programs and he was directing me to arrange with them the renewal of the project in which they were interested and which had been stopped.

I was struck afterwards by two things. First, the overwhelming power of the man and how he dominates any group which he joins. But, secondly, he managed to give them really what they were after, but do it in the context of an ethical and wise and intelligent disposition of the resources

available to the government--a very amazing performance--and funny, too, you know. There were some jokes in this spiel which only lasted about eight minutes, I guess. Then, whoosh, he was gone from the room and there were these two little senators and me. They were pleased as punch and they didn't exactly know what to do at that point--you know, what they were supposed to do. So I wound up writing a press release for them by which they could announce this marvelous thing--not a part of my usual work.

P: What is the line between the use of the Civil Corps of Engineers and the contracting out?

F: Well, that's not the right question. The Army Corps of Engineers in its civil program for the most part is--you see, it's a nation-wide force of 32,000 people; only about 120 of them are military though. The rest are all civilians. Basically, their function is two-fold. One, to conduct studies with respect to whether and where water conservation projects should be constructed. The second function is to supervise, then, the construction of approved projects. Those dams and harbors, and so on, that you see are not built by the Army Corps. They are built by contractors who bid on the work just the way we have government buildings built by private contractors under the supervision of the General Services Administration.

Contracting out is another question entirely. You know, that's where you have a governmental function--the provision of custodial care at the Pentagon or cafeteria service. The question is, do you perform it with government employees or do you hire somebody else to do it for you? And that often creates tensions and arguments. But it's quite a different sort of controversy from the civil works program.

P: I used the wrong word.

I'd like to get more into your area now. One of the first things I

wanted to ask you about was the issue of the overcrowding at Arlington Cemetery. I believe specifically since John F. Kennedy's burial there, this has grown as a controversy and the debate has been whether to expand or confine Arlington Cemetery. What solutions have been presented and by whom? I'm questioning you on this area because I believe you have worked on this special problem.

F: Yes, indeed, I certainly did. The civil functions of the Army include the operation of the national cemetery system. Because I was in charge of the civil functions, that meant I got to be Mr. Cemetery--a title that I never thought was glorious enough for the responsibility that I was holding.

It was really a very simple issue in the case of Arlington. There was just so much space in the cemetery. And the acceleration in the utilization of that space which took place in the 1960's, some of it owing to the burial of President Kennedy there, but most of it just occurring because of the increase in the death rate of the World War I population. Because of that acceleration in utilization, it was apparent by the end of 1965 that the cemetery would have to be closed in about two or three years to everybody except where a widow would join her husband or vice versa in the future.

So I worked on that problem pretty much alone for about a year before I told any of my superiors about it. There had been a scheme which had been approved back around 1924 for ultimately taking over what was called South Post Fort Myer. The cemetery was surrounded by North Post Fort Myer and some superhighways and then by South Post. This forty-year old scheme envisioned tearing down the buildings in South Post and using that to expand the available cemetery land.

Mr. McNamara had gotten interested in the appearance over at Arlington.

There had been an expansion in the late '50's which had been done hurriedly because they were about to run out of grave space then, and it was really hideous. It had done without landscaping or adequate ground contouring and the graves were packed together. This was in marked contrast to the beauty and surrounding of the older parts. He had gotten interested in this because he was so intensely interested in the Kennedy grave project which I was supervising for him. So he remarked to me one day about how important it was not to repeat the mistake of the 1950's in the expansion into South Post.

So we worked some and got some good architects in and landscape designers to help design the new areas and realized that if we took the time to do the job right we would have to shut the cemetery down before the new space was available. So the choice was to do a rush job of expansion or somehow reduce the flow of funerals going into Arlington.

I've forgotten the time sequence. This was in about February of 1966, maybe it was early '67--we barred burials unless the decedent had served a full career in the Armed Forces or had won a Medal of Honor or had served as an elected federal official, always with the basic requirement that he be a veteran. There were a few other categories. But that was a very difficult choice to make because historically the national cemeteries have been opened to any veteran. Arlington is a particularly cherished shrine, and here we were without any specific statutory authority narrowing the class of eligibles and doing it on a basis that some people thought involved favoritism.

P: What was the resistance that you met and what groups led this resistance?

F: Well, we didn't meet any resistance until after we had changed the rules. Then it consisted primarily of protests from veterans organizations who

were, as you might expect, guarding the interests of their constituency.

We didn't get any significant protests from members of Congress because we were all prisoners of the facts involved and somebody had to come up with a formula for reducing the number of daily interments at Arlington Cemetery.

P: Did you come up with that formula?

F: Well, yes, I happened to have evolved the basic formula. But the point I was trying to make was that somebody had to do this unpleasant thing of taking an entitlement away, a valued entitlement, away from a lot of people. It is easier for the Executive Branch to do that than it is for the Congress. But once we had done it, the congressmen had no particular gripe about it because, as I say, we and they were all prisoners of the same facts. If we didn't do it, then within about eight or ten months after the time we had announced it, Arlington would have been full and there would have been no space for Viet Nam casualties or anybody else during a hiatus while the new area was being gotten ready. Now, that new area is still not ready, but when it is ready, it will look right. It won't look vulgar and scarred the way the 1959 expansion area looks.

P: And will the same formula be applied?

F: Well, again, even under the current restricted formula and counting all the graves that will become available with the expansion in the South Post, new burials in Arlington will end about 1985. If the formula is made more liberal, then the expansion area will be used up that much sooner. So I don't know what's going to be done then. That's a decision that will be made in a year or two when the new areas are ready. I personally think now that we've gotten past the initial shock of limiting burials at Arlington that it's wise simply to leave the rule as it is today.

P: Was much persuasion necessary in order to make this an Executive decision?

F: No, no, not here in the building.

P: And at the White House?

F: No, no, there wasn't any problem over there that I'm aware of. McNamara sent a memorandum to the President explaining the problem, showing photographs of the 1959 area, some charts showing what would happen to the daily burial rate and saying in effect, "This is what we are going to do, boss, unless we hear from you to the contrary." I don't know whether the President ever mentioned it to McNamara. McNamara didn't tell me one way or another, but I never heard any report of a problem at the White House.

P: Were you involved in the arrangements for the John F. Kennedy burial there?

F: No.

P: I'd like to discuss with you a relatively new role of the military in social problems. You have gotten in on this initially with your service in the civil rights area. I'd like you to first start off with an explanation of what Project 100,000 is? Also, who conceived this?

F: Well, it's a long story. It goes back to, I think, about June of 1964 when--and this is in part hearsay and in part a problem of memory on my part--at that time I was still in OSD, just about to move back to the Army. But there were some kinds of discussions involving the White House staff and Adam Yarmolinsky over the possibility of lowering Army standards so that more disadvantaged, under-educated people could be brought in, given both academic and military training, and raised to a level which would permit them to perform adequately while in service--and obviously, hopefully, in a much more fruitful and productive way after they left the service. So this was taken up with the Army. At this state, I have nothing to do with it, you see.

Steve Ailes was Secretary of the Army then, and there was very little

enthusiasm within the Army staff for the whole idea because it involved lowering standards and they were getting enough men without lowering standards. Well, Ailes was very much for the program and it was modest in nature, the plan that the Army finally came up with. I think it involved taking up something like 60,000 men over a three-year period. They would all have gone through a course at Ft. Leonard Wood. A basic training which is usually eight weeks would have, I think, been extended to thirteen weeks to take care of the academic phases of it. That was approved by McNamara and all during the summer, then, detailed planning was underway.

P: Who was doing this detailed planning?

F: The Army staff. You know. How many barracks you need? How many teachers to hire? What salaries to pay the teachers? All of the things that have to be worked out when you are dealing with masses of people. But in September when--and President Johnson was also involved in the program by that time in the sense that McNamara or somebody had described it to Senator Russell and Mr. Vinson. I don't know who else. Ordinarily it would have included George Mahon. Well, Russell sort of has a double hat over there in the Senate.

In that process the people over in Congress got to raising questions about the use of the military for performing a social function, or what they conceived to be a use of that character. They thought it might better be done by the Job Corps and wrote a provision into the appropriations act prohibiting the launching of the program. So it ground to a halt. Nothing happened. Well, McNamara doesn't like to--and this is despite calls from the President to Russell.

So nothing happened. But McNamara was quite put out at having met this defeat, or what he conceived to be a defeat, of a project that seemed to have a very high potential for good without any real degradation in the military

readiness.

So there then followed a period of thought over here in the building. I, again, haven't got the dates right in my mind, but we still wanted to get something of this kind started because there was a strong conviction on McNamara's part and mine and on the part of several others that the resources available to the Defense department--their expenditure and their allocation for military purposes--have an enormous impact on our civilian society. Whether we marshall and organize that impact or simply let it proceed blindly there is still going to be an impact. The sensible thing to do is to marshal it in ways that are consistent with domestic stability rather than simply accidental. Clifford has the same view, by the way, as he has made clear in his recent speeches.

Anyhow, McNamara asked me to write a speech for him which he was to give to the Veterans of Foreign Wars in a convention, I think, in August of 1966. He outlined the general theme that he wanted to develop, which was basically we would lower the standards a little bit and take in men who had not hitherto been able to qualify, keep an eye on them while they were in--not, you know, assemble them in a big lump at Ft. Leonard Wood, but just let them go through the regular training cycles but keeping an eye on them--and the expectation that during their military careers they would pick up skills and absorb attitudes that would make them far more valuable as members of society after they left.

So I wrote that speech for him. I thought it was the wrong time to give the speech and the wrong forum. It didn't seem to me that VFW was the likely place to spring this one. And I counseled waiting a couple of months, because it didn't require any congressional approval, we didn't need any more money to get it started, and why jeopardize it by revealing the program

while the Congress was still in session and able to write another appropriations bill rider saying, "Don't do it." But he went ahead anyhow and he was right and I was wrong. Congress didn't stop it.

It has proved to be a most successful program in all senses. We've been going for just two years now. It started October 1, '66, with a lowering of standards. You know, you can calculate with quite a good amount of precision the extra number of men who will qualify when standards are reduced. So that the first year the standards were reduced enough to produce 40,000 men. The second year, the one we've just finished, they were lowered so that 100,000 men would come in. We hit it just almost exactly on the button. There were 140,667 men who came in under Project 100,000 the first two years. We keep detailed records on these men. We have all of them on a central computer file by name. We know all about them and what's happening to them in the Army, Navy, and Air Force and Marine Corps. We have control groups with the same kind of statistics, so we can compare their performance with that of men who meet the pre-October '66 standards.

P: What is the proportion of Negroes in this?

F: About 38 percent.

P: How was the decision made to proportionately distribute these among the services?

F: Through an agonizing series of discussions with the military departments. But, basically, it's related to each department's share of the total accessions of the Defense department during a given year. Right now, we have just started Phase III, which will only go for nine months because we are converting to a fiscal year basis. It's been troublesome for people who were used to reports constructed on a calendar, or a fiscal year basis, to have to deal with a year that starts on the first of October. But, anyhow, in the nine

months of Phase III, 12 percent of the Army's intake and of the Marine Corps', and 9 percent of the Air Force's and Navy's will be new standard's men. That's the target. The reason the two ground combat forces have a slightly larger percentage is that the distribution of skills and technical specialties in the Air Force and the Navy is richer than it is in the other two services.

P: You said that you would integrate these groups right in with the trainees going through. Is that an effort to not single them out?

F: Yes, and also, it was an experiment to see if there was any need to segregate them and give them a special boost. If that's unnecessary, then fine. It's a lot more efficient to train people by the regular program.

P: What did you find out?

F: Well, I've got some statistics. I think about 13 percent of the men need extra help.

P: What is this extra help?

F: Oh, they are taken out of the group and put in a separate company where there is a greater proportion of trainers to trainees. Some of it may involve literacy training. The Army has had a very effective literacy program underway since last April which they expect will reach--I think the figure is somewhere between 12,000 and 20,000 men a year who now read at the fifth grade level or below and who, according to the experience of the first six months, can be raised two grade levels in reading ability in a matter of two or three weeks. This is rather remarkable.

P: Why is that?

F: Because the business of the military departments, aside from fighting wars, is to train people. They are the best training institutions--most able in our whole society in terms of taking masses of men who don't know something and over a period of time teaching them. They don't claim any expertise in teaching children. I'm talking about educating men in a formal sense. There

hasn't been much good work done in our society on adult literacy training. It's been hit-and-miss and troublesome and the good ideas that may have been developed in one place have been, you know, lost sight of and not available for use in other areas. Well, that won't be the case with our programs, I hope.

Now, coming back to the percent that needed extra help. I'm now looking at the statistics. Overall, the man in mental categories I, II, and III--that's from the highest to about the middle--4 percent have to be recycled or given some extra help in basic training. In the Category IV men--all the Project 100,000 men are the bottom of Category IV. Their rates are just about 10 percent in needing extra help. That's an acceptable extra cost. Nobody pretends that these low aptitude men, or at least low aptitude test score men, are going to be as a group as easy to train and as good performers as are men with higher aptitude test scores. I mean, our aptitude tests have some validity as predictive devices for future performance. But the differences in performance levels and success rates between the new standards men--or Project 100,000 men--and the control groups, the differences are not so large as to cause us any concern whatsoever.

P: And is the inclusion of this special training or academics along with these other teaching methods, that imposes no extra strain on your training level?

F: Well, every extra burden you ask the training base to bear has some cost. You know, men can only do so much with the resources you give to them. So to the extent that we are spending more time with the new standards men, giving them literacy training, recycling them in basic training, yes, there is an economic cost associated with it, but we think it's worth it, because the men turn out to be adequate performers in the military service. The long-run gains to society, we think, will be very large.

P: You've spoken of recycling--you do not have a system of a longer training period?

F: Well, the different services vary.

P: I mean, for this special group.

F: No, no. They are taking the same basic training course. Typically it runs eight weeks and it's very precisely structured. You do certain things on the third hour of the fiftieth day and so on. If you're falling behind and this is observed at the end of three weeks, well, you can simply be put back a week, join one of the basic training companies that started a week after you did. That's recycling. That's the grossest kind of assistance, if you can call it that.

P: What I am aiming at is how do you get this special training in without limiting their military training?

F: Well, in various ways. If you recycle a man by one week's worth, you obviously extend his basic training from eight to nine weeks. Well, in the case of the Navy, they have a nine-week basic training and at the end of four weeks, they have what they call a service week. All the boys do KP and clean up the grounds and so on and paint stones for a week. But the boys who have hit that fifth week and who need special help may, instead of being put on KP, be put into a remedial education or training company. So that doesn't cost us anything in terms of completing the course on time. They just use that fifth week in a more beneficial way. Or, they might simply be placed in a special literacy program where they have reading and writing and so on in the morning for four hours and then in the afternoon they have military training. This may extend their time in the training base by a week or two.

P: And they still must in the end have reached a certain level of competence

in their training?

F: They have to complete basic training in a satisfactory fashion or else they are discharged. 96 percent of them do it.

P: That's your dropout--4 percent?

F: Yes. As against 2 percent for the control groups. So it's 96 percent against 98 percent--the success rate.

P: But the end result is the same level of military competence?

F: No, the end result is that they all qualify as graduates of basic training. We don't pretend that we turn them into supermen, but they all meet minimum standards for graduation. Of course, obviously when you are talking about 100,000 men, some of them will be well above the minimum standards, but every one of them that graduates, meets at least the minimum standard that the services have stated to be necessary for a graduate of basic training.

P: Is there special care given to their assignment after they have graduated from training?

F: Yes, part of Project 100,000 has been to study the training courses that follow basic training to see if they can be adapted to the abilities of these men with lesser aptitudes and still produce an adequately trained serviceman. We worked with the services for about a year in course simplification and have found that--well, it's hard to quantify it--a great many changes were found to be possible. These have assisted in speeding the passage through the course of men with higher abilities. You know, it is self-paced learning and so on--more hands-on learning rather than theoretical instruction.

All the services try to assign the men against courses where they have a reasonable expectancy of success. As you might expect, a larger than average proportion of them go into the combat arms because there is less book learning involved and less theoretical material to have to deal with.

But it isn't really a case of using these men as cannon fodder. The figures in the Army are something like this: About 35 percent of all the men in the Army are in the combat arms specialties--MOS's, Military Occupation Specialties--and if you look at the Project 100,000 men, about 45 percent are going into those specialties, which is a skewed distribution but is consistent with their aptitude scores. Not enough of them qualify for electronics technicians, lab techs, and that sort of thing.

P: Do you think there will be a continuation of this program or is it conceivable that you will attempt to expand it by lowering standards even further?

F: Well, there will be a continuation. We are in the third year now. As I said, the third year is only nine months long, but we contemplate doing it in the fourth and subsequent years, beginning next July and each July thereafter. Now, as long as I am around, we are going to do it. But I can't say how long I'll be around or what decisions will be reached by my successors--or the successors to Mr. Clifford. But what we've done now is, as I've mentioned earlier, put the program on a--the quotas are not in terms of absolute numbers but in terms of absolute percentages of intake so as accessions rise or fall the number of new standards men will rise and fall.

Whether we should reduce the standards any more than we already have I'm not prepared to say now. We haven't had a full cycle on Project 100,000 yet because the first man came in two years ago. They are leaving now, those who were draftees. But we don't have the full reports on that two-year period and won't have until next March. Well, we've got a great deal of information on them now. We don't have, for example, a record of what increases in educational level have occurred during that two-year period. We are testing these men as they leave. We also have follow-up procedures

to find them ninety days after separation and again a year after separation and find out what's happened to them. The program ought really to go on, the follow-up, at least, for a decade, to see whether all of this effort and worrying and record-keeping and course simplification has made any difference to society. I think it will prove to have made a great difference. But we want to measure the results, we don't want to speculate on them.

In the meantime, the services have maintained their readiness. The ability of the Armed Forces to perform their prime mission which is to fight wars, fight off aggressors, hasn't been hampered by the program.

P: Initially, when this was coming into being, you spoke of the resistance in Congress, what other resistance did you meet from groups and also was there much division within the armed services regarding this program?

F: I don't remember any resistance to it from groups outside the Pentagon. If there was any, I wasn't aware of it. They didn't know about it. McNamara announced it, or outlined its general terms, in that VFW speech.

P: How did the VFW receive it?

F: Well, I wasn't present, but I don't believe they passed a resolution saying McNamara is crazy or anything.

Well, it was put together in a way which made it very difficult to criticize it on the outside. Its elements are readily understandable and acceptable. You have men in our society who are high school dropouts and what not, educational cripples, unemployed, who don't meet military entrance standards but who we think would, given the benefit of the expert training and motivating skills which now exist in the Armed Forces, could be brought up to a higher standard of performance, thus easing the burdens on the outside without adversely affecting the combat readiness. That's a fairly appealing proposition.

P: What was the division in the armed services?

F: In the armed services. Well, it's again the old business of, you know, being ready to carry out the programs the President wants them to carry out, but being somewhat reluctant to lower standards when they were getting enough men under the then-existing standards.

P: Did this represent a very great number of dissents?

F: No, I don't think so. I don't know how many people were aware of it within the Army, but the manpower pool in the fall of 1966 was dwindling in the face of the build-up which was then occurring in the Army. They would have had to lower standards anyhow in order to satisfy the build-up requirements. So to the extent that it had to be done anyhow, it kind of took the steam out of people who objected to the idea of lowering standards. But I don't think that fact was known to a great many people who nevertheless had opinions on the subject that it was undesirable to use the Army's resources in this fashion. They were against it on principle, that why take a less apt man when we can get plenty of apt men. But I don't hear that much anymore.

P: The next area that seemed to follow this was your Operation Transition.

F: Yes.

P: And I would like you to go into that.

F: That was a logical consequence. Well, that's another one that came from somewhere over in the White House. I hadn't yet rejoined OSD. This was in the spring of 1967. The President's manpower message to the Congress said that he had asked the Secretary of Defense to see if there wasn't something that couldn't be done to organize the opportunities of departing servicemen to prepare themselves for civilian jobs before they left the service.

You know, frequently a presidential message directing a department head to do something was as a result of the department head suggesting to the President that he issue such an order. That may have occurred here in this

instance.

But in any event, it was a logical step and consistent with our historical concern about the veteran and simply backed up the time in which we began to assist that veteran to a period six months before he became a veteran and was also consistent with Project 100,000 because this was the other end of the pipeline for those men.

So we tried it out at five different bases last summer--the summer and fall of '67--interviewing men as they approached separation by, you know, five or six months ahead, determining what their interests were, counseling them, and arranging training courses for them. We discovered a very high level of interest on the part of those that had already made the decision not to reenlist. It was about 50 percent who said they wanted some kind of training or, at least in many cases, educational opportunities before they left service. So we went full blast in January and it's going on at bases all over the country now. Only, we underestimated the level of interest in it. It's about 65 percent now. Quite consistently the men want some kind of training before they go back to civilian life.

P: This is not just from the Project 100,000? It involves all.

F: That's right. Every serviceman who is about to leave. The interest in it on the part of the private sector employers is quite great. This is a source of very good manpower. Young men who have got their military obligations behind them, who are accustomed to showing up on time and who, almost by definition are not bad actors. They are not thieves. They don't have behavioral problems or they wouldn't be in the Armed Forces. So lots of industries are interested in them and there's been a growing development of industry-sponsored and funded courses right on or near military installations and designed for servicemen. General Motors has a big auto mechanics training

center here in Alexandria, Virginia. Most of the men going through that now are men in the Armed Forces about to be discharged. Humble Oil--well, they have trailers that they put on military bases. All we do is provide them a place to plug in an electric connection and they provide the courses in their trailers--the instructors and all the other equipment--for teaching these men how to be service station managers. They go four hours a day for six weeks or something. But when they are through, they have a job with Humble if they want or other oil companies.

P: Does this extend their time?

F: No, it's while they are within their regular period of service.

P: Did this meet any opposition?

F: Oh, yes, to the extent that they are released from their regular duty hours it means that they are not available for military purposes during that period. Both the House and the Senate Appropriations committees in their reports this year on the Defense Appropriation Bill said slighting things about Project Transition. They didn't quite knock it out of the budget, but suggested that it should not be enlarged beyond the level of funding in the budget. Well, we can't do that anyhow in the current year, and it doesn't stop us from asking for more money in the fiscal '70 budget. By that time the wisdom and desirability of this effort may be more apparent to the members of the appropriations committees in both houses. We're doing everything we can to prove the value of the program. The men want it, industry wants it, and it seems far too valuable to junk it.

P: Is it expensive?

F: We're spending about \$16 million dollars this year mainly for counselors. I don't know how much it is costing in terms of duty time that is devoted to the training courses. But, on the other hand, there is an unexpected

military payoff from Project Transition. All the services have a program--of varying degrees of formality--to catch men about six months before their terms are scheduled to expire and to put on a big effort to get them to reenlist. They only go into Project Transition if they have resisted that reenlistment pitch and in Project Transition they get a lot more counseling on job opportunities in their own skills. It results in, in the case of many of them--number as yet unknown--making a more real assessment, you know, of their civilian job opportunities. Some number of them reach a judgment to reenlist. This program is not designed with that in mind. You know, the men would be suspicious of it, and rightly so, if it were just another reenlistment effort. But there is a payoff into the military by reenlistments owing to Project Transition. I'm having the Air Force do a study of this for me now and the report is due on the 31st of October, trying to cost the value of these extra reenlistments and compare it with the cost of Project Transition. One reenlistment is worth an awful lot to us. It saves on the average \$6,000.

P: What results have been shown by this program so far?

F: Well, one of our problems with it is that it's a growing program and the development of useful ways to measure results has gone more slowly than I would have liked. We've gotten gross numbers of how many men are counseled and how many are interested in training and how many have entered training and how many are in training and how many have graduated from training, how many have been placed in jobs--that sort of thing--but the figures are not complete. We have to develop rates of participation, rather than absolute numbers, if we are really to understand how effective it is. Also, as with the Project 100,000 men, some of whom will be in this Project Transition group, we have arrangements made to follow up and find out what happened to

Project Transition participants.

P: Have you done this yet or had a chance to?

F: The program hasn't been going that long.

P: To show conclusive results?

F: Right. And it would be, I would judge, eighteen months to two years before we could really say, "Here's what happened," and, "Here's what was spent," and "Here's what was saved and, it was worth it," or, "It wasn't worth it." We have to depend in many ways on other agencies for help in developing our data. The Veterans Administration and the Department of Labor both are involved in this follow-up procedure for us. It's going to be awhile before we can say with statistical proof that the program is a great one. I happen to think it's the most important contribution we can make toward increasing the stability and mobility of that part of the work force that flows through the military forces.

P: What is the percentage of Negroes in this?

F: Speaking from memory, it's about 20 percent, as I recall. It's about twice the participation rate of separating white servicemen. In other words, about 10 percent of the separations are Negroes, but about twice that rate occurs in Project Transition.

One of the interesting aspects of this is the problem of using limited resources to help the men who are most in need of counseling and training help as they prepare to go back to civilian life. The boys, or the young men, who have high skills and a good perception of what it takes to succeed in civilian life tend to want to capitalize on any programs that are available to them. The boys with lower aptitudes and poorer perceptions of the realities of making their way in civilian life don't participate in the same--or at least I don't think they do--participate in the same proportions.

Now this is not consistent with what I said about the percentage of Negroes who were interested in the program. By definition, we tend to treat them as disadvantaged for the purposes of Project Transition. But this is just an observation at this point. We simply don't have sufficient data or reports available yet to know whether we ought to do something in a policy way to interfere with the natural flow into Project Transition.

P: In other words, make it mandatory?

F: Well, or excluding people who in someone's judgment don't need it. You know, this flies in the face of egalitarian concepts. I would rather expand the resources available to Project Transition than to deny its services to any departing serviceman.

P: And can you gear this counseling to all levels?

F: Oh, yes.

P: From a high skill to a relatively unskilled?

F: Oh, yes. Well, there is a big shortage of qualified counselors throughout all of our society. The Armed Forces suffers from that same shortage. I don't think the problem then is really one of being able to gear the counseling effort to the potential of the counselee. It's to find good counselors, because we know it can be done. We just have to find them--the counselors that will do it. One big group that isn't able to participate in Transition now is, for the most part, the non-careerist coming back from Viet Nam.

P: Would you define a non-careerist?

F: A two-year man who has no intention of remaining in the Army. Typically, he has basic and advanced training and leave and so on for about six months. Then he is sent over to Viet Nam for a tour that lasts twelve months. On his return, if he has five months or less to serve on his two years, we give him a discharge. The way it works, the boys are flown into a big separation

center, either at Oakland--if they are coming from Europe it's at, I guess, McGuire Air Force Base--somewhere here in the East. The separation centers pride themselves on the speed with which they get all the paperwork done and send the boy on his way to his honorable discharge and his final paycheck and they can do this in six or eight hours. Well, there is a pass at counseling made in that period, but it's a twenty-four hour a day separation mill. The boys are wild to get home, and they are not interested in serious thoughtful counseling on vocational and educational matters at that juncture. We haven't quite figured out how to solve that problem.

P: In other words, the returning Viet Nam veteran is not getting involved in this Project Transition?

F: Not unless he wants to.

P: But that extends his time.

F: Yes. The circumstances at the time he makes his choice are wholly unfavorable to the idea of continuing in the Army.

P: This should probably be the group that you'd attempt most to involve?

F: Yes. I console myself with the thought that maybe this miserable war will soon be over and by the time we could develop a different solution to this separation mill environment, the need for it won't exist for it anymore. If the men are coming back and have five or six months left to serve, we'll keep them in the Army. Or, we will be able to set up effective counseling procedures in Viet Nam. We've tried that thus far but it just hasn't worked out because the men are too busy and the opportunity to participate in Project Transition training in Viet Nam is virtually nil. But in a cease-fire situation all those possibilities open up. But I don't think any man should be forced to remain in the services beyond a natural expiration point for his term of service in order to avail himself of Project Transition. I think that

would be playing God a little bit too much with them.

P: Is this quick separation in the form of a reward for service in Viet Nam?
Even if they have not quite completed their tour?

F: No, it is nothing as generous as that. It's a product of the fact that if he has five months of service to go when he hits the port, we give him a 30-day leave anyhow. So he's at home for thirty days and then he comes back to a base and he's there for four months. It's very hard to get effective service out of a man who has only four months to go. It means, to put it in simple arithmetic, one job is filled by three different men over a twelve-month period. That presents an impossible problem for the men in charge of the unit that is subject of that kind of turnover. They can't bring their units up to a standard of readiness that's acceptable when there is just a parade of men going through who are all, you know, their minds are 98 percent out in civilian life anyhow at that juncture.

P: With this quick separation, is there any problem with the psychological or emotional impact of the transition, and I don't mean this in terms of the Project, but the transition from the military to civilian life?

F: Well, I don't know the dimensions of it. I think most of them are eager to return--those who depart are eager to return--to familiar civilian surroundings. They vary in the degree of cultural shock that they may experience on their return. We are not the only agency of government, you know, who worries about these people. The Department of Labor through the United States Employment Service offices, and there are about 2,200 of them throughout the country, is supposed to get in personal touch with every separated veteran within sixty days after his separation to see, you know, "How are you doing; do you know the services available; have you thought about coming in to take advantage of all the help we are able to afford you?"

And then the Veterans Administration has veteran service centers that are after these people, too. So to answer your question, I don't know the answer.

P: With the operation of these other agencies concerning what happens to the veteran when he returns or is separated, is there in regard to Project Transition, any overlapping available counseling facilities?

F: Well, ours is in-service counseling.

P: In other words, could they just as well get this out of service?

F: Well, theoretically, yes. People tend to be satisfied with the first satisfactory response, or first satisfactory solution, to any problem that they are trying to solve. This may not be the optimum solution for that individual. That's why it's important to expose to him the whole range of choices that is really available. This is, in my judgment, more likely to occur while the man is still two, three, four, five, six months away from having to make a choice than after he has been separated and fallen back into the same environment from which he came. He may have taken the first job that looked suitable to him and not really given a fair chance to the possibility of going to school, going to some other community, going to some other job.

P: Let's continue on with this social role here. Would you discuss the integration of off-base housing and what the military is attempting to do here?

F: Two-thirds of military families that are stationed in this country live off post. I used to have these figures on my tongue tip. I think it's about 400,000 of 600,000, and it may be 600,000 of 900,000. I've forgotten which. Back in 1963, when I was directly involved in establishing and articulating in written form the policies of the Defense department with

respect to both on-base and off-base discrimination problems, I set in motion various reporting requirements and other devices intended to take a temperature reading every once in a while. You know, what was really wrong in the way of community treatment of Negro servicemen? You know, housing, education, transportation, admission to movie theaters and restaurants and that sort of thing.

It was during that period that debates which ultimately led to the adoption of the Public Accommodations Act of 1964 were going on. The big focus was on the same kinds of discrimination which were being dealt with by that legislation--public accommodations for the most part, and schooling. [It was] essentially criminal what would happen to the children of Negro servicemen who were sent to southern military bases. You know, the kids would switch from overseas dependents schools in Europe to the schools of Columbus, Mississippi, where absolute segregation prevailed and the quality of education available to those kids was atrocious. You know, they would be two grades behind where they had been the year before. We spent a whole lot of time on those immediate outrages--those and the idea of, you know, businesses that were absolutely dependent upon military patronage but because of their segregationist policies were dividing our people up. You know, the Negro lieutenant would have to get his hamburger at the kitchen door and the white private would walk in the front door and be served courteously. We spent a great deal of time on that and fought those battles. We knew all along that housing was the ultimate problem, but we put it aside to deal with after we had gotten past the blazing cases of formal discrimination. Most housing discrimination is informal.

P: How did you get past these first problems?

F: I'm digressing, but I got out of the civil rights business, you see, after

a year and went off to become General Counsel of the Army. So I didn't have any institutional responsibility for such subjects after that. But I was pretty well known around the building, as a kind of a wild man on the civil rights questions, and these sort of tended to come to me even though I was General Counsel of the Army. But I had no basis particularly--or none at all really--for directing new actions in the housing field.

But in the spring of '67 there were--well, there's a group of civil rights activists in Washington that is known by the acronym "Access." I don't know what the letters mean but this is an organization devoted to open housing. They came over here and picketed the Pentagon because McNamara hadn't done anything about open housing. Particularly, River House, which is a big apartment complex about 200 yards from the Pentagon, would not admit Negroes. They picketed River House and then they would come over here and picket the Pentagon.

It was a very troublesome to McNamara and to Vance, both of whom had deep social consciences and had not acted for two reasons. One, you can't do everything. You can't keep your mind on all of the problems that are a part of the Defense department. You have to kind of concentrate on one thing at a time and really work on it and then go away and leave it and work on something else. Well, McNamara had concentrated on civil rights in 1963-64 period and then gone away and left it. But the ACCESS picketers--this brought his attention back to housing discrimination. You know, it's curious what sorts of things would cause public uproars. Mrs. McNamara's particular project is to overcome the shortage of textbooks in the D.C. public schools which are for the most part now, I think 90 percent or so black.

P: It was 94 percent as of today.

F: I think that was in the high schools. It may be 94 overall. That led McNamara

to get involved in public debates over the quality of education available in the public school system because of his wife's interest. So, because of the ACCESS business, he returned to the housing problem and he said, "Well, the first thing let's do is find out what the problem is, what are the dimensions of it? How much discrimination is there against our people and what's the impact on them? What's happened with them because they can't rent where white servicemen can rent?"

So a nationwide survey was taken of landlords and careful analyses was made of about 15 different bases to see what the outcomes were in terms of the quality of housing available to Negro servicemen--the distances from the base and that kind of thing. Well, it documented what everybody knew to be the case, and that was that the Negro serviceman, in practically every part of the country, was the victim of pervasive discrimination in housing.

So about that time the Maryland legislature was having a tussle with the problem of whether to enact an open housing law. Of course, for reasons that were never quite completely clear to me, the legislature, instead of passing in effect an open housing law, they adopted a resolution urging Secretary McNamara to take all steps available to him to end discrimination against servicemen in Maryland. The Governor sent it in and said, "Here's what the legislature has asked you to do." Well, this made it kind of easy then to move in on the Maryland situation and see if we couldn't get away with applying off-base housing sanctions and to prohibit renting from discriminatory landlords. We've not done anything about individual residences and the purchase and sale of residences, because it's practically impossible to enforce that or keep accurate records on it.

P: Or probably to determine whether or not they are discriminatory?

F: Yes. But as far as commercially available housing, the commercially managed

housing, McNamara decided to start with Maryland. The fact that the legislature had requested him to do it--not in so many terms but to take whatever action he could--prevented any real problems with people like Mendel Rivers and other Southerners who were in important positions on the Armed Services Committees. So we started with Andrews Air Force Base and put discriminatory landlords within a three-mile radius, or something like that, off-limits, gradually extended it to other bases in Maryland, extended it to a three-mile radius around the Pentagon in December. In the meantime we were getting monthly reports from every installation with 500 or more men and showing their progress in two things, one, setting up what we call family housing referral offices. One of the problems revealed by the surveys in the spring of '67 was that most servicemen, white or black, were not getting any help whatsoever from the military in solving their off-base housing problems. So we got reports monthly which showed progress in establishing effective housing referral services and at the same time in reporting on how many landlords they had been able to sign up for that housing referral service. To be signed up a landlord had to agree to rent to servicemen without discrimination. The percentages would go up every month. I think, nationwide we had about 25 percent listings in August of '67.

[End of tape]

INTERVIEWEE: ALFRED B. FITT (Tape #2)

INTERVIEWER: DOROTHY PIERCE

October 25, 1968, and October 29, 1968

P: Mr. Fitt, you were discussing the percentage of involvement in this housing program.

F: Yes. I got a report today showing that, as of 30 September, 92 percent of the landlords near the bases that I mentioned have signed up with our housing referral services. I think I said earlier that we started with 25 percent. I was wrong on that. It was 33 percent. That's a very significant gain over roughly a thirteen month period.

I don't kid myself. I think there is a good deal of water in those listings, and we can't relax simply because there is a written assurance from a landlord that he will rent to servicemen without regard to color. This has to be policed in effective and relentless ways to make certain that when a Negro serviceman does show up at a landlord's who says he has a vacancy and who said he will rent without regard to color that that man won't be rebuffed because of his race. It obviously has helped enormously to have a nationwide open housing law enacted by the Congress that will take effect in January. You may remember that in June the Supreme Court held that one of the reconstruction laws passed about, I guess, 1866, prohibiting--well, it was held in 1968 to prohibit any housing discrimination anywhere in the country. On the basis of that decision, Secretary Clifford expanded the off-limits sanction from the areas that I mentioned before, in Maryland and Virginia, to every base in the country.

P: Was there an immediate problem in applying this?

F: No. He made it effective as of the first of August. We provided that if any

military department thought that the sanction would result in an inadequate supply of housing being available to the men at a given installation that department should come in and seek an exception from me.

Only one case arose, and this involved the Marine Corps supply center in Albany, Georgia, where the local command had obtained 22 percent listings by August of 1967 and hadn't added one in the following twelve months. It was sort of a combination of failure of leadership down there on the part of the military and a rigid community attitude toward housing segregation. So, in that instance, we narrowed the sanction area to--oh, I've forgotten the details, but, you know, like a one-mile circle from the base. I said, "All right, but I want a weekly report showing the progress made by the commander in obtaining listings and the report has to show how many contacts he made in that week, who he talked to, and what's been done." Well, they are up to 55 percent listings now. We have extended the sanction area a little more, and that community will come around, I think, shortly.

P: This can all be done just by the impact of accommodating military patronage?

F: Yes. You know, if a beribboned, uniformed officer comes around to you as a landlord and says, "Now, look, I've got men coming back from Viet Nam who have fought and gone through the dangers of combat for their country and earned medals, and I want to be sure that if one of them needs to rent some property from you that you will treat him without discrimination." It's very hard to resist that kind of plea. And very few people do.

They say, "Well, I would be willing to do it if everybody else would, but if I go it alone, I'll be ruined economically." So what you have to do is go around to everybody and get each of them to agree to go along if the other fellow does. And ultimately you'll bring them around.

River House is open now. They horsed us around for six months saying that

they would open up if so and so would. Then we would get so and so to agree and the River House people would say, "Well, you've got to go further." They kept expanding the universe on us until finally I got them in along with about fifteen other real estate people and property managers of all these big complexes in here in northern Virginia and got them all to agree that if we got certain others to sign up then the group that was meeting with me would all open at once. We wrote up the deal and everybody signed it. After about two weeks, we got the others who had not been present to sign up and confronted River House with this, and they at last opened up. Then we were unable to find a Negro serviceman who wanted to go over to River House! That was a source of much trouble.

P: Does this program apply to civilian employment on military bases?

F: I'm not sure I understand the question.

P: Well, I was wondering if a person who was working on a base, could they come under this clause in looking, on their own, independently looking for a residence in and around the bases--say, if they were a Negro family.

F: The policy on that is not explicit. That's one of the things I hope to make explicit before the first of the year. We did put out a directive which requires commanders to give assistance to both military members and civilians in connection with enforcing their rights under the 1968 Federal Open Housing Act. The law envisions a complaint procedure. If you are discriminated against, you get the Housing and Urban Development agency to try to solve the problem for you. It also authorizes enforcement litigation by the Attorney General in pattern segregation areas. So what we did was to put out a directive which said to the local commanders, "Set up an orientation and information program so that people will know what their rights are under the law. Encourage them to come in and get assistance in enforcing those

rights, in preparing complaints to HUD and to the Department of Justice, but before you forward the complaints, go out and try to solve the problem yourself." And that, as I say, is applicable to civilians. It's not quite the same as saying that the services of the Housing and Referral Office would be available to the civilians, and that's something we are going to do. The timing got confused.

P: We have pretty well covered this, but are there some other problems that have occurred in implementing this program?

F: The open housing thing?

P: Yes.

F: Oh, as I mentioned, I'm sure there is some water in our listings and some variation from base to base in connection with the effectiveness of the program and in the important element of instilling confidence in Negro servicemen that this referral service is really going to be any good for him. We are just going to have to keep working on that. You know, it would be criminal to hold out some kind of hope and then have it all prove to be the same old runaround.

P: Is there any effort on the part of the armed services not to send minority racial groups to areas where there are prejudices?

F: No, no.

P: You spoke of sanctions. What are the penalties when you have a discriminatory landlord in the area?

F: Well, unfortunately, the only sanction is that we would not permit our people to rent from him. If he is not interested in renting to servicemen, then it obviously doesn't mean anything to him.

P: But you do not permit an armed services person to rent in these areas?

F: From a landlord who has not listed with our family housing referral offices.

P: And in turn signed the--

F: Yes. By definition he has agreed not to discriminate.

P: Has this been effective?

F: That's what we are still determining. We sent a team around last March to about 25 bases to see how they were doing--and there the emphasis was on building the family housing referral office services. We are going to have to do it again.

In the meantime, this civil rights commission staff did a little study of this themselves and they found some practices which, you know, made the whole thing a joke--ahideous joke. The people at one base--the man would go in the housing office for assistance, and the way the program is supposed to work, you know, they found out what his interests are, his income level, the number of children, that kind of thing. Then they are supposed to check the listings they've got available and pick out a few that are in the area where the man might be interested in living. Then they are supposed to call the landlords and say, "I've got a serviceman here with two children," or whatever. "Have you any vacancies?"

If the landlord says, "Yes," "Fine, this guy will be out to look." Suppose they find that there are three or four apartment houses in the area. They are supposed to give the man a range of choices, and then he goes out and makes the selection. But this one base, they were doing that, all right, but they were revealing the race of the man ahead of time--before they inquired as to whether there were any current vacancies. Well, that destroys the efficacy of the program because they got, in each case, a reply that there were no vacancies when it was a Negro. You see, so we've got some more to do in this area.

P: There are charges that the military has a disproportionate number of Negroes in service, and that promotional advantages are limited.

F: Who makes those charges?

P: You read them in the paper. Are these true?

F: No.

P: Would you give me your opinion on them?

F: No, they are not true. The Army is the biggest service. It has a lower percentage of Negroes in it today than it did in 1949. This was 12.4--I'm talking about enlisted men--12.4 percent then, and today it is 12.1 percent. The Negro reenlistment rate is somewhat higher than that of the white service-man so that the career force has a greater proportion of Negroes than does the non-career force. It runs about 20 percent in the Army in the combat arms area. It's less than that in the technical specialties. The promotion procedures in the Armed Forces are as color blind as it is possible to make any promotion procedure in any institution in our society.

P: Why are there so few high-ranking Negro officers?

F: There are three reasons. One, the services really didn't end discrimination and segregation until early in the 1950's. The Truman 1948 order took five or six years fully to implement. Well, it takes about 25 years to grow a general officer and the senior Negro officers in the Armed Forces now entered during World War II. The base from which to make selections to the highest grades in the Armed Forces from among the Negro officers is just not very large. It's growing larger, and will continue to grow as the years pass.

Well, I've got the exact figures here. The Army, 2.7 percent of the second lieutenants are Negroes, 3.1 percent of the first lieutenants, 4.2 percent of the captains, 5.6 percent of the majors, 2.7 percent of lieutenant colonels, and 0.5 percent of the colonels on 31 December 1967 were Negroes. About 3 percent of our college graduate population in the age group we are

talking about is Negro.

So this is the third element that I was talking about. If the Armed Forces in the officer grades insist upon having college graduates--and they do, and I think this is correct--it automatically excludes more Negroes than it does whites from that opportunity, proportionately. And also--that was only a second point, I'm sorry.

The third point is that the educational crippling of Negroes--educational and other kinds of crippling of Negroes--operates to keep their percentage of officers even below what you would expect on a straight proportionate basis.

P: Are the military academies easily accessible to this group?

F: Yes.

P: There are charges that that is not so.

F: Well, there are charges that there aren't enough Negroes in the service academies, and I think in an arithmetic sense there isn't any doubt about it. The number of Negroes in the academies is way below 3 percent--which is an acceptable standard I think, based on the numbers of Negroes now going to college.

I must say it is not for a lack of effort over the last five years, in case finding and securing of appointments for boys who are qualified. It's just that to get into a military academy, in the first place, you have to want to go. You are seventeen or eighteen years old and you have to think that you want to spend your adult lifetime being in the military service. This is not everybody's cup of tea.

Secondly, the competition for Negro high school graduates who can score better than 500 on the college boards is enormous. I was involved in this particular effort back in 1963 when I set up a case-finding program to get

more Negro youngsters into the academies. You know, we wrote thousands of high school principals and the NAACP and all kinds of groups and sent our recruiters out to scores and scores and scores and scores of places finding juniors and seniors in high schools who might wish to consider going to one of the academies. And every really qualified boy that we found, you know, would have offers from Duke and Harvard and Yale and North Carolina State. If they were athletes as well as scholars there would be fifty or sixty scholarship offers, full scholarships. And of course that's our big selling point. It is the free college education and a good one and they were getting the equivalent offers from civilian institutions that didn't impose any requirements as to do five years of active duty and that sort of thing.

I'll never forget one boy. His name was Charles Bolden. He was from South Carolina, and he was a senior in high school in the spring of 1964. He had applied to his congressman and his two senators for an appointment to the Naval Academy. Two of them told him that his score showed that he was not qualified. The third, who was Strom Thurmond, offered to appoint him to the Merchant Marine Academy. And he didn't want to do that--he, Bolden. Well, I have forgotten just how we turned up Bolden, but somehow, as part of our case-finding effort, I learned about him, and I got him an appointment to Annapolis. He had been accepted at Harvard and Duke and North Carolina, but he went to the Naval Academy. He graduated last June. He had been president of the junior class. He had a B average. And it was just a happy ending. I want to do more of that. The numbers of Negroes at the service academies has tripled over the last five years, but it is still only about 90 out of 8,000-9,000 boys, 1 percent.

P: The Navy has been charged many times by various groups that it is a lily-white service--to use current phraseology--and that there are unfair opportunities

for racial or minority groups who are in it. Is this true?

F: The Navy has only about 5 percent of its force who are Negroes, an infinitesimal number who are officers, and a history and a tradition which makes it apparently a relatively unattractive service for Negroes. For a long time the only Negroes in the Navy were those who waited on tables, made beds, and swept up after and cleaned up after white sailors and officers. This was ended as a result of President Truman's 1948 order, but the way it was ended was to have all those jobs performed by Filipinos instead of Negroes. So there's still an obvious color problem in the Navy, which I am sure, rightly or wrongly, influences Negroes to believe that they would be discriminated against.

Our own researches and surveys and whatnot support the notion that there is sort of an aristocratic, discriminatory pattern in the Navy that's proving very difficult to eradicate. We saw only last January some evidence of this. One of the Navy ships, one of the big cruisers or something, was scheduled to call at the New Orleans in connection with the Mardi Gras. And you know, when a big Navy ship comes into a Navy town--and New Orleans is a big naval base--it is traditional to invite the officers to the parties and whatnot. And there are lots of parties in connection with Mardi Gras. They distribute the invitations in advance, on the ship, and work out who is going to go where and they put out a written paper, saying that at certain parties Jews and Italians and Negroes would not be--

P: That was in writing?

F: Oh, yes. And, of course, this led to a great hullabaloo quite rightly. The ship's commander was told, "None of your people are going to go to any party that divides up the Navy men on the basis of race or religion." But the work of two or three years, I think, went down the drain in trying to

convince minority groups that they get support for equal treatment from the Navy as an institution.

I've worked with Paul Nitze while he was Secretary of the Navy and Paul Ignatius, his successor, and Chuck Baird who is the Under Secretary, and lots of people in the Navy and the Navy personnel chieftains for four or five years now. They are passionately committed to equal treatment, and all the written policies say all the right things. They are doing all the right things in terms of getting reports and following up--and the percentage of Negroes in the Navy declines. It has declined over the last four or five years. We will just have to see what the future brings. But as I say, I'm satisfied that the attitudes and the vigor of the Navy leadership which are unexceptionable in this situation, so it's just going to take continued relentless attention. I guess we had better break it up.

P: May I ask you just one more question on this? This same area--and I think it was aiming at the Navy, but I would like to apply this to all the services--is the overdeployment of Negroes on hazardous duty. Is this true?

F: No, it is not true. This thought was raised at the time we first committed any significant combat forces in Viet Nam. In the early days of the build up over there--and that was in the summer and fall of 1965--there were paratroop outfits and other, you know, ranger groups and green berets. They were all elite groups or units that have extra pay. They had a disproportionate percentage of Negroes--like 20-25 percent instead of 10-12 percent because in the first place, combat arms do have more Negroes for the reasons I mentioned earlier. Secondly, because of the elite character and the pay bonus they tended to attract more Negroes than you would expect proportionately. In consequence, the casualties borne by Negroes exceeded their proportions in the Armed Forces as a whole. As the years have gone by, though--and those

11

original units have long since been replaced--the percentage of Negro casualties is now consistent with their percentages in the combat arms as a whole.

P: Is there any effort to keep this from an over-percentage of Negroes serving in that capacity so that they do bear the burden of casualties?

F: Well, we haven't gotten to the point where we've had to examine our consciences on this issue. In other words, the percentages of Negroes in combat arms is not that large. You know, there must be some critical mass or critical point, where you have to ask yourself, "Am I doing this group a favor by getting it into the Armed Forces or am I simply increasing its chances for a speedy exit from the earth by coming into the Army?" We haven't come anywhere near that point.

P: And you are not considering that presently?

F: No. As I say, we haven't come to any conscience point, at least.

P: To conclude this, what is your opinion on the use of the military service as a social instrument?

F: I would like to put that off until we meet again. It seems to me that is an important subject that ought to be dealt with for more than a minute or two.

[End of first interview]

P: Mr. Fitt, this is our second meeting. Today is Tuesday, October 29, 1968. We concluded our previous session with a very generalized question and I would like to pick up at that point. The question at that point was, what are your opinions, or in your judgment, the use of the military service as an instrument in social problems?

F: Well, I have some opinions on that score. It's, as you say, a very general

question and it's important in dealing with a question of that kind to be quite specific about what one means by the use of the Armed Forces as an instrument to help achieve social progress. There is a body of opinion which holds that it is folly to entrust the military in the area of social reform, that this is a role for which the military is quite unsuited and which would propel us toward, you know, authoritarian and doctrinaire procedures in dealing with the social problems that are observable in our society. I noticed in the New York Review of Books, a recent issue in which I. F. Stone was reviewing Mr. McNamara's book, and he spent about half the review not discussing the book but pointing out the dangers to our society in using the Armed Forces as an instrument of social reform. He cited the experience in Latin American countries with respect to the intrusion of the Armed Forces into what most people regard as civilian responsibilities and drew unhappy conclusions from those examples. Well, that's one attitude.

Then there is a group which is quite at the opposite end of the political spectrum, or philosophical spectrum, which believes not that the military offers a danger to our society if it concerns itself with social reform, but that this just isn't a proper use of defense resources because these critics disagree with the goals which most people have in mind when they talk about using the military for social reform.

I don't think there is much enthusiasm in the military itself for an enlarged role in dealing with civilian problems because it's something they are not used to and they tend to be conservative in their own approach to social problems. They would just rather not be thrust into the cauldron of domestic politics which they envision would happen to them if they were involved in social reform.

I don't have to agree or disagree with any of these viewpoints because we are not really talking about committing the Armed Forces in this country

to taking over the responsibilities of the Department of Labor or the Job Corps or HEW or any of that or policing the welfare system. What I am talking about when I think of using the military as an instrument of social reform is the intelligent use of our resources when we have decided--quite independently of any social considerations--that we need an armed force of so many million men distributed in such and such a way between the different military departments. So we've made that judgment, for the moment at least, that we ought to have three and a half million men in uniform. As long as we have reached that judgment, then I am eager to explore ways in which the men that pass through the Armed Forces can be made better citizens for the long haul and not just for the period of two or three or four years during which they are in uniform. This isn't such an exciting and controversial goal. We've had it as a society certainly since the beginning of World War II when most people recognized that something should be done to help the transition of the serviceman back to civilian life when he left the Armed Forces. Of course it was a very dramatic interruption of the lives of young men, including yours truly at that time. There was a certain amount of patriotic fervor then which is not present in peacetime or in connection with the current conflict in Viet Nam.

But, even so, the principle, it seems to me, remains constant, that if men are required to leave civilian pursuits and enter the Armed Forces, then there is an obligation on the part of society to help them out in making the return to civilian life. So Project Transition. So the GI Bill which subsidizes the educational programs of veterans. Then, in addition, we've had our open housing programs which has probably aroused more irritation and criticism than any of the others I've mentioned. But, again, it seems to me when you examine the program it's not arguable that the military should ignore

the welfare of the men in uniform insofar as their requirement for off-base housing is concerned. Furthermore we've had laws passed and national policy statements written in a statutory sense which make it an offense to discriminate against people in the sale and rental of housing. I believe nobody suggests that the law doesn't apply to servicemen so that in this and other ways we ask commanders to support their men as they enforce their rights as citizens.

Well, there are some programs we've got that probably entail a little more cost because we have sought to serve larger purposes than simply the development of an armed force which meets our military requirements. I'm thinking of Project 100,000 where, of course, we have taken in men of lower aptitudes and we need not have done that. We could have kept draft standards higher and there would have been probably somewhat less cost in the training of the men with higher aptitudes and somewhat better performance as they served in uniform.

But I think that you can't base all your decisions on what's the cheapest way to get a ready Army, Navy, Air Force, and Marine Corps. The cheapest way probably would be to raise standards even more and rely more heavily on the draft. We don't have to pay people much when we have a compulsory system. We could bring them in and give them pocket money. But our society had made a judgment that that doesn't seem fair and that it is better to pay the higher cost of compensation for first termers than to rely on compulsion alone to produce the manpower we need. Well, similarly, I think it's important to our society, or at least we have judged it to be so here in policy positions in the Defense department, to try to draw a cross section of our society into the Armed Forces so that men from the slums--both urban and rural--as well as men from graduate school and the whole range in between

have the experience of service in the Armed Forces. This probably costs us a little bit of money. But I think we will be able to demonstrate ultimately that the long-run social cost is less than the long-run social gain by reason of opening up the Armed Forces to these men of lower aptitudes.

Mr. Clifford gave a speech, as you know, at the end of September, saying that he supported this whole approach to the use of Defense department resources and what examples did he cite? Well, he said, we ought to be able to build a model housing development on a military installation which would not be circumscribed by archaic building codes or any of the limitations that prevent the full development of our society's genius insofar as housing construction and design is concerned. Well, who could argue with doing that. If the end result happens to be something that is beneficial to civilian society, it still doesn't mean that it should not have been undertaken on behalf of the military community. The same way with hospital design.

There are other ideas that are percolating around. Some people suggest that no man should leave the Armed Forces unless he has the equivalent of a high school education. Well, I think this is a very desirable general goal. We haven't worked out just how to achieve it yet. But I'll be working on the further development of that idea, among other things, before the end of the year.

As I go through this list of things--well, there is another thing we are doing. We have what we call the Intensified Recruitment Program. Last February, in going over the Project 100,000 figures showing where the men came from, I noticed that a great many were coming from the South--a disproportionate number--and very few from our big cities. So, on looking into it a little further I decided that we ought to try to increase our recruitment efforts in our bit cities, which for the most part are in the North and

Northeast, the idea being that the unemployed young male in our central city probably for several reasons wasn't being exposed to the opportunity of service in the Armed Forces. You know, not everyone regards it as an opportunity, but a great many youngsters do. There are attractive features to military service and there is an upward society mobility that is unique I think, or almost unique, among our institutions and that our recruiters just weren't dipping into the slums when they were looking for young men to volunteer.

So, in conjunction with the Department of Labor, we identified high unemployment areas in about forty-three cities and we began on a pilot basis with three in March and we doubled the recruiters quotas for those areas. We looked over their experience in the preceding year and said, "All right, sign up twice as many as past experience shows." We gradually added cities until, as I have mentioned, I think there were forty-three in the program by July, and we've brought in in that period something like 6,500 men more than would have otherwise have been recruited from those high unemployment areas. Well, as it so happens, about 58 percent of them are either unemployed or are working on part-time jobs or jobs that bring in less than \$60 a week. So we are making a tiny dent in the lump of unemployed, foot-loose, 19-20 year olds in urban slums. I don't know what the figures would show if we annualized the experience of the last few months because we were adding cities during that period, and I don't have a full projection, but I would guess we would cut into those groups by about 20,000 more than would have enlisted had we not started the program.

P: This is a recruitment program, not a part of Selective Service?

F: That's right. This is all volunteer activity. But, in a sense this is a use of the Armed Forces as a social instrument because particularly the Navy

and the Air Force have long waiting lists for service in those two departments. They don't have to go into the slums to recruit anybody. They can get all the kids they want out of suburbia. We've made them go into the ghettos and offer the same opportunities to those kids. I think it is working fine thus far. I'm going to review it in January to see just how the program is really operating and whether it should be adjusted to meet any ethical or quality considerations that become apparent through our experience with it.

Again, I go at this whole question of social uses of the Armed Forces kind of one idea at a time. If the one idea seems good then we will do it and if it doesn't seem good why we won't do it.

P: You are saying that in effect the military is meeting its needs in a sort of model programs approach of equality in all areas if I am understanding you correctly. This is not in any way handicapping the maintenance of the mission of the military to maintain the security of the United States, both internally and our commitments abroad?

F: I didn't understand the introduction to that question.

P: Well, I was saying this approach is sort of coupling the military needs with a model program of social equality in all areas from both the areas of housing to color blind recruitment, et cetera. I'm saying that if this is the approach that you are indicating to me, it does not handicap the mission of the military to maintain the security of the United States and our commitments abroad.

F: Well, so far as our equal opportunity policies are concerned, they not only do not handicap our ability to carry out our defense mission, they serve it and improve our utilization of the manpower resources that are available in our society. In other words, we cut ourselves off for many years as a society from the talents available in the Negro manpower pool by a whole series of

bars and special hurdles and through the operation of prejudice. We have pretty much gotten away from that in the Armed Forces, and a man can go as far as his talents and his ambition will take him. His advancement isn't limited by any, you know, irrelevant consideration, and I include race as an irrelevant consideration. And that program is cost free. It helps us. It saves money. It saves resources.

Now, there are some that do cause, as I mentioned before, probably some increase in the amount of effort, some degradation in the amount of output that we can extract from the resources we've got. That's the Project 100,000 program, as I mentioned. The men in it assuredly do not perform quite as well as the men who met our old standards. If we went to some sort of program of assuring a high school diploma for every man who entered the Armed Forces, we would have to acknowledge the costs of diverting the man from his military job to go into a classroom. If we took that man during the last three months of his service and sent him to school instead of having him perform some military job, why that cost of his salary and so on during that period, unless we provided additional resources to the military departments, would be bound to have some impact on readiness. I don't think anybody can blink at that.

There are really two phases to this, two parts. One is the case where you've got to spend the money anyhow and so you want to spend it in a way that is most consistent with all other goals that our society has. An example of that would be the color blind policies that we follow.

The second is where you undertake to do something that costs a little more than you have to pay for it. Under those circumstances you mustn't kid yourself. You've got to provide the resources for doing it, and this only after you have made a judgment that in the overall sense it's the most

effective and economical way to get that particular goal realized.

P: And has a beneficial result, too.

F: Oh, yes.

P: We have talked a lot of this area of the military in social reform. I would like to go on to some other areas, but is there any other remark you would like to make regarding this?

F: No, not really.

P: I wanted to discuss with you the military involvement in civil disorders. This, of course, has come about with the increase of civil tension and disruption in our society over the last few years. The National Guard and the reservists are becoming more and more involved in quelling these civil disorders. Would you discuss with me your opinion of their role and the psychological impact of armed military in our streets?

F: Well, everybody that I know is opposed to civil disorder. We would rather not have riots and commotion in our cities. When you do have civil disturbances that the local authorities can't control, some other force has to be brought to bear because domestic peace--law and order--is the first requisite. You have to have a setting free of violence in order to realize any sort of happy and civilized existence. I regard it as regrettable that it is necessary to use the National Guard to quell civil disturbances, but I'm not at all troubled by that in the sense that there is some other better force available for restoring law and order. The real problem, and this is not a very profound thought, the real problem is that we have got to get at the conditions that bring about the disorder in the first place.

P: And so that the military commitment is not a moral question as is the--

F: I don't regard it as such. If the police can't bring things under control and the National Guard is called in and it cannot do so, then the next and

effective and economical way to get that particular goal realized.

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F: I don't regard it as such. If the police can't bring things under control and the National Guard is called in and it cannot do so, then the next and

really the last available step is to call in the active Army. We have only had to do that on a limited number of occasions. And I'm thankful for that. It's certainly not a task that the Army wishes to discharge. But they recognize in the Army that, you know, if law and order can't be maintained by those who are charged with maintaining it ordinarily in our society, then the Armed Forces will be brought in.

P: Has this had an impact on getting Negroes into the Guard?

F: I don't know.

P: And are there problems in getting the Negroes into the Guard?

F: Well, one of the early recommendations of the Kerner Commission was that there be an increase in the numbers of Negroes in the National Guard. As you know, the Kerner Commission was appointed right after the Detroit riot at the end of July 1967. There was a marked contrast in Detroit between the regulars who happened to be a paratrooper outfit who were 20-25 percent Negro and the National Guard forces of the State of Michigan which were 1 or 2 percent Negro. It just seemed to the Kerner Commission and to a lot of other people that it was too bad that a lily-white, or virtually lily-white, force was being used or had to be used to put down a riot in a Negro slum area--hence their recommendation.

But, you know, there are other reasons why the percentage of Negroes should be larger in the Reserve components. It's a method of discharging one's military obligation that lots of boys prefer to serving two or three or four years on active duty and for a complex of reasons, including in some instances explicit discrimination and in others implicit discrimination against Negroes, Puerto Ricans, Mexican-Americans and so on, they just weren't getting into the Guard in anywhere near their proportionate share of the population. But it wasn't simply racial or color discrimination that

brought this about. It came about because of geographic patterns and the location of armories. They aren't to be found in slum areas for the most part. And Reserve units, particularly during times of peace and low draft calls, have a hard time recruiting up to strength and much of the recruiting is a self-sustaining effort. You go out and recruit your friends. If you start out with a white group and they go out and recruit their friends, you don't find any Negroes joining.

Well, I don't know what the answer is in terms of securing a larger proportion of Negroes in the Guard. I have some discomfort in the idea of force-feeding the Guard with Negro recruits solely to improve their appearance when they go out to put down a riot in a slum. This isn't a very glorious goal.

We conducted an experiment in New Jersey where the Governor requested an overstrength in the National Guard forces available to him, 5 percent over strength, and that overstrength would be set aside for Negroes. There had to be an overstrength because there was a waiting list to join these units and if you didn't have some kind of overstrength provision the discrimination against the white boys on the waiting list would be quite explicit and give them some cause to complain. That began in AUGUST OF 1967. They went out and did what I think is a good job. They increased their percentage of Negroes in New Jersey from something like, in their Guard, from 1 percent to 5 or 6 percent, and we are considering extending that same approach elsewhere.

P: Does the Guard hold--well, let me say it this way. Have you observed why it is not attracting more Negroes voluntarily, both the National Guard and the Reserve, and does this enter into the question that influence can be used to get your name on some of these areas where you can fulfill your military

obligation without active duty, or long-term active duty?

F: Oh, that was several questions. I doubt if there is any significant amount of corruption in terms of funny business about the waiting list and getting in ahead of others. I touched on the reasons why I think Negroes tend not to be in the reserves. We had, as late as 1963, I think at the start of the year, there was something like ten Southern states where Negroes couldn't join the Guard. In one case, the state law said so, and the others because it was state policy. Well, that has all been changed. You know, the formal discrimination is no longer there but I'm sure that it's still awkward in many cases for a Negro who tries to join one of the units from a state where historically there haven't been any Negroes permitted in the Guard.

This reserve program tends to attract a very large percentage of highly educated youngsters, college graduates in many instances who go out and find units to join and keep searching until they find one with a vacancy. For a boy who dropped out of school in the eighth grade or the ninth grade and who is living in one of our typical big city Negro slums, this sort of opportunity just doesn't really occur to him. He's not out scrambling to find a Reserve spot.

But it's a complex question, as I have said. And we don't know all the answers. But it's certainly a part of the whole melange of problems associated with achieving a fully integrated and decent existence for the Negro members of our society.

P: I believe you were present at the Detroit riots in July of 1967.

F: That's right.

P: Who was on that team with you?

F: Well, it wasn't my team. It was Cy Vance who had just retired as Deputy Secretary of Defense. There was Dan Henkin, who is a Deputy Assistant Secretary

of Defense for Public Affairs; and Warren Christopher, who had just become Deputy Attorney General of the United States about two weeks before; and John Doar, poor devil, who is now president of the New York City School Board and was then Assistant Attorney General of the United States in charge of the Civil Rights Division; and others. And, of course, there were the military people there, too.

P: What was the problem in deploying the military in Detroit?

F: I'm not sure what you are getting at by the question.

P: Well, the strategy and tactics involved and the delay in committing them.

F: Well, there was a lot of horsing around initially by Governor Romney. I was called to the Pentagon about three o'clock on Monday morning.

P: A.M.?

F: A.M. The riot having started about 24 hours before, the disturbance about 24 hours before, and during Sunday in Detroit the situation gradually got worse and worse. Sometime in the late evening, or early on Monday morning, Governor Romney got in touch with the Attorney General to discuss the possible use of federal troops. The record of that is available, the sequence and the time and who talked to whom. I won't try to reproduce that because I wasn't present for any of the conversations between Romney and Ramsey Clark that morning.

But to us in the Pentagon--well, I was in a group with Secretary of the Army Resor and Johnny Johnson, the Chief of Staff, and some others at the Army Operations Center. Between three and five or six o'clock in the morning there were many conversations with, I guess, Romney and Cavanaugh and Ramsey Clark and the State Adjutant General in Detroit--who was then in Detroit or at least the commander of the National Guard division I guess was on the scene in Detroit by then. Well, it wasn't clear to us that the situation was out of control

then or that the Army would be needed in Detroit. Again, I'm talking about three or four or five o'clock in the morning. By seven, I remember I went up to breakfast because it appeared that the Army wouldn't be needed, but in the meantime various forces here and there around the country had been alerted. We had begun moving airplanes, and what not, to transplant them in the event it proved that they were needed.

So, in the meantime, Romney was jockeying with Ramsey Clark as to on what basis the federal government could entertain a request for the assistance of federal troops. Again that's a matter of public record as to who said what to whom. I happen to know Ramsey Clark and I had plenty of opportunity to observe Romney after I got to Detroit. I think Romney was doing the best he knew how and it wasn't a very good best. And Ramsey Clark is a straight shooter. But, in any event, the Governor finally did request the troops, I guess, about 10:30 Monday morning. I flew out with Vance and some of the others I named. We got to Selfridge about three o'clock and then went on into town.

P: Why did you have a group from the Pentagon at this level going to be there?

F: Well, there was some historical precedent for this. When troops were used at Oxford, Mississippi, in connection with the admission of James Meredith, and then again at the University of Alabama, the President got into the habit of having a top civilian out there. They had been from the Justice department in the earlier cases, but in this instance I think that the President just wanted to have somebody on the scene that he knew and had great confidence in. Clark couldn't go, and Warren Christopher was brand new. That's why, I think, maybe the President wanted Cy Vance out there. But I don't know about that for sure. Anyhow, I'm glad he was there.

Well, when we got to Detroit, I went first to the Federal Building,

and Vance and General Throckmorton joined up with the Mayor and the Governor and others and did a tour of the city. In the meantime the troops had begun arriving at Selfridge around three. The advance party had gotten there about two, I think. They were held at Selfridge for several hours waiting a decision actually to commit them in the Detroit area. Selfridge is about twenty miles from downtown Detroit.

Frankly, you know, the scene was one of considerable confusion and frantic exhausted men. Cavanaugh, the Mayor, and Romney, the Governor, neither of them had gotten any sleep that preceding night so they were coming to the end of their physical tethers. Lots of confusion just on facts as to what was happening and what disposition had been made of the National Guard forces already in the city.

Vance didn't want to commit federal troops. They hadn't been used against the people of this country since 1943 when there had been another riot in Detroit, and he was unwilling to recommend to the President that this be done until he was satisfied that the situation could be brought under control in no other way.

I've forgotten I think it was finally about ten o'clock when he called the President and recommended that the Army troops be used. In the meantime, they had begun to bring them in from Selfridge and put them at a temporary encampment area at the State Fairgrounds in the northern part of Detroit.

P: Could you tell me a little bit about what you did see yourself?

F: I didn't see a great deal. I grew up in the Detroit area and it was hard to see my own city in flames and eerie seeing how deserted the streets in the downtown area were during that period. I spent almost all my time at the little command center we had which was ultimately set up in the police headquarters and made two trips through the city. I was there Monday,

Tuesday, Wednesday, and came back Thursday afternoon. So I really didn't see a great deal of what was going on--except that which was going on in the command center.

But, you know, there was controversy afterward over the question of the speed with which the federal forces were committed and whether the President hadn't been playing politics with Governor Romney and vice versa in trying to get out of the responsibility for using federal troops in that situation. You know, it didn't seem like that as the events were unfolding, as the telephone calls were being made, and the discussions had Monday and on into Monday evening. I know that there was no element of that kind of seeking to be concerned about political advantage in connection with the work of Cy Vance. He was there to be the President's representative to make certain that this serious act, the commitment of the Army against rioters, was really necessary. And he wasn't satisfied until, as they say, about ten o'clock at night and then the President acted on his advice.

P: How did the troops act and were they trained correctly for this type of activity?

F: Well, there have been scads of reports about the performance of the National Guard in Detroit and elsewhere and also on the performance of the regulars. I have not seen any report critical of the regulars. They did a good job and made friends with the people and hardly ever fired their weapons and stood up straight. You know, they were regulars; the same can't be said for the guardsmen and there are lots of reasons for that. The reasons for that and I think a great many lessons were learned as a result of the experiences in Detroit and Newark and some of the other communities in the summer of 1967.

P: What, in your opinion, is the biggest lesson to be learned from this?

F: Plan in advance and have your people know what it is they are supposed to do when everything breaks down in the city. You know, you simply have to work out ahead of time how you are going to keep the information coming. You want to be sure that, you know, that your radio sets are on the same frequency as the people you are working with--simple things like that. If you are going to commit troops, the National Guard, to a given city, you want to figure out in advance where are they going to sleep, how are they going to be fed? When you get there, what are you going to do? Are you going to sit in a high school gymnasium waiting for something to happen or are you going to send out patrols to guard intersections? You know, there are a million details that can be worked out through advance planning that all contribute to a speedy and effective response to riot and civil disturbance situations. The speedier the reaction, the less likely the city is to go up in flames and the less likely also that men will get tired and be indiscriminate in the use of firearms.

P: And is it your opinion that this is the only effective means to quell a large civil disturbance?

F: No, that isn't what I said. I said if the police can't do it and if the state forces, the National Guard, can't do it, then the use of federal forces should be considered. Any riot ultimately would burn itself out. The people do get tired of looting and burning and killing and robbing and smashing. But I haven't seen any case yet where it seemed better to let a riot run its course rather than to commit forces that are available for the restoration of law and order.

P: If it isn't the only means, what would be another?

F: Well, maybe I didn't understand your question. The use of different techniques or the improvement of the response is the kind of alternative that I had in

mind. There now tends to be a much greater reliance on the use, for example, of tear gas. We've had several little incipient riots right here in Washington over the last month or two. They've all been brought under control without great commotion because of extremely swift, massive, but peaceful commitment of the police in the area.

P: I was wondering if you were thinking of anything else regarding the commitment of federal troops in civil disturbances.

F: Well, I'm against it. I think practically everybody is, but saying that, that's not enough. We just have to work in our society to find the ways to prevent the need for federal troops from ever arising again.

P: I would like to go on to Selective Service. I believe you were appointed chairman of the President's task force on selective service.

F: Whose?

P: The President's Task Force on Selective Service.

F: No, that was Burke Marshall.

P: Did you serve on--

F: No, No, I was General Counsel of the Army in that period. But I have worked intensively on selective service policy questions for the last fifteen months or so.

P: Well, our selective service system has been accused of being a very unfair and unjust system as to drafting men into service. What is your opinion of this particular charge?

F: Well, I would make some changes in--

P: Such as?

F: Policies that are now being followed, but it would take a change in the law to bring the system around to the manner in which I would operate it.

You know, there are really two charges. One is that the system itself

is operated in a discriminatory manner. That there aren't enough Negroes on draft boards. The procedures that are followed in connection with appeals are not clear and fully consistent with due process. Men aren't allowed to be accompanied by a lawyer, for example, in connection with selective service appeals within the system. There is that category of complaint which I place as something quite apart from the problem of, as the Marshall Commission phrased it, "When not all need serve, who shall serve?" There the problem is one of devising some method, in which the people will have confidence, for selecting, for example, 300,000 men a year out of a pool of a million fully qualified men.

The Marshall Commission recommended, and the President agreed, that that choice should be made through a random selection system and that if a boy got through, say, his twentieth year without having been drafted, then he wouldn't be drafted except in the course of some extreme national crisis with an enormous build-up in the Armed Forces. The Congress chose to reject that random selection system. It could have been put into effect by the President under the law as it stood in the spring of 1967, but the Congress amended the law to prohibit what it called a lottery. So the President was not able to switch to that system.

The other element of it, having what we call a prime age group of nineteen-year olds, seemed to most people to make a lot of sense, that if you could get the uncertainties of draft liability behind you by the time you were twenty, this was very much to be desired. I think all the groups that studied it, including the Congress, thought that this was a desirable change from the then and the present system which says, "of the qualified people take the oldest first." So you take the 26-year old before you take the 25-year old and so on. But when you can't have random selection,

then the problem of switching to a prime age group, age 19, becomes in my judgment virtually insoluble.

P: In your opinion, then, a lottery system or this random selection would work and would be desirable?

F: There isn't any doubt in my mind that it would work or that it is desirable. But, you know, you have to be careful about what you are talking about in this situation because the word lottery has perjorative connotations that should be avoided. What I am talking about is that there are two million boys that turn nineteen next year--and that's about the number who will--and about 500,000 or 600,000 will be physically or mentally disqualified for service. That leaves you a million and a half. Half a million of those boys will volunteer and you still need 200,000 to 300,000. You have a million fully qualified boys that don't have any exemptions, or anything of that kind, and you only want 300,000 of them. That's when I would throw all their names in a hat, figuratively speaking, and pick out 300,000.

P: And does this include the graduate students who are deferred?

F: Oh, yes. Well, that's another problem though.

P: I believe you prepared a chart on this. What did it reflect?

F: Well, this was at a time when the National Security Council was deliberating whether to recommend advising restoration of graduate school deferments. That NSC deliberation was going on in December, January, and February of 1968. The President had ended graduate school deferments except for physicians and others in the health field in June of 1967. So the chart you speak of was worked up over here--worked up in my office--in order to display the effects that the continuation of the June '67 policy would have on the graduate school population in the fall of 1968 and also on the likely intake of college graduates in the Armed Forces through the draft. It showed that

there would be a decline in graduate school enrollments in the fall of '68, a decline which has not in fact occurred.

P: And why is this?

F: Oh, there are lots of reasons. We have had low draft calls. General Hershey has followed a policy which permits delaying one's induction until the end of the semester in which he has enrolled. Lots of boys have found their ways into reserve programs. The boards, you know, there are 4,000 boards. Some of them haven't been particularly quick to review the 2-S classification the boy had last year and when they get around to it he'll become 1-A. But I don't worry about the graduate schools. They are going to have enough students.

[End of tape]

INTERVIEWEE: ALFRED B. FITT (Tape #3)

INTERVIEWER: DOROTHY PIERCE

October 29, 1968, and November 8, 1968

P: Mr. Fitt, you were talking about the transition involved here. Would you continue with that?

F: Yes. The graduate schools depend for the most part on the most recent college graduates as their recruits for first-year graduate school, obviously. Well, if we draft the college graduate before he enters graduate school, then there would be some falloff in admissions. That hasn't taken place for the reasons I mentioned. But even had it taken place, the problem would disappear over a period of two or three years because the boys who entered the Army instead of going to graduate school would be returning from the Army and would then enter graduate school and perhaps even more of them than would otherwise have gone on to graduate school because of the GI Bill entitlement that they accrue while they are in the Armed Forces. So for the graduate schools it is not, in my judgment, can't be a long-run problem although some of them may have distortions in their current admissions.

P: In your opinion, the graduate student deferment should not be maintained. They should be accessible to--

F: Well, my personal opinion is that we shouldn't have college deferments but that a boy should go through this one-year period of exposure when they are nineteen and that would be it. Then we would get away from all kinds of tensions that are present in the way in which the system is now operating.

P: I wanted to continue this on with the consideration on a volunteer army, and I believe that the Marshall Commission in '65 did also consider this, and also the '64 Gorham Study talked in terms of the feasibility and the

effects on society and the cost. Very little action, I think, was taken on these. What were the recommendations and why couldn't some of these be effective?

F: The Marshall Commission made its report in February or March of 1967, not '65. It was their conclusion that an all-volunteer army is not possible of attainment certainly in times of armed conflict. They came to the conclusion that it simply was not a feasible suggestion. This was pretty much the judgment we reached as a result of the studies which Bill Gorham directed back in 1964-65.

You know, you start with a judgment as to what size armed force you need distributed in some particular fashion. Then you have to see if there is some way you can procure it without the need of any compulsion. We would all rather, I think, see an army that didn't require that draft. But not everybody agrees on moral grounds that the Armed Forces should be made up of men who respond primarily to money inducements.

P: It becomes a mercenary force?

F: Yes. I'm not particularly influenced by that argument, but there are those who advance it with much vigor. Well, while I think what everybody would rather have the kind of army we ought to have without the need of the draft there are some people who say that, "Well, maybe you could get an army without the draft but it wouldn't be the kind of army that our society ought to have." And it's that group that I think has the weakest end of the debate here. My own view is that after, you know, really living with this problem for quite awhile that we are unlikely to be able to obtain the kind of army we need as a military force without the use of the draft.

P: Are you thinking in terms of the quality?

F: Yes. Quality. The best example I think is in the category of physicians.

I doubt very much whether we could ever have a pay schedule which would be attractive to physicians, in competition with civilian opportunities, that would be compatible with the rest of the compensation structure of the federal government. The use of compensation--the money payments--to maintain a volunteer force is technically feasible if you have a stable force and don't have to build up rapidly. But our history is, over time, of ups and downs in the size of the Armed Forces, and the ups just wouldn't occur without the use of the draft.

You know, it's a matter of priorities in this society. If we could obtain all the volunteers we needed by spending four or five or six billion dollars more a year, that means that that amount of money wouldn't be available for other purposes. The people through their Congress and the President have to make difficult choices in the allocation of resources.

We can demonstrate, and are prepared to demonstrate, that the average spendable income available to a man during his first two years in the Army on the average is considerably greater than the amount available to a civilian high school graduate of the same age who is fully employed as a civilian. And so I got kind of impatient with the arguments of some of the experts in the field of economics who insist that there is a hidden tax which the draftee is paying. This is perhaps true in one sense because any time a man is doing something he doesn't want to do why--

P: It would be a form of a tax.

F: It is a form of a tax. But in terms of, you know, money income, and how much money he really has available to spend, the draftee is better off on the average than if he hadn't been drafted.

P: This question of a volunteer army is not being brought into this campaign.

Those in favor of it say it is economically feasible. Those opposed say it is way out of hand and absolutely impractical in terms of being able to support it. Where do you think does this lie?

F: Well, the truth here is sort of uncertain because we haven't really tried to maintain our Armed Forces without the draft, well, really since 1940. There was a brief time in the late '40's when we suspended the draft but we had to reinstate it then just before the Korean war. But we didn't try massive increases in recruiting or even career compensation at that time. Until it is tried, nobody will really be able to say with utter conviction that such and such a thing won't work. All I'm saying is that I know it will cost at least four or five billion dollars to try it for a year or two.

I doubt very much we would get anything for that money. You know, we still won't have enough volunteers. We won't have any reserve forces that amount to anything because all the cost estimates have been with respect to the active forces and the sums there are so huge for inducing a volunteer army that nobody has gone on to calculate the additional amounts necessary to keep the reserves up to strength. But I just happen to think that we've got better uses for four or five billion dollars than to pay military recruits even more to give them an even greater advantage than they now enjoy over their civilian counterparts as far as spendable income is concerned.

P: This is four or five billion above what is not the Defense budget?

F: That's right. And that's a minimum figure. You know, the Poverty Program now is funded at about \$1.7 or \$1.8 billion dollars a year. If we are going to spend four or five billion dollars more on something, I would rather put it into that than into what I think is a vain attempt to induce an all-volunteer force.

P: Along this line, but not necessarily in the strictures of a volunteer army, it has been suggested that increasing economic pressure coupled with

decreasing military qualifications but also improved opportunities within the military could conceivably lead to an unbalanced or disproportionate minority mix of the armed services and, in fact, perhaps a Negro army. Could you comment on this or give me the practicality of it--the eventuality of it?

F: Well, since we've never tried it, we can't be certain what the make-up of an all-volunteer force will be.

P: Well, would this necessarily be, though--this could conceivably come about in our system, too--our present system.

F: Well, I just happen to think that NEGRO youngsters by-and-large have about the same attitude toward the military service as a career as do white youngsters. Consequently, I doubt very much if an all-volunteer army would be a largely Negro army. Pay isn't everything. You still have to want to be a soldier or you get out of the army. To the extent that Negro opportunities in the civilian economy are limited more so than in the armed forces, they will tend to stay in the armed forces. But I think Negro opportunities on the outside are increasing rather than decreasing. So I just don't see this particular prospect as a real one.

P: Is it conceivable within our own structure now?

F: I don't understand your question.

P: That within our system of recruitment--

F: Well, anything is conceivable. Yes, sure.

P: Of an all-Negro service--not necessarily an all-Negro service, but a disproportionate number of them so that they in effect were controlling the Negro?

F: Well, it's conceivable, but we don't have any basis for thinking that it is going to happen. As I mentioned earlier, the percentage of Negro enlisted men in the Army is less today than it was in 1949--12.1 percent against

12.4 percent. It's about 5 percent and declining in the Navy. It's stable at around 10 percent in the Air Force and the Marine Corps.

P: Are there no studies on this question going on?

F: Oh, yes, there are. We study practically everything.

P: How are they approaching this?

F: Well, I'm not going to answer that question because I would rather tell you what we are doing--and so you will see why I can't answer the question. We are in the process of having one of the research organizations that does contract work for the Defense department develop a computer model on which we can make better predictions than have been possible in the past with respect to the racial mix in the Armed Forces.

One of the problems in constructing, in getting good data to pump into that model once it is designed is the fact that reenlistment statistics over the last twenty years have not been put together in a statistically sophisticated manner. It's hard to know, really, what the true Negro reenlistment rate is as compared to whites. There's a higher Negro rate but fewer Negroes are eligible to reenlist. The white reenlistment rate is depressed by the fact that men who complete OCS as enlisted men, and are separated in order to be appointed as officers, are counted as ineligible to reenlist. Careerists who retire were counted as ineligible to reenlist. Well, all this makes it hard to draw really useful conclusions from reenlistment data. So we are going back and reconstructing our reenlistment experience for the last twenty years to see what it really has been. So that's underway.

We are in the process right now of inviting proposals from research institutions on a project to get a better understanding of Negro attitudes toward service in the Armed Forces--Negro male youngsters seventeen, eighteen, nineteen. I'm talking about projects that are a year or two away from completion.

P: So there would be not immediately any approach to making a percentage of minority enlistments in a ratio to, say, the large Caucasian?

F: You mean to impose some kind of control?

P: Yes.

F: No. I'm against that.

P: Why?

F: Well, why should I be for it?

P: Could you give your reasons for being against it?

F: Well, I don't know any good reason to do it. There is no trend that seems to call for any control of that kind and nobody can tell me that any given point is objectionable, or any given mix of whites and blacks is good and then something more than that, some greater fraction of Negroes, is bad.

P: Then you regard this as speculation that there would be a high minority percentage in such as the Armed Forces running it?

F: Well, yes, it's speculation. As I have sought to make quite clear, I don't think that is really likely to happen--not because of any artificial controls on Negro intake in the ARMED Forces, but simply because Negroes won't enlist and reenlist in enough numbers to make it an all-Negro or nearly all-Negro army.

P: What is your relationship with General Hershey?

F: Well, he's head of the Selective Service System, and I'm in charge of Defense Manpower policies. I send him a letter every month telling him how many people we need to be drafted two months later.

P: And there is no other working function between your departments?

F: Well, our staffs work back and forth in connection with problems of administration. We like to have an even flow of men coming into the Armed Forces examining stations for pre-induction physicals for several reasons.

It permits us to, you know, make the most effective use of our people at the examining stations if they have a relatively stable load rather than one with peaks and valleys.

Also, we are interested in maintaining a high pool of men who have been examined and passed because this is a great stimulus to enlistment. If you passed your physical examination, and you haven't gotten your induction notice yet, you are in a much more receptive mood for the inducements of our recruiters. And we would rather recruit somebody for three years than have him be drafted for two years. So we try to work out that kind of question with General Hershey--an even flow of people to our examining stations.

P: What are your views of General Hershey and how he is operating?

F: I think he's a very wise old man who has rendered excellent service over the years, and it is time for him to retire.

P: Do you think it is true that dissenting students are now being penalized by changing their draft status?

F: You understand that the Department of Defense has absolutely nothing to do with that?

P: Yes, sir.

F: All right. So any opinion I have is that of Alfred B. Fitt, private citizen, and not as a Defense department official. I tend to side with the Attorney General of the United States in his criticism of the policies. I don't just tend to side with him; I do side with him. And as a matter of fact, we in the Defense department don't think that the way to discipline people who offend against selective service regulations is to throw them into the Army. If they have broken the law or the government rules of some kind--

P: Or if they have burned their draft card--

F: WELL, that's against the law. The way to deal with that misbehavior is through the civil courts or whatever civil apparatus there is for dealing with the problem. We don't think that the Armed Forces should be a dumping ground for young men that the people on the outside haven't been able to figure out how to deal with.

End of Interview

P: Mr. Fitt, this is our third session, and today is Friday, November 8, 1968. Today I would like to discuss with you that part of your function concerning the reserve forces. I would like to start back a little early on this with your involvement with the preparation of the legal opinion before Congress on the power of the Secretary of Defense to reorganize and consolidate the Reserves and National Guard. What was the basis of this opinion?

F: The basis was the law that the Congress had written on the subject. That had its origin--not the law but the opinion--had its origin in October of 1964, as I remember it, when the then--I was then General Counsel of the Army and the Secretary of the Army, Steven Ailes, was endeavoring to bring about what he judged to be a rational reorganization of the Army reserve components. The plan that he ultimately approved, and which was also approved by Mr. McNamara, called for increasing what we call the pay drill strength of the National Guard forces from something like 400,000 to somewhat over 500,000--550,000, I believe--and eliminating the some 250,000 members who were in the units of the United States Army Reserve. The question was, "Could this be done legally?" Well, the real question was whether any unit structure had to be maintained in the United States Army

Reserve. The answer to that was quite straightforward as a legal matter. There wasn't any doubt that the Secretary of the Army had the power to prescribe the fashion in which the USAR was to be organized.

The opinion itself--somewhat later, I think it was in April of 1965--became a controversial matter so far as the House Armed Services Committee was concerned. Mr. Hebert conducted hearings that spring on the subject of the proposed Reserve reorganization. It was his view that the Secretary of the Army lacked the legal authority to do what I had said he had that authority to do. But, you know, there wasn't a serious issue of law involved. Mr. Hebert and his colleagues were against the proposal on substantive grounds and ultimately prevailed, as a matter of fact, but not because of any conclusion that it was against the law or beyond the statutory authority of the Secretary of the Army.

P: Would it have been, in your opinion, an effective and efficient and economical move? Also, is it no violation of our traditional organization of forces regarding a state organized military level?

F: Well, the proposal would not have reduced the size of the state forces, which we call the National Guard. It would have increased them. And for this reason the National Guard in a collective sense, the State Adjutant Generals, were in favor of the proposal. The people affiliated with the United States Army Reserve were very much against the proposal for reasons that are fairly obvious. But there was no issue of states rights involved. And there is really no great historical tradition with respect to the USAR. It came into being in a real sense after World War II and more particularly after the Korean War. So there wasn't any extended period in our past during which we had had organized units in the United States Army Reserve.

P: I was under the impression that the opposition was mainly from the National Guard.

F: No, not to that proposal. As I said, that proposal would have increased the resources available to the states in their National Guard units. Later on--that 1964-65 proposal having been rebuffed by the Congress which wrote provisions into the appropriations act for several years which had the effect of prohibiting the abolition of the USAR--later on in 1967, just last year, the Army came up with a different proposal. Well, it was really a series of proposals representing basically an attempt to organize all the combat reserve component units into the National Guard and all the support type units into the USAR, keeping roughly a strength of 400,000 in the Guard and 240,000 or so in the USAR. That was quite satisfactory to the National Guard.

But then there came a time when Senator Russell in hearing suggested to Secretary of the Army Stanley Resor that perhaps some combat units should remain in the USAR. In order to bring that about, it was necessary to subtract some combat units from the force structure allocated to the Guard. The Guard was not at all happy with that suggestion. They had, I think, some feeling of betrayal because they had committed themselves in favor of the program which we had recommended to the Congress. Then when we asked them to agree or support a program consistent with Senator Russell's suggestion they thought that was a bit much. But ultimately they came around and that plan, roughly on the lines as suggested by the senator, was the one that was put into effect--just about a year ago.

P: In this program are you talking about that there have been some realignment of reserve structure, too. Is this the same one you were talking about?

F: Well, if I can go back a little bit. In 1962, if you remember, a year in

President Kennedy had called about 150,000 men to active duty--in the fall of 1961. When they returned to civilian life it then was possible really to resurrect some reorganization plans that had been sort of gathering dust during the period of the call-up.

P: This was the Berlin crisis?

F: Right. The organizational structure of the Army Reserve components was badly out of whack with a great many units that would never be needed on active duty. At the same time there were a great many gaps and voids in the force structure in the sense that the unit was required in our total force structure and had been allocated to the reserves but had never been created in the Reserves.

So the problem was two-fold, to get rid of the units for which we had no need and to constitute the units which we did need. It wasn't possibly simply to take the men in the units of the kind that weren't needed and put a new label on them and say, "You are now a unit we do need," for lots of reasons. So the Process of moving from the old obsolete structure to the new structure was really a very painful one and was the subject of argument and debate and controversy from 1963 right on through until we finally got it settled a year ago--I should say in the summer of 1967. The new force structure is in effect in the Army Reserve components now.

It was a most wearying fight and I think, as I look back on it, we could have handled our part of it somewhat more smoothly because the amount of arguing that took place was all out of proportion to the merits of the matter. It seems rather elementary that we should have the freedom to disband on obsolete unit in the Reserves and add units that are currently needed. Nobody really disagrees with that but it's the process of if you have allowed a situation to go on and on and on without reorganization so

that you have to make one catastrophic change in order to catch up, this is what causes the trouble. I hope that we have learned our lesson and we will keep the reserve force structure modernized, you know, by monthly changes so that we never fall so far behind again.

P: Did this also involve a tactical change in the deployment of the reserves?

F: Well, I'm not a big man on military tactics and strategy. It's basically the task of the Joint Chiefs to advise the Secretary of Defense on what force structure is needed and, of the military departments then, to build the units that are in the approved force structure.

P: What I was thinking of, isn't this called something like the 3-prong approach? Perhaps I'm in error there.

F: Well, I'm not familiar with that phrase in this context.

P: I may have it wrong. All this talk about the reserves, of course, leads to discussion of the readiness and preparedness level. I believe that you have reported on our readiness level, or at least continuously report on that area of our manpower strength. Have you appeared before Congress in this aspect?

F: No, not really. My last testimony before the Congress having to do with any reserve matter was last spring when we were presenting our testimony about what size reserve strength ought to be authorized for the current fiscal year--paid strength I mean. I have never testified over there, as far as I remember, on reserve readiness matters.

P: I mean, the readiness level is applicable to the military manpower level, too, isn't it--active duty?

F: Oh, yes. Each department has its own method for measuring readiness--you know, grading units on how well prepared they are to go to war and how rapidly they can do so. We've not developed a really satisfactory method

for measuring the readiness of reserve units because obviously they are reserve units. They are not expected to be as ready to go as the forces in the active establishment. But people tend to make comparisons between them and these comparisons always show up quite unfavorably to the reserves, if you use the same standards of, you know, strength and stage of training and amount and quality of equipment and that kind of thing.

P: Is it your assessment that the reserves are really trained well enough in the event of a call-up?

F: Well, I don't think you can generalize on that. That involves a subjective judgment. You have to set yourself some targets. In other words, make a goal that you want a particular kind of unit to be ready to deploy in two weeks or ten weeks or fourteen weeks after you activate it. Then it's possible to measure against that target. If you don't provide the unit with enough men and equipment and training opportunity it won't be able to meet its target. But the target dates, the readiness or the deployment dates of different units in the force structure vary quite considerably.

P: Are the various reserve units that are now being committed to Viet Nam getting enough training before being sent? There has been quite a furor raised over this recently.

F: No, I'm not aware of any furor over that. There has been some correspondence with respect to some of the units. One unit, some of its members went to court and sought to get an injunction restraining the Army from sending them to Viet Nam on the grounds that they had not received all the required training. Well, I am familiar with that case in great detail. The men were not assigning the real reason for their lawsuit which was that they just really didn't want to go to Viet Nam. Their claim of lack of adequate preparation was just not so. You know, in any unit men are coming and going,

and sometimes they are sick, and sometimes they are AWOL, and individuals will miss part of the training program from time to time. They make up those missed periods later on. This was the case with the unit that went to court. Some of its men had had, for example, only nineteen hours of instruction on the M-16 rifle and they were supposed to have twenty hours to complete the training program entirely. Some of them had missed the hour-long lecture on standards of conduct. You know, this is a matter which is desirable and all units are supposed to complete all elements of the pre-embarkation training program before they leave. But there are some portions of the program which obviously have greater relevance and importance than others.

The unit that made the complaint was the subject of the most intensive investigation to see what really was the case because we don't want to send a unit into a combat area if it hasn't been properly trained and properly prepared for its mission. Well, the result of the investigation was finding that this unit was ready. Hundreds of men were interviewed personally and their qualifications were checked with great care--you know, their military occupational specialty ratings. The whole affair was, I think, handled by the Army with diligence and energy and with a desire to make absolutely sure this unit was not sent off unprepared.

As I mentioned, I think the real problem with those men was not that they weren't being properly trained for Viet Nam service. The real problem was that the contingent liability which they had assumed when they had joined the reserves had suddenly become real. They were on active duty and on their way overseas and they didn't want to do it.

P: In your judgment, does this reflect a new low in morale or motivation or a breakdown in discipline?

F: I don't know if it is a new low. I think about 20,000 USAR and Army National Guard reservists were involved in the current call-up. About somewhere in the neighborhood of a thousand of them joined in the various lawsuits. So you see, all the lawsuits except the last one I have just been talking about were based on a claim that the President did not have the authority to bring them on active duty. It was only this last unit that raised the training question.

P: Was that--?

F: Well, they have lost in every court they went into though the decisions against the contention that the President lacked authority were reviewed and affirmed by the various courts of appeal that considered the issue. Those decisions were not disturbed by the Supreme Court of the United States. I'm speaking rather carefully there. In several cases the appeals were taken to the Supreme Court and that court refused to accept the case. That doesn't constitute an affirmance of the lower court's decision. But Justice Douglas alone among the Justices, apparently, thought the question raised by the reservists was worthy of consideration by the Supreme Court, and he issued some orders which had the effect of temporarily putting off the deployment of several of the suing units--or the units in which some of the men were suing.

Now, your question was is this a new low in morale. I don't know. There were obviously some very unhappy men and the thing sort of snowballed. Once Justice Douglas issued his first stay order a lot of these kids got hold of the same lawyer and had their schedule of deployment put off on the very same ground. It wouldn't have happened had the Supreme Court been in session, but Justice Douglas issued his first stay in, I think, it was early September and the court wasn't due back in session until the 7th of October.

Well, it was during that two or three weeks that all the other kids got the same lawyer to pull off the same trick for them. All of those stays were dissolved on the 7th of October when the court reconvened.

P: There was speculation during the Tet offensives and the Pueblo crisis of call-ups. What were the considerations, and how were the final decisions reached?

F: Well, there was a call-up within a day or two after the Pueblo was seized. That was about the 25th of January and within a day or so some thousands of Naval Air and Air Force units were brought on board. I wasn't involved in the discussions which led to the President's decision to do that.

Then later on after the Tet Offensive the forces over there were augmented by the temporary dispatch of a Marine Regimental Combat Team, I think the phrase is, and some airborne forces from the active Army.

After much discussion in March, discussion which led to the Viet Nam force level decisions mentioned in the President's speech on the 31st of March, why we announced another call-up on the 11th of April, as I remember it. One purpose was to replace those active units which had been sent over in early February on a temporary basis and which weren't really the right units to fit in over there. They needed more combat support units in place of the Marine Regimental Combat Team and that kind of thing.

So, at the same time, the Army's strategic reserve force in this country had been depleted over some years by the commitment of forces in Southeast Asia. So some of the units called in--well, they reported in May, they were called in April--some of those units were used, and are now today being used, as part of the strategic reserve force here in the United States ready to go if the decision should be made to commit additional forces from our active reserve to some other part of the world.

P: The speculation was, though, of a complete call-up, particularly during the Tet Offensive. What is your assessment of the policy in relation to call-ups and things of what is kind of commonly referred to as bullets and butter?

F: Guns and butter?

P: Guns and butter.

F: Well, you're raising really sort of a fundamental question about the role of the reserves. If we are going to have reserves--and they are expensive. We are spending about \$3 billion dollars a year to maintain the existing reserve establishment. If we are going to do that, it must be because it's cheaper to have those forces in reserve rather than have them permanently in the active establishment. I mean, it's demonstrably cheaper than having them in the active establishment, but it's a waste of money if you never use them in the circumstances for which they were created. So there is a tough policy problem inherent now in the decision as to what we really expect out of the reserve forces.

The whole period of the Viet Nam fighting was marked by, among other things, a discussion of whether or not to use the reserves. This was first raised in the summer of 1965. The decision then reached was that they shouldn't be called, that we should build the active establishment through the draft and enlistments, and so on, rather than bring reserves on board. Well, nobody really knows by hindsight or knew at the time the decision was made whether it was the correct decision.

The fact is that we fought that war from, oh, really, the initial build-up in the summer of '65 until the Tet Offensive without ever really making any great demands on the rest of our society. Maybe this was partly the trouble. It was too easy to commit the forces because the forces were ready--the active forces. McNamara had done a great job in building the

active establishment and reorganizing it, making it much readier and much stronger than it had been. So when the President had occasion to consider committing strength to Viet Nam, the strength was there to be committed. He didn't have to call reserves.

And, you know, that's what really generates political controversy. When you call a lot of men out of civilian life then you have to have a very clear explanation of the national interest that requires that sort of sacrifice. It might have exposed the whole question of the wisdom of our commitment in Southeast Asia a lot sooner had the reserves been involved. But history does not disclose its alternatives and we will never know that.

P: Do you think this has had a bearing on our inflationary situation now?

F: Do I think what has had a bearing on our inflationary situation?

P: Not using the reserves in this capacity, increasing the active military establishment.

F: Oh, I don't think that has anything to do with the rising cost of living--the calling or the not calling of the reserves. That's a product of other forces at work in our economy.

P: Well, I wasn't relating it directly. I was thinking in terms of defense budgeting--the rising costs of that.

F: Well, yes. If you drain money out of the society in order to fight a war in a distant country. Or I should say in one sense you are not draining money out of society, the government is incurring deficits and that means more money in the hands of the wage earner and the goods purchaser here in the country. Of course, you have inflation unless there are some means to reduce that extra purchasing power. That's what led to the surtax which was enacted last spring. Or at least that's the conventional argument for it. I'm not enough of an economist to assess the wisdom in the economic and fiscal policies courses we have been following. I'm enough of an economist

though to be uncertain as to the existence of any ultimate truths in this arrangement.

P: But not using the reserves in a large commitment in this way--you do not feel this has contributed to, say, an increasing military financing?

F: No, only in the narrowest, most technical sense. What we've done is build the active forces and continue to incur the cost of the reserve forces. Now, if we called the reserves, it would not have increased our active force costs at all over what we are now spending and it would have saved us the cost of maintaining the reserve establishment by whatever amount that we had been spending on the units we had decided to call. But that would have been maybe a billion dollars. That isn't the cause of the inflation.

P: Has current student opposition and demonstrations against the Viet Nam war affected our ROTC programs?

F: Yes, particularly when the demonstrations take the form of burning down the ROTC building on a campus, and this has happened in several places. It's very difficult for me to understand what moves these youngsters to that kind of conduct. I know of no defense to arson in that situation. It seems to me to be the antithesis of the kind of spirit of inquiry and freedom to entertain conflicting viewpoints that should mark a university campus. But our ROTC programs, by and large, except for the kind of thing I just mentioned, haven't been affected. They continue to be oversubscribed, and we have no trouble filling our quotas. Now, this varies from campus to campus, you understand.

P: From Berkeley to--

F: Well, no, even at Berkeley--you see, it's an avenue toward officer service as a means of discharging one's military obligation.

P: And Defense has made no change in their ROTC programs as a result of these

current demonstrations against it?

F: Well, we seek to make changes constantly in the ROTC program to keep it in tune with our current needs, and the current needs of the institutions where we have units, and with the needs of the student bodies of those institutions. You know, at one time the department favored compulsory ROTC at every school where we had a unit. That was during the Eisenhower Administration. We got off of that policy very rapidly back in the early '60's. So that, I think, was a beneficial change.

You know, there have been charges levied against the ROTC for many years, quite aside from the kind of charges we see today which really result not from any substantive evil in the ROTC program but because of violent student disagreement with our adventure in Viet Name. So they attack the ROTC as a symbol of the military on campus just the way they picket the military recruiters or the Dow Chemical recruiters, and so on, not because the individuals they are picketing are evil but they are symbols of the establishment which has brought about the involvement in Viet Nam.

But going back a moment, the historical complaints about ROTC have run along these lines. Number one, that the courses are not intellectually respectable and don't belong as part of the university curriculum. Secondly, that the course content is prescribed at a distant place, Washington, D.C. It is not prescribed on the campus. The faculty body has no control over it. And thirdly, that ROTC takes up too much time away from the standard curriculum that has to be followed.

Well, all the services for all the time that I have been familiar with the matter, which is a little over a year in the case of the Air Force and the Navy and about seven years in the case of the Army are constantly searching for ways to overcome these basic challenges to ROTC, to

make the courses intellectually respectable, to permit some manner of greater participation by the local institution in prescribing the course content, and, finally, some way to rely more on the standard courses available in the university and give ROTC credit for attendance at those courses rather than having separate periods dedicated to military subjects. This is an evolutionary process which I expect to continue over the years as times change and viewpoints are altered as to what should go on on the university campus. Maybe we shouldn't have ROTC. Maybe that's not the best way to get officers.

P: Do you have an opinion on that?

F: Well, no, I'm skeptical, but you see, we don't have a clean slate here. We have a history of, for the most part, a very happy relationship with the universities where our units are located. Whenever we expand the numbers of units, there are far more institutions that would like to have an ROTC unit than we can accommodate. So it's apparent that there is no unanimity in the academic world on the subject of the depravity of ROTC. In fact, I think the majority opinion is favorable to it. If we made a decision to abolish ROTC, we would be involved in a herculean struggle not only with the institutions that would like to keep units but with the Congress because, for reasons that appeal to them, they think that the ROTC is virtually something sacred on campus. I would approach it by making the analysis as to which is the most economical and effective way to provide the officer intake that the Armed Forces needs.

P: Since your contact with the reserves, both singly in the Army and as Assistant Secretary of Defense, what do you consider one of the biggest, or the biggest, problem concerning their organization, their readiness?

F: The biggest problem? Well, that's a hard question.

P: More than one. In reflection looking back over the last few years where you've dealt with manpower and reserves.

F: Well, I'd say the biggest problem is that we haven't managed to analyze the requirements for the Reserves in a totally realistic fashion. The question of what do we need in the reserves is a very large question and we've not been able to break it into manageable parts. It's, I think, reasonably clear that we should have some forces in reserve. You can prescribe a total armed forces structure, active and reserve, that is rational and self-sustaining and the pieces fit together. But, you see, really the size of that force and the manner in which it should be organized are sort of the ultimate questions in the operation of the Defense department, and the answers are subjective.

You know, today we have about three and a half million men on active duty. Three or four years ago we had two million, seven hundred thousand men on active duty. Presumably after the Viet Nam war winds up we will reduce our forces. But we will never know whether the particular size force we have at any given time is the right size, whether it is too much or too little unless we get into a war. Then we know that we don't have enough because we never have enough when you are fighting a war.

So, backing up. We start with subjective judgment about what the total force structure ought to be. Then we allocate it with some element of subjectivity between active and reserve components. Under those circumstances, it's troublesome to me to reflect on the allocation of the reserves when I'm not convinced that the assumptions that go into that allocation of the reserve forces will ever govern their ultimate use. If we have decided that such and such a number of division forces should be in the reserves and then never call them--although we are in a situation where under the original

assumptions it would have been appropriate to call them--we've just wasted billions of dollars.

I don't know whether we should assume today in our reserve forces planning that future decision-makers will decide correctly, that they will decide in accordance with the same assumptions we are using. If you make that assumption, then, sure, you build a reserve force of a certain size. But if you assume on the other hand that, well, some Secretary of Defense five or ten or forty years from now is not going to want to call the reserves because to do so--or some President--because to do so, you know, cause a lot of letters to Congress and uproar and turmoil and lawsuits and to hell with them, well, then why create those reserve forces. It's a difficult problem.

There's a commission to study, last February--which was designed to get at the heart of the matter--you know, what size reserve forces should we have and how ready should they be and then after we reach those judgments we could see what in fact we did have and either put more money into them or put less money in them as the case may be. That study hasn't gotten anywhere because it's beyond our institutional capacity at the moment. We are too busy worrying about other things.

P: I'd like to discuss military manpower commitments to Viet Nam. Of course, it has led to an increase in our military personnel. But what have the requirements for this type of war insurgency been? In comparison to other types of conflicts and how has this changed or affected Defense policy?

F: Well, I don't know the answer to your question. I think it's quite clear that we haven't achieved a military solution in Viet Nam.

p: I'm speaking of manpower levels.

F: Yes, but you mentioned what are the manpower requirements. Well, the

requirements are what are needed to achieve a military solution. We haven't achieved a military solution. I don't know what the requirements are. I suppose upwards of a million or two million. But then you get into questions of, you know, are the Red Chinese going to come down there. So nobody knows what the requirements are.

P: Let me change this a little bit.

F: I think you'd better.

P: For this kind of conflict, what problems have been occurring, say, in the area of skill mix? This is a new type of war for us, really.

F: Well, again, there is not a simple answer to that. First of all, you have to know what forces you want in Viet Nam. We can scrape up, you know, so many hundreds of thousands of men and pilots and mechanics and riflemen and so on and send them over there. And we did that. Then we also decided everybody's going to have a one-year tour. So all of the men we would send over there came back after twelve months. Obviously, we sent men over gradually so that it wasn't a case of 100 percent turnover on the first of July or something like that. But the twelve-month tour meant that we brought all those trained pilots home and other men with very long training periods behind them, and they had to be replaced. We could have simplified the problem considerably, say, by having an eighteen-month tour or a two-year tour, but there were reasons not to do that. One of the great contributors toward the high morale of our people in Viet Nam--and it's unquestionably high--has been the one-year tour.

Well, I think you can see from this illustration that there are a mixture of policy decisions that affect the problem of providing the kinds of skills needed at any given time over in Viet Nam. We've solved it by sending men back for a second tour and that sort of thing, increasing the

output of our training base here in this country. The training base responds with varying speed to a demand for a higher output. We can generate more riflemen very rapidly, but you can't generate more pilots very rapidly. It takes a couple of years from the time you decide you want more pilots to the time you begin getting more pilots.

P: Since these increases in the summer of '65, there have been no special skills required that placed a great strain on the then present output of them or turnout of them?

F: Oh, look, there have been lots of great strains on the Armed Forces in connection with fighting this war.

P: Could you tell me about them? I'm thinking about things--like the use of the helicopter must have precipitated a brand new area of training of skills. You've got your maintenance of them.

F: Yes.

P: You can't just suddenly have a helicopter pilot, either.

F: No, that's right. But it doesn't take us anywhere near as long to train a helicopter pilot as it does a jet pilot. Well, what we did was, as we increased the number of helicopters--and of course you can't just send a letter to some helicopter manufacturer and get a lot more helicopters the next day either. That again is a slow process comparatively. This isn't my field exactly--but my recollection is that we were able to speed up the production of pilots for helicopters at just about the same rate we could speed up the production of helicopters--and the mechanics and what not that are associated with those aircraft. This was an example of one of the strains. We had to increase that area of effort quite substantially.

There is a shortage of junior officers in the Armed Forces now because Viet Nam consumes more than a fair share of lieutenants and captains. I don't

mean that they are consumed in a sense that they are killed over there, but the units in Viet Nam are kept at or above 100 percent strength and the rest of the units elsewhere in the world are manned at 90 percent or less. Well, if the strengths are to be kept up in Viet Nam, it means that units elsewhere have to bear a greater proportion of whatever shortages exist. So you will find that lieutenants and captains are relatively scarce in our Army forces in Europe, for example.

P: Offhand, can you think of other areas where we have had to change our training skills for this type of conflict?

F: Well, there is a whole melange of change. Change is the essence of the armed forces. They are always deciding to do things differently, you know, and adapting to new weapons systems and new doctrines and new forms of unit organization.

P: How much of this has come from the Viet Nam war, from this type of a conflict which is a departure from traditional--

F: Well, I think change comes far more rapidly during the wartime period than it does during peactime because your old doctrines and methods are put to the test. You can see what's working and what isn't working with great rapidity. So you make changes with great rapidity. There have been revolutionary developments in weapons and electronic techniques and whatnot having to do with the weapons of war. We've got listening devices that are very effective. We've got night vision devices. None of this was in the force, you know, in 1964, or at least nothing like the kind of equipment that is over there in Viet Nam now. It's a forced draft research laboratory for fighting wars, and I couldn't begin to list all the changes that have emanated from our experience over there. But, you know, we find out this works, that doesn't work, that thing gets rusty and nobody expected it to

get rusty so we have to do it differently. We have to build it a little differently and that means that the men back in the training base have to be trained a little bit differently. You know, there's a tremendous ripple effect from anything we do over there.

P: And it has created a pretty great strain on your training apparatus for all these new innovations?

F: Well, I don't know if it has. I don't like to use general terms like "great strain." [Because] there's some comparison contained in that phrase. We've, I'd say, had more occasion to crowd up the training base with people as a result of a decision not to open new training centers than because of any problems in installing training appropriate to fighting in Viet Nam. So there has been a strain on the training base in the sense that we've asked it to process far more men than it was designed to process. That's not true today, but it was true during the period of the 1965-66 buildup.

P: What are high-skill needs in this area?

F: In which area?

P: Prime needs in this area of skills--in Viet Nam right now?

F: Well, I've never tried to educate myself, you know, on a catalog of skills over there. We have about 1,500 different kinds of skills that are required in the enlisted force, and schooling and training appropriate to all of them.

P: Does this represent an increase?

F: Over what?

P: Pre-1965.

F: I don't know. It's hard to tell because the services sort of alternate between favoring occupational descriptions which are very narrow and precise or descriptions which are broad and general. So the same Air Force in size and

in actual skill distribution in 1960 may have had 1,000 different specialties under the nomenclature then in use, and it might have 300 today or it might be the other way around. I don't know which. But all the services go through sort of a cyclical process the way all institutions seem to alternate between emphasizing decentralization and centralization.

P: In Viet Nam we have had occasion to revert back to some much older type of equipment because of the type of terrain and the type of combat the troops are involved in. Has this had any sort of reflection on the skill needs or requirements in Viet Nam?

F: Well, I don't know. I'm not sure there has been much occasion to use older equipment. We have found a use for prop-driven airplanes, for example. But I'm just not an expert in that field. I remember early in the Viet Nam war we didn't have enough 750 pound bombs. You know, all the planning during the '50's had assumed that any war that we were going to fight would be one tremendous awful cataclysm of nuclear weapons. So we just allowed the production lines for conventional bombs to grind to a halt and we sold off many of the bombs that were in the inventory. In 1965 we had to go to West Germany and there was a junk dealer there who bought a lot of these then surplus bombs some year or two before, and we bought them back from him. I think he paid \$3 or \$4 apiece or a pound and we paid \$20 apiece or a pound to get them back. And there was much journalistic hilarity at our stupidity in that situation. But accidents will happen and people don't know everything, can't know everything about the future when they are making their decisions to dispose of surplus old cast-iron bombs.

P: This transition is what I was trying to refer to, unless you have something else to add on that.

F: No.

P: Demands of this type of limited war placed on military manpower.

F: Well, I'll simply say this. In summary, it has been less of a demand than fighting a full-scale war and more of a demand than not fighting any war at all.

P: Could you clarify that?

F: I don't think it needs clarification. It's just sort of a truism. If you are fighting a war, the greater your involvement, the greater the strain; the less your involvement, the less the strain. By comparison with 1964 we went through a rather hectic period in the Armed Forces during these last four years--or three years. But it's less of an uproar and strain than it was during World War II.

P: And are you saying that the gear-up that took place during '64 and '65 was to the right level and so that in terms of what we are using as strain was already achieved at that time?

F: No, I don't remember saying that, or anything like that. But I did say earlier that the strength and preparation increases which Mr. McNamara brought about during his first two or three years as Secretary of Defense made forces available to the President in 1965 which he could commit without imposing a great strain on our civilian society.

P: I want to go into another area here, but it is still connected to the Viet Nam war. Have the rather dramatic desertions to Sweden reflected a stronger opposition or lack of confidence in America's commitment--stronger than other military involvements we've had?

F: In the first place, there haven't been a great many of these cases, and the number is dwindling. I get a report of this every week: How many men have gone to foreign countries from our Armed Forces ostensibly as a result of protest against our Viet Nam policies? The peak was reached in March of this year when there were something like 68 who left that month. It's less

than a third of that in September, although our figures for September aren't very good yet because these men are gone and we don't really know that they are in Sweden, for example, until they pop up in Sweden and they surface in Sweden. It may be three or four months before we really know where the man is. But the numbers are a relative handful. I can't remember the exact figures, but since July of 1966 it is something like 380 U.S. citizens who have done this. Now there have been another couple of hundred aliens who for the most part have gone back to their own countries. Of the 380 or so U.S. citizens, about 150 have come back. So there are about 200 outstanding at the moment as best we can determine.

We have checked all the records on all of these guys to see, you know, if these are noble young men who have left in protest against a military engagement of which they very deeply disapproved on ethical grounds. It's our judgment that this is so with respect to none more than a handful of them. About half of them had already been in trouble unrelated to any question of Viet Nam participation--you know, barracks thieves and drunks and just immature youngsters, inadequate personalities and so on. In other words, they are typical AWOL's. They just happened to have gone off while in a foreign country and to a place that's gotten to have the reputation of a safe haven--Sweden.

Incidentally, the figures I was giving you earlier are worldwide, not just Sweden. The other half hadn't been in any trouble before they left that we knew of. Until they do come back we really won't know why they left, and even then we may never find out whether it was for political reasons or because they had a row with their girl friend. You know, there are all sorts of reasons why young men will go AWOL.

P: Has this created much of a flap?

F: Much of a what?

P: A flap.

F: Oh, yes, I had to go over to the Senate last spring because there was a special investigating committee formed. Senator Inouye was its chairman. I testified before the committee for a couple of days and they have been getting reports from us, more statistics, now for some months and the committee report is just about ready to be released. It's very critical of us, at least in its present form. I don't know whether it will be in that form when it is released. You know, they don't think we are paying enough attention to this very serious problem or that we are punishing the men with sufficient severity when they do return.

[end of tape]

INTERVIEWEE: ALFRED B. FITT (Tape #4)

INTERVIEWER: DOROTHY PIERCE

November 8, 1968

P: Mr. Fitt, are there programs in the works to repatriate or readjust these men if they do choose to return to this country?

F: Well, we want all of them to come back. They are all members of the Armed Forces and we want them to return to their units. Then on their return, you know, it is up to the unit commander to recommend appropriate disciplinary action. We made a study in connection with the hearings of the Inouye Subcommittee hearings with respect to what had in fact happened to the men who had returned up to that time. Well, it just varied all over the lot. Some of them had been given merely a reprimand. You understand, I'm talking about somebody who was AWOL and in a foreign country, but the circumstances of his absence may have been--. Well, for example, he may have been gone for two days and not engaged in any public denunciation of the United States, or anything like that. But in our books he went to a foreign country and he was AWOL and now he's back. Or it may have been that he was on a naval vessel that was visiting in Japan and he left the ship on approved liberty and he went to the Russian embassy and tried to get them to take him in and send him on to Sweden but they rebuff him and then we find out about it. There's a case of unsuccessful attempt. So the cases range all the way from that sort of thing up to the spectacular one of the four sailors from the Intrepid who did desert in Japan and then went on to the Soviet Union and thence to Sweden, and they are still there a year later.

Well, the punishments range from simple reprimand up to a year. I think the most severe sentence was six months at that time, plus a bad

conduct discharge. It may be that subsequently there have been some longer sentences. I just haven't been keeping track of that aspect of this since last May. Our interest is that we don't want an AWOL to get the impression that by his conduct he can, you know, completely evade dangerous service. If we habitually take an AWOL and give him a prison sentence--and of course the maximum that is prescribed by law--the effective maximum, is three years for desertion, although in some instances it can be five years. But if we just throw them in the clink and then kick them out of the Armed Forces when their sentence has been served, you know, some men are desperate enough or cowardly enough to take that as the way of avoiding dangerous service. We would much rather rehabilitate them and use them in some effective role in some armed forces because for every man we throw into prison and then discharge we have to bring somebody else on board in the Armed Forces and he has to do the task that the man in prison is no longer available to do.

We also want to encourage AWOL men to return. And one way to encourage them is not to have a draconian sentence awaiting them when they do show up. So this is, as far as I can tell, not well understood by the people over in the Congress who regard the sentences that have been administered in these cases as far too lenient.

P: Has training had to cope with the unpopularity of the war, the propaganda, the demonstrations against the war?

F: Has training?

P: During the training period, is this discussed?

F: Well, I don't know. All of the military departments are, you know, have been in the business of training young men, raw recruits, for a long, long time. They know how to handle groups of boys eighteen, nineteen, and twenty and turn them into soldiers, sailors, and airmen and fill them with

pride and esprit. It's amazing how skillful they are at it. Again, this is something we watch with great care. The coffee house movement and so on has not, so far as we can tell, made any dent on the men in the Armed Forces in the sense of reducing readiness or causing any disruption on post or in units over in Viet Nam.

P: Is it your opinion that the conduct of this war has been one of restraint, or escalation?

F: I don't know if I have an opinion on that question. I'm too much the beneficiary of hindsight at this juncture. I'm sorry we ever got into it.

p: Do you feel our commitment there is a mistake? Let me define this--a mistake in time or place?

F: I've always had reservations about the nature of the national interest which required our armed presence in Southeast Asia, and those reservations have grown stronger as the years have passed.

P: What is the present projection of our needed troop level in Viet Nam to maintain our commitment?

F: Well, the President imposed a ceiling last March 31. It's 549,500. As far as I know, that's still in effect.

P: We have now had a cessation in bombing. What do you see as the future of Viet Nam without the American military presence?

F: It depends on a lot of questions to which I don't know the answers. We are just going to have to feel our way along and try to reach a settlement which will leave that country in a condition of relative stability and peace and able to work out its own destiny whatever that may be.

P: What has been learned for the future from the rapid gear-up in Viet Nam and fighting a war of insurgency?

F: Well, I'm sure there is quite a long list of things that have been learned.

You mean in a military sense?

P: Yes.

F: Well, I don't know. You would have to talk to the military people more about that. You know, they've got lessons learned, books. There are monthly publications of new ideas and developments, tactical approaches that have proven effective and how to find booby traps and do this and do that. I really hadn't supposed that was what your question was about.

P: Well, in terms of manpower and reserves, how does it affect it? What have we learned from that?

F: Well, that isn't a manpower question--you know, how to fight a war. My job is to see that the right numbers of people get into the Armed Forces with the right qualities against certain kinds of standards and that then they are paid and cared for in a sensible and proper fashion while they are with us, and they reenlist in the right numbers and all that kind of thing. I don't have anything to do with what their training courses should be, or how long basic training should last, or how many men should be radiomen and how many men should be riflemen. Those are different questions.

P: I understand that, but I think what I'm aiming at is that there were certain changes and accommodations for this type of conflict that were made. We must be able to use this as an experience to relate to any sort of future involvements whether in fact the question of whether we should or shouldn't.

F: Well, that's a question of foreign policy and of institutional memory. Since we last talked, the election has been held and Mr. Nixon is evidently going to be the next President. I don't know what lessons he has learned from Mr. Johnson's experience.

P: Are there plans in the works for a post-Viet Nam manpower level? Are we working on that at this point?

F: Well, yes. The five-year defense program assumes that the war will end. I think, it's July 1, 1970. That's just a planning factor, and each year that date is advanced one year. So the five-year plan then, with respect to the out years, shows a different level of forces and so on.

Now, we've got all kinds of plans in the drawer. We call them our T-Day Plans. This is, you know, what do we do when peace breaks out? We have a long list of things we do the day peace breaks out and then what we do. We call it T-Day. What do we do on T-Day plus 30? T-Day plus six months? All that sort of thing.

P: What do you see as the proper mix of forces after Viet Nam?

F: I haven't the faintest idea.

P: Are there readiness levels that we should maintain?

F: You know, we should maintain that size and mix of forces at that state of readiness which is appropriate to the defense of the national security, and I don't know what the answer to that is.

P: Has the Czech invasion changed thinking on this at all?

F: I suppose it has. You know, I don't participate in the determination of what size forces the United States should have in its military establishment. That's the Joint Chiefs, Systems Analysis, the Secretary of Defense, and the President--and the Secretary of State, to some extent. As I mentioned earlier, there is no finite number that you can say at any given moment, "This is enough; any less would be not enough; any more would be too many."

P: With more mobility it has been thought that we could possibly cut our troops stationed abroad.

F: Yes.

P: What is your judgment on this possibility?

F: Well, I think it is a real one. Part of our planning is already based on

that. Our force levels in Europe, for example, are less now than they might otherwise have been because we have prepositioned equipment over there for two divisions that are based in this country. They can be married up with their equipment in a matter of a week or two. I'm sure you are familiar with the C-5A aircraft which can carry, I've forgotten what the total is, 500 or 700 men--something like that--and that's now beginning to come into production. That increases mobility and our ability to transport forces over great distances. So, to the extent that our mobility is increased, the need to station forces elsewhere is lessened.

P: Do you see in the future that we will have no forces stationed abroad unless there is a conflict? I'm not considering a combat situation.

F: I don't know. I can't look very far ahead into the future on that kind of thing. Obviously, there is a dynamic at work in our world which will influence that kind of decision here in this country. NATO is quite different today from the NATO we saw three years ago. France is no longer a part of it. NATO today is different from NATO the day before the Czech invasion by the Soviet Union--or at least attitudes are different. Things that seemed part of the conventional wisdom twenty years ago, for example, all the economists were convinced that we would forever be in a creditor position so far as the balance of payments were concerned. We've been in a condition just the opposite now for about ten straight years. So I hesitate to make any predictions about what the future holds as far as stationing American troops on foreign soil is concerned. It will be different from today and it's bound to be different from what I might predict it to be.

P: Senator Stennis' Preparedness Subcommittee has said that we are stretched too thin. We can't be policemen of the world. Do we have the ability to gear up and react in other areas of the world with our present involvement

in Viet Nam?

F: Yes, but all things are relative. You know, we geared up and went into the Dominican Republic in the spring of 1965, wasn't it? At the same time we were beginning to gear up to go into Viet Nam. We can meet certain contingencies elsewhere. There are other contingencies about which we could do nothing in the conventional sense.

A good example is the Pueblo. There is nothing we could do about that in the military sense if we wanted to get the men back alive. So that's one contingency that wasn't covered. But Senator Stennis says we're stretched too thin. That's his judgment. Who knows what too thin is in our society?

P: We have a very high Defense budget and our military pay-raises seem to be a growing trend. Do you think our present type of compensation, base pay and allowances and military privileges--is this a modern look at this?

F: Haven't we talked about this before?

P: We touched on it.

F: I've sort of forgotten. We have pending proposals to change the whole system all around and put everybody in the career force on a salary that is comparable to salaries paid for comparable responsibility in the civil service, which in turn is related to the private sector. As you came in today, I happened to be working on a memorandum for Mr. Clifford seeking his decision on our retirement system reform proposals. That's part of our big package of compensation reform. I hope before I leave office in January, we'll be sending legislative proposals to the Hill which would bring about major changes in active duty compensation, in the retirement system, and in the survivor benefit package.

P: What are the problems involved in changing the system?

F: Well, we have to convince the Congress that the change ought to be made.

On any careful analysis of the situation I think one is led inevitably to the judgment that we should switch to a salary system instead of the base pay and allowances system. That's a very simple proposition, but it's infernally complicated to make the change. It's expensive because, as part of the change, we want to make up the lag that exists between the total compensation paid the military today and the compensation paid their counterparts in the civilian sector. It's going to take two and a half to three billion dollars to make the change if we make it next July 1. So that's just one of the little bills that's going to be lying on Mr. Nixon's desk when he takes office determined to cut the federal budget--plus the need to spend about \$50 billion dollars a year more in our domestic society.

P: The question has periodically arisen about the use of civilians in various jobs that are held down by military people and thus releasing them. Is this feasible?

F: Yes, it is feasible. We went through a program developed in 1965 by which we cut military strength authorizations by 114,000 and substituted 95,000 civilians in the jobs that the military men had formerly held. The reason that we could get along with fewer civilians is they don't require the same training base and don't have the same turnover rate and so on. We had almost completed that program, it was a three year program, by the end of last June. We had taken on some 91,000 civilians and reduced military strengths by the amount I mentioned when we bumped into the law the Congress passed in conjunction with enacting the surtax. They have said we must get back to our civilian employment level of June 30, 1966. Well, so, you know, this is a really most irresponsible piece of legislation because there is no relationship between today's needs and employment levels two and a half years ago. One good example of the wreckage that law is causing is that we can't complete the civilian substitution program. In fact, if we had to go

on much longer under this law, we would have to reverse it and begin drafting men to fill jobs that civilians could fill. You know, it's insane.

P: What areas has this been most applicable in?

F: You mean in the civilian substitution program?

P: Yes.

F: Oh, in the support areas. You know, clerical personnel, station support-- you obviously can't put civilians into fighting units. But you can substitute civilians in depots and places where we repair and overhaul vehicles or store supplies in this country. The services have been very diligent in carrying out the program. I think their cooperation has been splendid. I'm just sorry that we are now stuck with the law I mentioned that has stopped the program dead and may cause its reversal.

P: Is this economically an improvement?

F: You mean is it cheaper for our society to do it this way?

P: Yes.

F: It depends on how you count. To the extent that it reduces the need for compulsory military service, there is an economic savings. We are not pulling men out of the civilian economy who conceivably would perform more valuable services in that economy than in the Armed Forces. We are not doing that to the extent that draft calls are reduced because of the civilianization program. I think, you know, the budget costs of 95,000 civilian employees compared to the budget costs of 114,000 military are about the same. I'm not sure of that.

P: I was just thinking that the civilian employment might cost more directly.

F: Well, but--

P: It has its compensations for not taking military men out.

F: Yes, that's right. But you see there is the constant repetitive training

cost for the military man who typically is a member of the force for less than four years. The civilian is typically a member of our employed force for far longer times than that. I don't know what the exact time is, but our turnover in the civilian force is much less than it is in the military force. And we don't have to pay the cost of moving civilians around all the time because we don't make them move around all the time. All that kind of thing. We don't provide them GI Bill benefits, or a free grave in a national cemetery, or hospitalization.

P: Has the role of women in the Armed Forces improved?

F: Well, that suggests that there was something that needed improvement.

P: Changed?

F: As a matter of fact, there were many little discriminations in law against women members of the Armed Forces, particularly officer members. Their promotion opportunities were limited in various ways. I think we got all that straightened out in a bill that was enacted by the Congress a year ago. I have no doubt that the lot of the women in the Armed Forces could be improved over the present, but I just don't know what special problems they have these days. I meet with the directors of the Women's Services every once in awhile, and they haven't raised any special problems with me.

P: Well, it is thought that the military is not a place for women, initially, and that's probably where the restrictions were begun. How did this reassessment of their role come about?

F: Well, I think there was so much hollering from the women and so many claims of discrimination which could not be denied that we men, both here in the building and over in the Congress, finally had to straighten up and straighten the situation out.

P: Have there been studies performed that show the results of this change of

this program?

F: No, not that I am aware of. You know, it mostly took the form of better promotion opportunities. They are paid the same as men and they have all the same monetary entitlements and privileges of the commissaries and all that kind of thing. Their chief gripe, as I understood, it was; there were these arbitrary limits on how far they could advance. There were some tricky businesses on their retirement rights. I don't remember all the changes that were made, but some of them represented corrections of injustices that were more theoretical than real.

P: Or practical?

F: No, I don't think anything impractical resulted from the legislation. At least, I'm not aware of it. You know, it's a big institution, the Defense department, and we are full of lots of people, and so--

P: How would a woman general be effectively used?

F: I haven't thought about that question. Frankly, I suppose that it will be quite awhile before a woman could--well, let me put it this way. The obvious answer to your question I suppose is in the Nursing Corps or the head of the WAC. That doesn't stir me up and scare me or make me think it would be the end of the world if the head of the Women's Army Corps were a general. Either that or in one of the other women's services, or in the Nursing Corps, I suppose, is where the first general officer would be chosen.

P: In your judgment, are there changes or modernizations needed in Defense manpower in terms of numbers, skills--all in this area--to be an effective nuclear force?

F: Well, what's an effective nuclear force? I don't quite understand your question.

P: Well, I'm thinking in terms of fighting a nuclear war which has its

limitations anyway.

F: Well, again we're out of my field. I don't have anything to do with the training and assignment of our people who are, you know, involved in the missile, nuclear strike business. I'm just assuming that if it came to that, that our forces would be able to shoot off their nuclear missiles and hit their targets. I don't regard that prospect with any pleasure or anticipation but I'm sure that our people in charge of preparations for that sort of endeavor have brought about adequate preparations.

P: Do you deal with the manpower level in the intelligence area?

F: No.

P: Admiral Rickover has recently charged that the civilian general staff is too large and there should be a reduction in Defense headquarters, and a decentralization. What is your judgment of this issue?

F: Well, you know, there is no ultimate answer to that question. Being a part of that central civilian staff, I have my own views as to the importance of the work I am performing to the national interest.

P: I would like to hear them.

F: Well, we've seen a development, an evolution, or an explosion over the last twenty years in our ability to collect and manipulate and digest information. It has made it possible for central headquarters to keep track of a whole lot of things that were just beyond the capability of any institution to tabulate in years past. But if you get a lot of data and information in--and the thirst for information is insatiable, you know, the decision-maker always wants to have the latest, best, most complete, and most accurate up-to-the-minute set of facts before he makes his decision. We always want more information rather than less.

But the more information you pull in, then the greater the need for a

central staff to analyze that information and to present it in a useful form to decision makers. The process we have seen of growth is OSD over these years has been sort of the inevitable result of that phenomenon plus the very active leadership role that McNamara played. He was anxious to reach out and make decisions that hitherto had been made at much lower levels.

Now, Admiral Rickover, as you mentioned, has made what I regard as sort of a sentimental criticism--or maybe romantic criticism. He doesn't like this development because it seems to him, I'm sure, that decisions which he would have made one way, had he continued to have the authority to make them, are being made in a different fashion at a higher level. And since he is a very able and strong-minded and very thoughtful man, he, I think, starts with the viewpoint that those of us up here who disagree with him are wrong. So the solution is to get rid of us. You know, I'm oversimplifying just the way he was. But I must say that I have seen enough evidence around here of mismanagement in the services to warrant a continued and perhaps a higher level of OSD surveillance of what it is they are up to down there.

I'll give you an example. In 1965, the Congress authorized us to pay higher reenlistment bonuses in scarce skills so that we could pay as much as five times the ordinary reenlistment bonus if a man had a very scarce skill and agreed to reenlist for six years. In fact, in the paper only this morning, or yesterday morning, there was a picture of a Sergeant who just reenlisted and he got \$10,000. That's the maximum you can get under the system, but it illustrates the very large sums that are possible. Well, anyhow, the whole idea of--and we call this the VRB or Variable Reenlistment Bonus Program--the whole idea was to use this VRB to

cure critical specialties that had shortages of career people in them. The law was passed back in '65. The programs got underway in '66. We put out a directive then giving general guidance as to how it was done, and then went away and didn't pay any attention to it for a couple of years. Last December I started a review program because I wasn't satisfied we were really running it properly. In May I got around to asking, "In how many specialties are we paying VRB where the specialty is already overmanned with careerists." It turned out there were about 150 and in one case we had seventeen times as many careerists in the specialty as the service--I think it was the Marine Corps--as the Marine Corps itself said it needed in that specialty and yet they were paying men an extra sum of money in order to reenlist in it.

P: What was the specialty?

F: I can't remember, but it was quite a shock to the services when I developed this material, or my staff did for me. I sent them a list of these overmanned specialties and said, "Why are you paying VRB and unless you can give me a good reason to continue to do so, I want you to stop it by such and such a date." Nobody could really argue with the results of the study. It was just that, you know, the services had been busy on other things and nobody had paid any attention to it. It wasn't until OSD turned it up that we discovered this money that we were literally wasting, the taxpayer's money. It wasn't a great sum. It was something like \$5 or \$6 million dollars a year.

We also conducted a study in the proficiency pay program and discovered--and there was where we pay careerists thirty to fifty to sixty to seventy-five to a hundred dollars more a month depending upon their specialty. Again, it's payable in specialties that are short, and it's a retention device. We discovered--and this program has been going on for about ten years--that

that all the payments we had been making at the thirty and fifty dollar level per month hadn't improved the retention. We had spent upwards of, I don't know, it was last year over \$100 million dollars in payments of that category that weren't buying anything for us. The services could have figured that out if they had made a study of it, but they didn't. We did, and now we are changing it.

P: Along this same line, particularly in this past campaign, the issue has been raised again regarding civilian authority prevailing over the seasoned military men. From what you have just told me, is this an area where civilian authority is definitely required and what is your judgment of this issue?

F: Well, there are several things you are talking about. Every responsible politician in our society gives at least lip service to the notion that we have to have civilian control over the military. But when we see an unsuccessful military adventure--and you've got to say that the Viet Nam war is an unsuccessful adventure, I think--it creates frustrations. The military point out that they were leashed, you know, and couldn't apply the military power in the most effective manner because of the restrictions placed on them by civilians. So those who did not place those restrictions on the military--meaning the opposition to the government in power--have a tendency to say, well, had they been in power, they would have turned the military loose. You get this in all forms. You know, there is sort of a nut group on the extreme right and then you go on through General Walker and Strom Thurmond and Barry Goldwater and on up to Mr. Nixon, who has left in my mind the impression that somehow he would have placed more reliance on the military in this situation--on the advice of the military.

P: I wanted to ask you--it's more along the line of the earlier criticism of

the centralization of the Department of Defense. Do you feel there are any overlapping functions in the service secretaries?

F: You mean, does the Army overlap with the Navy or something?

P: No, the existence of service secretaries and the Department of Defense.

F: You mean the Office of the Secretary of Defense?

P: Yes.

F: Well, they are complementary. You know, the Secretary of Defense surrounds himself with his staff which busies itself with many of the same things that the staffs of the service secretaries busy themselves. This is always true, I think, when you have a layering of authority. Higher headquarters worries to some extent about the same things that lower headquarters worry about and then more in addition. There is some overlap, but I think it's proper. I should look at the Army's VRB program. So should Mr. Resor.

P: All right. You have a level of assistant secretaries too. Is this an efficient way to run the Department of Defense with service secretaries, with an OSD set up with assistant secretaries and secretaries?

F: Well, people, you know, have different views of the matter.

P: What is yours?

F: Well, this is the situation that I find. I haven't given any thought to possible reorganizations of the Defense department. You know, I'm satisfied that any institution this size, or a lot smaller for that matter, could be rearranged in some fashion which would make it more effective and more efficient. We are going through a constant process of that kind. I've rearranged my manpower office since I have been here and have some people doing things different from what they did before. The organizational chart--the boxes are moved around a little bit, and that sort of thing. That will go on in varying degrees forever so long as there is a Defense

department. As I mentioned, earlier sometimes decentralization will be all the rage and other times centralization will be the rage.

P: Mr. Clifford became Secretary of Defense earlier this year after almost seven years under McNamara, Mr. McNamara. What changes have taken place?

F: In an organizational sense?

P: I would like you to cover all of them, too.

F: Well, he's quite a different man from Mr. McNamara. You know, Mr. McNamara often expressed the view that three or four years was about the maximum limit of the useful service in this department in a top civilian position.

So I think that the first obvious answer is that Mr. Clifford came in and he just brought a fresh viewpoint to things and a different relationship with the President. Of course, he had been a friend and adviser to the President for many years. But he came in and he wasn't the prisoner of any past judgments. He was, I think most people will concede, the principal architect of the decision to put a lid on our manpower commitments in Viet Nam. He's been, I think, the man most responsible for bringing about the bombing pause, or the bombing halt. There had come to be a polarization of viewpoints between the Defense department and the Armed Services committees of the Congress. Much animosity had developed.

P: Are you saying that Defense, in keeping with its position as part of the Executive Department, was committed to our Viet Nam involvement and the Congress was at this point--

F: No. I'm talking about the whole relationship between the Defense department and the Congress. Mr. McNamara set the tone for that. By the end of his tenure, the relationships had deteriorated very badly so that he had lost much of his effectiveness with the Congress. That situation affected all of us in our dealings with the Congress. Mr. Clifford has turned all that

around. He could have been expected to have a honeymoon period, you know. He's, I think, kept the good will of the Congress completely thus far, and I'm sure will for the balance of his tenure and I assume he's going to leave office in January.

As far as manpower is concerned, he's got very much the same viewpoints as Mr. McNamara. He's a great fan of, you know, the Open Housing Program and Project 100,000, Project Transition, and that kind of thing. He's not a professional manager, though. He doesn't bombard me with calls and memoranda asking about these programs the way McNamara did. I don't know how it is with the other assistant secretaries. But it's quite clear that with respect to the programs under my care he doesn't have any desire to dig into the nuts and bolts and participate in the development of all the policies that are relevant to these programs.

You know, I like Mr. Clifford a great deal. He's a very engaging, conscientious, pleasant man. He's good company. He's been a very great force for good around here since he arrived. I spent seven years working for Mr. McNamara--and a lot more closely than with Mr. Clifford.

P: Was the characterization of Mr. McNamara as the cold, scientific, computer mind accurate?

F: No. You know, he didn't have a lot of small talk or tell jokes or that kind of thing. He liked to get things done and not waste any time. But as far as being a cold fish or a walking calculator, that was a lot of baloney. He is a very hard-driving, tough, brainy man. He's the brightest man I ever bumped into.

He was inflexible on some issues. Once he came to a conclusion that such and such an investment was a waste of money or something like that, he just couldn't be shaken. I'd say that probably the only flaw that I

really would ascribe to him was this inability to make accommodations where it could be done so that the interests of both sides of a controversy could be recognized--or at least both sides could tell themselves that they had come out of the situation all right.

You know, that's the role of a lawyer, to bring about accommodations always with responsible ethical regard for the merits of any given matter. But there, as I say, are oodles of ways to skin a cat. Mr. Clifford is an extraordinary, able lawyer and to some extent I think he can bring about adjustments and changes that would be exactly the same as Mr. McNamara would have done but in a manner which left the other fellow smiling instead of weeping.

P: Did Mr. McNamara's innovations succeed in streamlining the Defense department?

F: Streamlining is a word that doesn't have any meaning to me in this sense. His innovations, I think, brought about a far more efficient operation of the department and led to a much greater combat power for the same amount of money than would have been the case had his innovations and his leadership not occurred.

P: I believe I skipped an area I wanted to ask you about here. It was base closing. Were you involved in that?

F: Not particularly.

P: All right. Do you have any comment on them?

F: No, not particularly. It was long past time, in the early '60's, to get rid of a lot of places we didn't need. You have to be tough to bring that off because lots of communities had an interest in seeing that various installations remained in existence. And adequate provisions had to be made for guaranteeing continued employment for the displaced employees. But, you

know, I don't have any comment on that.

P: What do you consider during your time here at Defense to be one of the greatest or most difficult--if you want to look at it that way--innovations or changes that have taken place?

F: You mean during--

P: Since you have been here.

F: In the building?

P: Yes.

F: You mean since 1961?

P: I'm thinking of the overall time.

F: You mean matters in which I have participated or just as an observer of the whole scene around here?

P: Both.

F: Well, I don't know. I would have to think about that and look back in a year or two on that. I'm too much engaged in the daily struggle at the moment to reflect on what's been important and what's been trivial over the last seven years.

P: Do you feel that the changes that have taken place will survive--changes in the administration, changes in Secretaries of Defense?

F: Oh, some of them will, some of them won't. I don't know what kind of fellow Mr. Nixon is going to send over here to run the thing. A lot will depend on him.

P: Do you think that it is conceivable that Mr. Clifford will stay?

F: No, I don't.

P: Has there been--

F: Well, wait a minute. It's conceivable, of course, it's conceivable. But the question is, will he? I doubt it. I doubt that he will be asked. If

he were asked, I think he would remain.

P: Has there been a particular piece of legislation over this long period of time that you have observed that has had an impact on manpower and reserves in the armed forces?

F: Oh, the Congress passed a bill a year ago in connection with the reserve program. They set up the office of Deputy Assistant Secretary for Reserve Affairs as a presidential appointment. That office is under me. They created the office of the manpower secretaryships in the military departments. The bill prescribed minimum strengths for the reserve components, made other reforms of greater and lesser impact. I would say that's the principal legislation the Congress has passed in the manpower area during my tenure. I'm leaving aside, you know, the renewal of the Selective Service law because that really relates more to how men are chosen rather than what happens to them after they get here.

Each year there are fifteen, twenty, thirty bills passed by the Congress that affect the manpower business in the Defense department in some way or another such as the Ladies Bill of Rights that we talked about earlier. But for the most part our manpower programs are governed by budget resources and administrative decisions rather than by new legislation. Our open housing program, our recruitments standards, Project 100,000, Project Transition, the changes in the proficiency pay program and in the Variable Reenlistment Bonus Program, all that has been done by me at this desk, signing pieces of paper rather than by having a law passed.

P: To these changes what is your biggest resistance or what is your resistance?

F: To which changes?

P: The changes or the areas which you yourself have gotten involved in--the VRB program, the social programs of the Army and the Armed Forces?

F: Well, there was a lot of trepidation about the Open Housing Program and foot-dragging. They didn't want to do that. I think we talked about this earlier, didn't we?

P: Yes, we did.

F: Not because they were against it but because they weren't confident that they could be effective at it.

P: You are speaking of the military?

F: Yes. For the most part, I've tried to operate on a basis by which through sheer force of logic and the possession of better information that my proposals would have to be accepted. That sounds awfully arrogant as I reflect on it, and I had better explain some. My experience has been that it is usually not at all difficult to figure out where you want to go, what you want to get done in the way of program changes here in the Department of Defense. What's really difficult is devising the process to get from where you are today to where it is you want to be and to locate the centers of institutional power that are important in bringing about any given reform or change and of marshalling your arguments and your data in the most effective manner. I spent hardly any time on the ultimate conclusion. I know where I want to get. I know what I want to get done. I spent a whole lot of time in bringing people around to that point of view.

To take a simple example, was the one I mentioned earlier of the use of the Variable Reenlistment Bonus in career specialities that were already overmanned. I was in the process of making some major changes in the program anyhow that I knew as a result of our studies had to be done. But the fact that the services were caught with their hand in the jam pot, so to speak, by paying money where they didn't have to pay it pretty much kept them off balance. I had far less trouble than I thought I would in making

the really major changes in those programs because of them.

P: Have the program changes you have instituted improved the status of the military man?

F: There could only be one answer to that. Obviously, yes.

P: Has that been the emphasis of your approach?

F: Well, you realize that the earlier answer was facetious. The whole point of my being around here is to try to bring about rationality and fairness in the treatment of the people of the Armed Forces. To the extent that people agree with me on what is rational and fair, you would have to say that there has been some improvement as a result of my labors here in the Pentagon. For those who hold a different view of what is rational and fair, they might say it is too bad Fitt ever got over there.

Look, I've been working on things that anybody at this desk would be working on, improving the compensation, making more sense out of it, trying to get the services to develop better career patterns for enlisted men and structuring their grade system in a fashion that will permit some reasonable promotion flow for carieerists--that kind of thing. I don't expect that anybody sitting here would find general areas of responsibilities that I haven't found. He might do things differently and I'm sure would place different emphasis than I would on the work to be performed here. But the manpower business is going to go on pretty much the same, I believe.

P: Is there a new interst in this area that you have been able to create these changes? Or why haven't some of these things taken place before?

F: Well, as I say, I expect my successor to place different emphasis on some of these manpower things from that that I would have placed. I am like that with respect to some of my predecessors. You get different ranges of interest and intellectual ability and energy in different incumbents of a

particular office. So you get different results from those different incumbencies. I'm going to have to leave to somebody else the judgment really as to whether it has made any difference whether I have been here or not been here.

P: I put in part of that question the attitude toward the changes. Do you think there is better reception to these changes now than there have been?

F: You mean under Mr. Clifford instead of Mr. McNamara.

P: No, I'm thinking of time, really, say, within the last few years.

F: Oh, back in 1961 we were all getting to know each other, you know, the military and the civilians, and the civilians among the civilians. Sure it's different today. Both sides have greater confidence in the other side--you know, in their ethics, in their intelligence, in their conception of the public interest, and so on.

P: Do you think Mr. Johnson has a lack of confidence in high level military decisions? The military mind is what I'm aiming at.

F: I don't know. As was clear in our first interview, I haven't had any association directly with the President that amounted to anything, so I don't know what degree of confidence he has in the military mind.

You know, I don't approach matters like that myself. I doubt very much if he does. I develop confidence in the mind of somebody I know or I don't develop it. But it isn't because he's got a uniform on. It's because of the observable quality of what comes out of his head. If it's just a lot of empty balloons, whether they are military or civilian, I soon discard him and I suppose the President is the same way. He's a remarkable man, our President, although as I say I haven't seen much of him personally. I must say that in every way that has come to my attention, he has been for the right, the rational, the correct, the honest course of action. His

range of interests is great. He has hammered hard on improving the lot of the career force, for example, the career civilian. He has been very respectful of the importance of the civil service. He's been just a driving man on getting more young people into government and into responsible positions. When I was involved in the civil works program with all of its political implications, there was never any funny business from the President on jimmying the figures.

P: What's the civil works program?

F: That's the Army rivers and harbors program--the dams and so on. He's had an unbearable, you know, five years. He's been criticized and reviled and he's had a tough time. I think he's a great man, and I'm just dreadfully sorry that things have turned out to be a mess under his administration. We've got a tormented, divided nation. It's ironic that this should have occurred under his administration because he brought so many talents, so many right instincts to the task.

I think I know why we are in this situation, as a nation, but I wouldn't regard this oral history, as far as I'm part of it, as complete if I didn't say these things about the President. I don't know where he will rest in the judgment of history as a President. But from what I've been able to observe--the Viet Nam war aside--he has been just and for the right and unflagging in his devotion to compassionate and rational government. He's a good man.

P: Mr. Fitt, do you have any further comments on anything that we have covered regarding this, or any areas that we could have left out, or your position as Assistant Secretary of Defense for Manpower and Reserve?

F: No, I don't think so. I'll probably think of some things after you've left. I will get, as you say, to read the transcript of this, and I assume

I have an unlimited amount of time to add to it.

P: May I turn this off unless you want this on the transcript?

F: Sure, you can turn it off.

P: Thank you.

F: All right.

I have an unlimited amount of time to add to it.

P: May I turn this off unless you want this on the transcript?

F: Sure, you can turn it off.

P: Thank you.

F: All right.

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By Alfred B. Fitt

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