INTERVIEW I

DATE: June 3, 1969

INTERVIEWEES: ARTHUR E. GOLDSCHMIDT and ELIZABETH WICKENDEN (Mrs. Goldschmidt)

INTERVIEWER: PAIGE MULHOLLAN

PLACE: The Goldschmidts' home, 544 East 86th, New York City

Tape 1 of 2

M: You don't have to talk into it [the recorder] or anything. It will pick you up anywhere you are. These are machines that Mr. Johnson acquired, as I understand it, for the convention last summer. Then they weren't used for that, so they were available when we started.

To begin with, let's just identify you. You're Arthur Goldschmidt and your current position is United States Representative to the United Nations Economic and Social Council.

G: No, I resigned that with the change of administration.

M: Oh, you're out of that.

G: Yes, I'm a free man for the first time in thirty-five years.

M: I was going to say, your career as a government slave goes back for some time. And now you're out of it.

G: Yes.

M: But you did serve in that position for--

G: Two years, a little over two years.

M: Two years, and before that you were connected with the special fund operations of the United Nations.

G: I was with the United Nations, yes.

M: Since what--early 1950s?

G: Early fifties, yes. Before that I was with the United States government from the summer of 1933 to 1950 when I was loaned to the United Nations for a year.

M: Loaned! (Laughter)

G: I really was, on leave of absence, and then for another year. By that time I had gotten so interested in it that I didn't want to come back.

M: Your background is Texas, I believe.

G: I was born and raised there and my mother still lives there, but I've been away for forty years, really.

M: Like Mr. Johnson. He's a Texan, only he's lived in Washington for thirty years.

(Interruption--Mrs. Goldschmidt comes into the room)

G: To start this off, it was in 1935 when I took my wife down to Texas to meet my family.

M: Oh, you weren't from Texas?

W: No, purely a ringer.

M: I was born in Arkansas. You can't ever be a Texan unless you were born there either. No matter how long you lived there, it doesn't count. I know what you mean.

G: We were then working for Harry Hopkins' outfit in 1935 and went down to San Antonio to see my family. We'd been married in 1933 but she hadn't met them, except my mother.

We stopped in Austin to see the relief administration people; they're the people who were involved with the various organizations that were headed by Harry Hopkins. I'd rather like to have her tell this story because she was the one who wanted to see the then-NYA administrator.

M: You even go back before congressional days. That's as far as you can go.

G: Yes. He always claimed that he knew me when he was an assistant to Congressman Kleberg, but I don't remember it. Of course at that time, you know, I thought I was terribly important and a mere congressional assistant wouldn't have been anybody I'd have remembered anyway! (Laughter)

M: That's right.

G: You know, we were these lucky people who had got down in the very early days of the New Deal and had rather responsible jobs at a very young age, and did have a lot of congressional liaison. But I don't remember that.

My first recollection of him was this visit we spent in Austin when he was NYA administrator. It was such a typical story I'd like to have Wicky tell you.

M: Okay, I'll have her tell that when she comes back in.

G: But my next contact with him was when I worked--it was just an ad hoc assignment where a bunch of southerners got together and wrote a rather famous report on the South.* In fact, Roosevelt asked for it through the NEC--Lowell Mellett's outfit. We wrote this little yellow pamphlet on the back porch of my home in Georgetown.

* Report on Economic Conditions of the South, U.S. Govt. Printing Office, 1938.

(Mrs. Goldschmidt enters again)

M: He says he wants you to tell this story because you were the one who wanted to go down and see the NYA Director Johnson at that time.

W: Actually we had stopped [because] I worked for Aubrey Williams and I was mainly concerned at that time with the FERA and the WPA that was just beginning. But, of course, Aubrey Williams was the director of the National Youth Administration and Lyndon Johnson was at that time the Texas director of the NYA. So we stopped in the headquarters in Austin and went in to see the Director of the WPA, and the word came down that Mr. Johnson wanted to see me. I went up to see him and that was the first that we had met him, Very characteristically, he had a long list of unresolved problems with headquarters.

M: That you were supposed to take care of for him.

W: He handed me the list and he said, "You get on the phone to your boss, Aubrey Williams, and get me answers to these questions." I talked to him a little bit so I understood what was involved, and I did call Aubrey Williams and I think I probably got answers to most of them. But that was our first meeting with Lyndon Johnson. It wasn't so very long after that that he came to Congress.

M: That was in 1936. He came in 1937.*

W: Was it 1937?

M: To fill an unexpired term.

W: So there must have been a good many intervening occasions while he was still in the NYA that I probably had some contact with him, but they're not sufficiently vivid in my mind to remember them until he

* It was 1935 when we drove to Texas. AG

came to Washington. Then from that point forward we both had our own parallel lines of communication.

M: Was this mostly social in the late thirties?

G: No, it wasn't social at all.

W: It was social, but it was also occupational.

G: In Washington, you don't have social without occupational.

W: I've discovered that. That's a good point.

G: I'll give you the occupational things. In the first place, my first contact with him was when I was on this group of people, a bunch of southerners that wrote the report on economic conditions in the South which I recommend all historians, particularly from Arkansas, read. It's a document that was produced to try to bring the South into the rest of the economy of the country. It was pointing out the difficulties that the South was having because it was not homogenized as part of the American economy. A group of us wrote this at the request of the President; some one of our group sold it to the President, and he thought it was a good idea, particularly with the elections coming up in 1938 and all the recalcitrant southerners that he was having trouble with on New Deal legislation.

He got hold of a lot of liberal southerners including LBJ who was one of FDR's coming young men and, through him, got some of the people listed on a group that was going to meet under the chairmanship of Professor Frank Graham. They were going to take what we wrote and rewrite it. Then it was going to be made public and in that way get a little publicity for the needs of the South, particularly support

of the TVA-type thing, housing, farm security, all the things that the South needed particularly.

I remember those meetings very well because we wrote this report, as I say, on my back porch in Georgetown mostly, and worked like dogs on it. Then we had the meeting of these distinguished southerners from all over the South including, I think, two or three that were put on at Johnson's suggestion. I remember Carl White, who was also on the LCRA board. One of them was the guy that was the Braniff president; his name was Smith, I think. Anyway, liberal southern businessmen or labor people. The only people from Congress that were there--there were no government officials in the group, but Johnson and Brooks Hays and several other liberal congressmen appeared there to listen in.

M: That's about the list at that time.

G: No, there were one or two others. I don't remember whether Lister Hill was one or not, I think he may have been, and John Sparkman may have been.

W: Pepper, was Pepper there?

G: Claude Pepper I'm sure was there, but he was in the Senate.

Anyway, as I recall, that was my first contact with Johnson of a quasi-official nature. Then I went to work shortly after that for the Public Works Administration. I think Johnson must have asked Ickes to have me work particularly on the lower Colorado River work. He was just getting zeroed in on that problem and they were having a whole series of problems. The immediate one was the flood that they had. It was causing a lot of political difficulty, particularly since the power

companies picked it up and blew it up into a man-made flood. They said that the dams caused the flood, which was a lot of nonsense but it was a very political fight we were undertaking.

In the power division of Public Works, I worked very closely with him. I was down in Austin quite a bit. I went there first on the investigation of the flood. Then there were just a series of municipal elections with respect to public power in all the little communities around the lower Colorado River. We were fighting the Texas Power and Light in the North and the Insull crowd from the West.

M: A formidable group.

G: They all kind of converged in Central Texas where the LCRA took a bite out of each of their territories as a public power area. As you know, it is a very large area now served entirely as a publicly owned public utility.

And it was in those years of real political battles that our friendship was formed. We were both quite young. He's a year or two older than I. And [when] you have a bunch of political battles like that, you sort of remember each other.

M: Who else lasts on into the more important part of his career?

G: The most important person at that period was Alvin Wirtz, who was the general counsel of the Lower Colorado River Authority and a man of enormous capacities, and a person who I think had a great deal to do with the forming of Johnson and of myself. I think I was enormously influenced by Senator Wirtz. He was one of those country boy lawyers, but. . . .

M: Rural states have those kinds.

G: Yes, a professional country boy, but he was extraordinarily sophisticated and intelligent and liberal in a populist kind of way personally.

M: Yes, I wanted to ask you about that. You said a group of liberal businessmen and liberal southern congressmen. Was it clearly understood by the people at the time that Johnson fell into the liberal bloc?

G: He was expected to. As a matter of fact, he ran as the only man in the race supporting FDR all the way, including the court-packing fight. That put him in immediate friendly relations with Ickes, who was very strong on the court issue, and a lot of other of the more left wing, if you want, New Dealers. So he was expected to be. Another thing, he was a friend of Maury Maverick's, who was an old friend of my family. So he was considered in the liberal camp. It wasn't until he got in the Senate that there was a feeling on the part of some people from time to time that he trimmed a bit on his liberalism.

M: What did that do to him in Texas? Was there a sufficient liberal bloc in Texas?

G: It didn't hurt him when he was in the Tenth District because the Tenth District is a bunch of professors like yourself who are likely to be more liberal. And then he did so much for the district.

I never saw a guy as thorough in working for his constituents. One thing that Johnson taught me, and I'm sure Wicky has some things to say about this, too, was that he was so thoroughly whatever he was; he was very thorough in doing his job. The Tenth District got the first public housing, it got the first this, the first that, and it got it because Johnson worked

at it. But in a lot of little ways. For instance, Johnson sent every newly married couple a letter; he sent every woman with a new baby a copy of Infant and Child Care. He'd currycomb the material available in the Government Printing Office and see to it that the people who were interested in this or that had gotten it. He was a very thorough representative of that district. I don't think he could have ever been shaken out of that district because he was doing the kind of job that a congressman really ought to do.

Then the LCRA fight put him in the newspapers a great deal because that was a real battle against the interests. There's enough of that kind of liberalism in Texas, and I don't mean to suggest that he wasn't shot at. I'm sure he was shot at a great deal from the conservative side, but it was possible in the Tenth District to do what you couldn't do as a senator. Those of us that knew him always said that when he got on to a national scene that whatever people felt about his Senate career being less than liberal would disappear, and I think that's true.

M: One of the questions I wanted to ask was whether or not you thought the goals he set perhaps for himself or perhaps for his people in the thirties were consistent over the long haul. From what you say there, it apparently means you do.

G: Johnson used to say when we'd push him real hard on something--and I consider myself and he considers me left of him--"Now wait a minute. The first thing you've got to do is to get elected. This isn't going to work."

But then in the Congress he was the same way. Wicky, you had some experience with his efforts to help you with NYA legislation.

M: After he was a congressman now.

W: Yes. Once he went to Congress he became our really chief helper to the extent that he could in his situation. I mean by that he wasn't on the committees that we dealt with, but--

M: He was a good tactician.

W: But I've always been concerned with the Congress all these years, am still.

G: She's the only person I know who has read the Congressional Record consistently every day for thirty-five years.

M: That's a record that I don't know whether to envy or not. (Laughter)

W: Certainly a great deal of what I've learned about the legislative process I've learned from him, and dealt with him constantly on both NYA and WPA problems. He became very quickly a master tactician. A friend of mine who later worked for the Legislative Reference Service when Johnson was the majority leader in the Senate said, "He played on the Senate as a master organist would play on an organ." But he was already doing that in the House. He knew so totally how to get from the Congress--and the House is a very unmanageable body for most people to deal with, but he knew how to extract every possible vote.

So that, for example--I don't know how much you know about the legislative process, but we always operated on an appropriations bill. And that meant that all the major decisions were taken in the committee of the whole House. But afterward we would challenge through his efforts

every decision that went against us when they came out of the committee as a whole. And that's a very difficult thing to do. But repeatedly votes were reversed. I think really in my own estimation his greatest technical achievement was in the legislative process.

M: He was interested, in this case, in problems that were not Tenth District problems, but wider scope than that, in helping you with such problems?

W: Yes, definitely. It was partly because of his own early association with the NYA program, which was part of the WPA program, so he was totally committed to it. And he was always extremely close and loyal to his old associates, so that he looked upon this agency as being his own home base and he fought very hard for it nationally, not just in his own district or his own state.

M: How important was his relationship with FDR? That's one that has been debated by his critics and admirers alike. Was he really pretty close to President Roosevelt, do you think?

G: I think he was, in a lot of ways. In the first place, I think the President was kind of tickled to get a liberal from Texas and liked his sort of gung ho qualities. And secondly, I think Johnson was very astute in making friends with the second-string people as well as the name people, ourselves included. Particularly with the cabinet people, he was on a good basis with Ickes, but he went below Ickes to Tom Corcoran and Ben Cohen and--

W: Jim Rowe, who later became very close to him. But at that time Jim was one of a large group of young mainly lawyers, though we don't

happen to be lawyers. But the bulk of them were lawyers who were the technicians of the New Deal, the people who drafted the legislation.

M: These were the White House staff people frequently, Corcoran and Cohen.

W: Some of them were later. They were not originally because, if you'll recall, it was only after the Reorganization Act that they created these so-called "passionately anonymous" assistants. So Roosevelt had to go searching around.

G: And sort of cheating a little bit on this.

W: Tom Corcoran worked for the RFC, and Ben Cohen worked for a thing called the--

G: The National Power Policy Committee.

M: That's still done, too. The day isn't past.

W: But it is true that later Jim Rowe was a White House assistant, but in the early days these people were scattered through the departments.

G: Johnson maintained very close and friendly relationships with a whole mass of people who he was available to, who he called on and asked for things and saw them socially. He saw us, the Fortases--

M: I was going to ask if the Fortases were among the group.

W: Certainly.

G: I'm the one who introduced Abe to Johnson. I'm not sure whether--

M: You knew Mr. Fortas in another connection?

G: Yes, we knew each other from early days, I don't know why. I think we knew Carol first.

W. There was a whole group of us who were at that time very young who had gone to Washington at the same time. We were a kind of group,

not organized, but we knew each other.

One of the things I would say that characterized Johnson as compared with other congressmen was that he has always been extremely clever about using other people's expertise. I don't mean by that that he necessarily exploited them. It was usually a mutual thing. He would call on Tex if he had a problem relating to power or Interior, and he would call on me, and did up to the very end, on anything relating to social welfare in the general sense. He had these people with whom he developed a kind of symbiotic relationship.

G: Yes, I wrote speeches for him. As a matter of fact, one of our difficulties in not being responsive fully to our relationship is that most of the things that I remember are cases of what Wicky says, where he, after I left Washington, wanted my help on something or another. This has just been true over the years. I mean, he'd run into me or I'd see him and he'd ask my help on something. He did this with a wide variety of people, and I don't want to make anything too much of it. But he'd see me and connect me with the power issue or some other issue, civil rights, and ask me to do something.

M: And he'd have other people with whom he had the same [relationship]?

G: I'm sure he did. Yes, of course.

W: Oh, yes, many people. I think there is a little disposition on his part, maybe on all people who go to places of high power and are therefore greatly besieged with petitioners of every sort, that he has some tendency to feel his greatest trust for the people that he has known the longest.

G: I think that's right.

M: It's remarkable how many of the people that he knew in the days you're talking about now were still around to be important to him when he became president. All the names you've mentioned, for example, lived on through his presidency.

W: Yes, though President Kennedy had rather deliberately tried to bring in a new group that was post-New Deal.

G: We kind of felt estranged from the Kennedy group.

W: To some extent, though I happened to serve on a Kennedy task force and I had Kennedy connections. But most of the people that Kennedy used and relied on were then in their forties or even younger, and they had not been through this New Deal period.

When Johnson came in, he sought out to a considerable extent the people that he had known in that period. And because we were so very young, all of us at that time in our twenties, we were still around.

M: It was remarkable to me--I'm in my mid-thirties--when we started this project the number of people that were important at that period in Mr. Johnson's career whom we could still interview.

G: I remember one time when he went to the navy, you know that short time when he went to the navy, he came by our house one Sunday morning. This is a typical LBJ story. He had an absolute sure-fire solution to the West Coast labor trouble. I've forgotten what it was. I've forgotten everything about it except that he had carefully put on his fancy navy uniform and was terribly proud of it. I think it was partly to show off the uniform. Wicky was upstairs with one of our children;

it must have been our first one who is now about your age.

He strode up and down our living room trying to tell me his solution for the West Coast labor problem. I said I didn't think his solution was worth a tinker's dam, and was resistant to it. He has a way of arguing that's rather difficult. He gets ad hominem, ad personam, everything else. And he said, "Oh, you're just a goddamned radical." I said, "Well, maybe so, but it just doesn't sound to me like it'll work. But you shouldn't ask me, I'm not an expert on these things. I don't know a damned thing about it, but you are asking my advice and I'm telling you I don't think it will work."

The argument went on, and I said, "Look, Wicky knows more about this than I do." She was working then part-time for Wayne Coy's outfit and they had to do with manpower problems. I said, "Let's call her down and I won't say a word. You just try to explain this damned thing to her and see if she buys it." So we called her down and he gave her the pitch and she said, "Well, you know, that didn't work in England. They tried it." Typically he said, "All right, now you both admit you don't know much about it. Who knows the most about what happened in England on this thing?" And Wicky said, "Eric Biddle who's just back from England, just got back this week. He's the manpower expert." "How can I get hold of Biddle?" "He usually stays at the Hay-Adams." "Get him on the phone."

M: Right now!

G: Right now. Gets Biddle on the phone and they make a date and he goes off. Having been completely sold on his idea, he was turned around

180 degrees, maybe not quite, but anyway he was turned around enough so that he was out to find the solution, not his solution, but a solution.

This was the kind of thing he does. He's an awfully difficult guy to argue with because he tries every trick in the book to trip you up or to convince you of whatever he's trying to convince you of. But if you stand your ground and you know a little bit more than he does, he was able--I mean, there was no reason for him to ask us about this. We were neither particularly expert witnesses. But he knew that we were honest and would give him an honest answer and wouldn't butter him up because he was in a navy uniform or because he was--

W: He always has had a remarkable absorptive capacity for picking people's brains, drawing from them, arguing partly to force them to defend themselves, their position, and oftentimes not seeming to listen. I think this is one of the things that disconcerts many people. He has such a capacity for concentration and seeming withdrawal from the person who's speaking to him, they don't realize that he's sopping it all up.

G: I don't know which is worse though, when he's listening actively and arguing with you or when he's listening passively and appearing to be ignoring you. Both of them are very trying.

W: It is very disconcerting and many people are totally thrown by it. On the other hand, I think they underestimate his capacity to absorb facts. He has a fantastic memory, and he somehow sorts things out in his mind in a way that he retains.

M: Even his critics I think gave him credit for that.

W. Yes. I remember when he had just become president and we were at his house at The Elms before he moved into the White House. He was obviously terribly absorbed and people were talking around the table about all kinds of things. I somehow let fall an idea that I had been interested in, which was to the effect that the Supreme Court was going to solve the problem of the use of federal funds in a non-discriminatory fashion, and that actually it might not be necessary for Congress to legislate. Of course, they did under Title VI in the Civil Rights Act, but the North Carolina case relating to Hill-Burton funds was then pending. All the time that people were talking, he was eating, paying attention to food, but he kept saying, "Tell me more. Explain it to me again. What is it you're saying? What is the case?" My whole argument of course was that people like Lister Hill would be taken off the spot once the Supreme Court gave that decision. Then he said to me, "Write me a memorandum." All of this was in the course of a dinner table conversation with infinite distractions. Yet all the time he was absorbing.

M: He was working even though it was social.

G: It was sort of a family affair. The only people who were there were the Fortases and the Valentis and ourselves, but it was also a kind of a reminiscent affair.

W: But it's typical of the way he does things. He picks out of a situation, he has the capacity to discard or to almost ignore everything that does not serve his purposes and to concentrate an enormous

absorptive capacity on what does serve his purpose.

G: And a terribly disconcerting memory. He quotes you back to yourself.

M: I was going to say, what happens if you give him strong advice and it turns out later to have been wrong? Does he remember this and perhaps listen to you with a little less attention next time?

G: I think the short answer to that is that I've never given him bad advice.

M: I put my foot in that.

W: I could answer on the reverse of that: an occasion when he didn't take advice and subsequently felt he'd made an error.

M: When you gave him advice that turned out to have been good advice that he did not take, does he come back to you and say, "Well, I should have taken it," or does he--?

W: Not precisely, but I know of at least one really very important situation where he subsequently felt he would have done better.

M: Can you tell me about that?

W: No, I don't want to go into it in detail.

M: You can restrict this.

W: It has to do with the poverty program. I was one of the critics of the poverty program.

G: This can be restricted.

M: This can be restricted forever, or as long as you want it to be. You get to read it over and edit it out.

W: I have done this before and when I read what I said I was appalled. But it had to do with the formulation of the original poverty program with which I was not in agreement.

M: And Mr. Johnson thought that it did not turn out like it might have?

W: Yes.

M: What about when you argue with him too strongly, as you may have done in that case? Did that cost friendships occasionally?

W: It might have, but in that particular case my efforts were chiefly through third parties so it didn't come to that. I was mainly communicating with him first through Walter Jenkins and, to some extent, through Abe Fortas, and to some extent, perhaps more so, through Willard Wirtz and Mike Feldman and Wilbur Cohen. But the main fact was that the total array of forces that were not in agreement with me were so overpowering that it really didn't come to a question of my arguing with him.

G: I've never had any unpleasantness with Johnson other than the problem that one has in arguing with a guy that you find it difficult to argue with. I've disagreed with things he has done, and so forth. I must say I've never made a point of disagreeing with him particularly. I think I would kind of guess that he knows pretty well about how someone like Wicky or I feel about almost everything that is public policy.

W: He teases us a lot.

G: Yes, there's a great deal of teasing.

W: But I've never personally, though I've had a great many dealings with him especially in the period he was in Congress, had this ill temper that people sometimes refer to. I have been scolded, berated by some members of Congress so it isn't that I don't know what it can be like, but never from him.

M: That's an interesting point.

W: But he would tease us. For instance, he told Jim Rowe that the only time he'd ever really gotten in trouble as senator was when he let me, and Jim to a lesser extent, talk him into voting for the creation of the Federal Security Agency which was opposed by the medical society in Texas for a now seemingly very obscure reason. But it was a big issue. And he often will refer to things like that, "Well, you got me in a lot of trouble with your--"

G: He loves to kid me about the time I was in trouble with Martin Dies.

M: He's easy to be in trouble with.

G: He kids me about my being a radical and so forth.

W: I've always thought that was very good-natured.

G: I've never been on the receiving end of any of his unpleasantness, but I've been present when other people have.

M: I was going to say, he has, with some fairly close friends, had some fairly substantial [fallings out]. Jim Rowe is a good example of it. He went two or three years apparently, didn't he, at a time when they were not very good friends after Rowe got involved with Humphrey's campaign in 1960 or thereabouts?

G: I wouldn't know about that. I think Jim has been in and out of favor with him, but I never knew that they had any real--

W: He of course is extremely sensitive to what he considers disloyalty, but if he ever had such feelings toward either of us we didn't know about them.

G: And we'd know about them, directly or indirectly.

W: We were never conscious of them.

G: Of course I must say that one of the things--I mean I would not have liked to have worked very closely with him. I've liked all the working relationships we've had because they were at arm's length. I don't think I would have liked it from day-to-day because I think he was terribly tough on the people that are working closely with him. Jim was actually in his office, you know, where he was under daily pressure. I think Johnson has this kind of mixture of almost ruthless exploitation of the people he works with, and then a great sense of guilt about it. These two things keep going back and forth, a kind of being real tough on them and then being terribly nice to them, doing all kinds of nice things for them, sometimes quite anonymously. But he can be a terrific pressure on people, and I just wouldn't like that kind of working conditions.

M: A lot of his friends apparently felt that way. Horace Busby never would stay around in the White House for very long at a time, and people of this nature.

G: I just literally didn't want to be in that kind of a situation.

W: The White House of course is a voracious taskmaster under anybody, but with Johnson's terrific sense of drive he made it more so.

G: When he has asked me to do things I've done them, and I've thrown myself into them at considerable personal discomfort to get the job done quickly, but I just felt I didn't want that kind of a life. I must say I wasn't pressured by anybody.

W: I think that one thing we probably should make clear is the curious

periodicity of our relationships with Johnson and with Lady Bird, too. And this was not due to any falling out, it was just the circumstances of our lives.

When he first went to Washington as a congressman, because Tex worked constantly on the power problems in his district and I worked constantly on the legislative problems of the WPA and the NYA in which he was very much interested, then we had a really very close continuing relationship. When he went to the Senate, it became considerably diminished. Then we came to New York. So during the period when he was in the Senate, because I became really a very active promoter, shall we say, of social security legislation, from time to time I would be in communication with him on that.

M: You were not in the same town for that ten years.

W: Not after 1950, but up to 1950 we were.

G: But we really saw him very little up in the Senate. Well, we saw him socially occasionally, but the only time I can recall my having any dealings with him in the Senate was when I was writing that national resources report on the Marshall Plan* and he was worried [about] what I was going to say about the oil business. He called me up from time to time, but then every damned senator in the place was worried about something or other and called up.

W: From one period of time, and my sense of timing is a little poor, we used to serve a rather peculiar role in the Johnsons' lives. I think it was partly because my husband came from Texas. He often had visiting constituents from Texas that were his supporters, the people that--

* National Resources on Foreign Aid, U.S. Govt. Printing Office, 1947.

this is typical of every congressman and senator--he would want to take out dancing or something and we would often be corraled into visiting these.

G: That was in the very early period.

M: During his congressional period.

G: I don't really think we saw much of him in the Senate. When he became Senate majority leader, there were two times when--I don't know whether it was at the same time or not; of course my time sense is bad. I really intended to do a little research on this beforehand.

M: That's all right. Times can be verified.

G: I think it was in 1956 when I was going down to Washington on U.N. business, and the Assistant Secretary of State Francis Wilcox, urged me to come and see him urgently. He told me that the contribution to the U.N. Technical Assistance Program was in some doubt. I knew Fran had told me a couple of months before that we were going to have easy sledding that year.

I said, "What's the matter?" You know,Wilcox knew all these guys by their first names because he came from the Hill. He said, "Well, it's Senator Knowland. He has decided that we're giving too much to the U.N." He said, "I've talked to him; Dulles has talked to him; Eisenhower has talked to him." So I said, "Well, Fran, what the hell do you expect me, a worn-out Democrat, to do?" He said, "Well, you know Lyndon Johnson, don't you?" I said, "Sure." He said, "I've decided that the only guy who can get Knowland to come across on this thing is Lyndon Johnson." Knowland was then minority leader, I think

it was that period. It may have been 1955, but I think it was 1956.

So I called up and said I wanted to see the Senator, and Walter [Jenkins] called me back during the day and said that he couldn't see me in his office, but would I come up and drive out to his house with him and have a drink while he got dressed for some speech or something. I said, "That's wonderful. There will be no telephones, and we can talk." I right away told him what it was about, and he began kidding me with, "You're not supposed to do this, are you? You're an international civil servant!" And I said, "Well, I'm not going it. I'm just carrying a message from the Assistant Secretary of State to you."

M: Did he perform then?

G: The interesting thing about it, I remember it so well because in the first place he laughed like hell. He said, "This is a hell of a way to run an administration. They have to come and get a guy from New York to come down and talk to me of the opposite party because even the President can't control this fellow." He was making jokes about that. He said to me, "You know, Knowland is very serious about this thing. He thinks it's a matter of principle." He already knew. He knew about things, you know, although it was a very minor issue.

M: Among the great spectrum, yes.

G: He said, "Knowland thinks it's a matter of principle. We only give 31 point something per cent on the regular appropriation to the U.N. Why should we give 45 per cent for this? And I said, "Now, Lyndon, just because you pay a certain amount of taxes doesn't mean you have

to give that same percentage to the Community Chest. This is like the Community Chest. Anyway, we're not giving the most." He said, "That's not true. We are giving the most." I said, "Well, sure, on the theory that white horses eat more than black horses because there are twice as many white horses, we are. Canada gives more, Denmark gives more." I listed all the countries that on a per capita basis gave more than we did.

That bugged him. He said, "You mean Canada gives more than we do?" I said, "Yes, they give such an amount, and they've got 14 million people. I had a whole list of countries. He said, "Well, I'll see what I can do about it. I can't promise you. Knowland is pretty adamant about this thing." I said, "All I want you to do is get the facts from them. I'm not giving them to you. I'm just opening the door for Francis Wilcox. I'm not lobbying for anybody. He kidded me about that.

And he did, he got Knowland to go along.

M: He could deliver if he decided he wanted to.

G: Yes. Incidentally, he never promised anything that he didn't deliver. He was awfully careful about what he'd say he'd do. But what he said he'd do, he did.

W: In 1956 we got through some very remarkable social security amendments that he certainly helped maneuver through. The whole legislative process under the Eisenhower period was very peculiar because things were constantly being put through over the opposition of the President. People should go back and study those years now because--

G: One of my newspapermen friends who was on Johnson's airplane told about his going to West Virginia during his first presidential [campaign] on some poverty thing, and having big crowds and made an enormous success. After a long and hard day, he came up front to the newspaper people in the plane and was obviously very belligerent and he said, "I guess you fellows are now going to write up, 'This is another great domestic victory for Johnson, who doesn't know anything about foreign policy.' I'll have you know that Eisenhower couldn't have got this through and that through and that through if it hadn't been for the majority leader." He just gave them a blow-by-blow description of what he knew about foreign policy. The newspaperman who told me about it said, "You know, it was really quite convincing."

He [Johnson] had had a couple under his belt when he did it and probably shouldn't have done it. He always was annoyed at people saying he didn't know anything about foreign policy because, after all, in that majority leader job he had to push all the Eisenhower stuff though.

M: You said that there was a kind of periodicity. Then did you come back in?

W: Yes. It wasn't really that we were unfriendly, it was just the circumstances of our lives seemed to move us apart. He went to the Senate and became leader.

M: He was minority leader for two years and then majority leader after 1954.

W: We then in 1950 came to New York. But there were contacts. I had contact with him in 1956 and occasionally at other times, I , for

instance, was the person who introduced him to Wilbur Cohen. He always associates me with Wilbur Cohen because I had worked with Wilbur Cohen.

But then when he became vice president, there were a couple of times when he sought Tex. out, on civil rights particularly.

G: I can't remember what the civil rights thing was, but he made me take a look at his bill at the time.

M: At his bill? When he was vice president?

W: No.

G: No, before when he was majority leader.

W: Before the vice presidency. He had a bill for a sort of conciliation service, wasn't it?

G: No, it had to do with voting.

W: He always was very interested in voting.

G: He was always keen on voting. He said, "Once the Negroes vote, there won't be all of this whoop-de-do." I think he was absolutely right about that. So he had this bill, and it also had a conciliation service and a couple of other things in it. But he made me take it and try it out on what he called my "liberal friends," that business. He said, "I want you to try this out on your liberal friends in New York." So I gave it to Helen Douglas, I gave it to Telford Taylor, I gave it to Ben Cohen.

W: Ben did some work on that.

G: I gave it to Ralph Bunche. Just to get their views on it. And of course, they were all kind of suspicious of Johnson on this civil

rights thing.

M: I was going to say, was it liberal enough for them?

G: What they said was--I remember Helen saying, "This is perfectly all right if it isn't a substitute for. .whatever the then going more radical thing was." "If this is in addition to it." But I really think they were mainly suspicious of a southerner's attack on the thing because it was a very pragmatic and I think probably, looking back on it, a very sensible approach.

Although I still remember at the time Johnson saying, "The Supreme Court never should have decided this on the school issue, because that's not the way to have done it. It should have been on the voting issue. The school thing is too intimate and too complicated and too expensive." [I remember his] making some point about this. I remember relaying that bit of senatorial wisdom to Abe, and he said, "Well, too bad the Supreme Court couldn't wait around for the issue to come up the way Lyndon Johnson wants it to come up." That was one time.

There were just curious ways in which we were in touch. When he was vice president, I suppose the most historically important thing was one time I was there in 1961 and I finished my business, and I literally hadn't any reason to do it except I hadn't seen Johnson for a long time and I'd heard that he had a very fancy office and I thought it would be fun to go visit him. There was a great deal of talk about his arrangements up there. So I was shuffling back and forth, and I called up his office and talked to Walter Jenkins and said, "Look, I haven't got a damned thing I want from the Vice President, but I'm in town and if

he's free, I'd like to come pay my respects, say howdy. I don't want anything and if it doesn't work, I'll call next time I'm in town.

He said, "Wait a minute." Then he said, "The boss says he'll buy you lunch if you'll eat hamburgers." I said, "Fine, I'll come up." So we ate hamburgers and cokes at the desk and talked about our children. He bugged me, why wasn't I back now that the Democrats were in, and I had to remind him that I hadn't left because the Democrats had left. I had left two years before Truman. He said, "You ought to be working on this AID business." And I said, "No, I have more fun in the U.N. AID business." He said, "Oh, that's peanuts compared to this." I said, "Yes,but there are certain things we can do that the U.S. can't do." As usual, "Like what?" he said. I said, "Well, there are things like the Mekong development. I described that. I described several other things. I talked to him about this and we talked about our children. We really just had kind of a sock feet reunion. It was fun. I couldn't have stayed more than an hour, probably less than that. He showed me pictures of his trip to Africa. It was just a good, kind of fun thing. I hadn't seen him for years.

When I got back to New York a couple of days later the New York Times had a little box that they were talking about sending him out to Saigon. So I sat down and wrote him a letter, sort of thanking him for the hamburgers and reminding him of the Mekong thing. I suggested to him that if he went to Saigon he should stop in Bangkok and see the people who were running it, describing what the project was and kind of reminding him because I thought he might have forgotten. All just in a page.

Well, he did. He messed up his whole official schedule by insisting on going by the Mekong offices and talking to people there. Ken Young, who was then ambassador, told me that he was half an hour late for an important businessmen's lunch and everything else.

But I always thought that was a terrible failure because there never was anything in the newspapers about it. My whole purpose, as I said in my letter, was that it'd get good publicity for this Mekong scheme, which was a great scheme, and it wouldn't do him any harm. But there never was a line in the newspapers about it.

I know this is true because five years later I suddenly got a call at the U.N. saying the President wanted me to come down and talk to him about Southeast Asia. This was just before the Baltimore speech.

M: I was just going to say go ahead and carry the Mekong thing out. You were involved in that all the way through.

G: The funny thing about it was that he did follow the script. As Wicky always said to me, "It's always good when you don't get an answer to one of your letters to the President because that's a sure sign he's doing something about it." And it's almost been true of everything I've ever dropped into the hopper with him.

But he asked me to come down and bring Wicky and spend the night at the White House.

M: When was this in relation to [the speech]? The Baltimore speech was in April of 1965.

G: It was about a month before that, a little less than that, about three weeks before.

The Baltimore speech wasn't actually [mentioned]. I don't think anyone knew exactly for what we were doing this. He was going to make a speech. I don't think it had been set at Baltimore when I was there. It was only some days afterwards that the Baltimore speech came up so that I knew it had a connection with the Baltimore speech after the fact, but not at the time. It was to be some new policy statement on Vietnam.

So we went down. As a matter of fact, he wanted us to come that night. It was about four in the afternoon--

M: "Come down here right now!"

G: We had some guests here for dinner. I said, "Do I have to come tonight?" Of course, I can, but we're having guests for dinner and it would be very inconvenient. Couldn't I come first thing in the morning?"

The word got back. My God, so many people called me, I didn't know who in the hell I was dealing with. It was one of those things. He evidently asked several people to get in touch with me. But it was worked out that we could come in the morning. We went through with our dinner party and took the first shuttle out of here in the morning and went over to the White House.

I sat around almost all day. I never saw him all that day because that was the night that the embassy had been bombed and everything was blowing loose all over the place at Saigon. But I talked to Bundy.

M: McGeorge or William?

G: McGeorge. And I talked to several of the White House people. Bird called me up and said to go swimming with her, and I said, "No, I want to be here when the President has a minute." I just ate a sandwich

at my desk and began writing out things that I thought, kind of making a note, getting a feel of what they were doing. It was a curious kind of a situation.

Goodwin was working on this, and I was in his office, the little office off of Goodwin's office, looking through the material. They were studying the papers to find out whether there had been anything in newspapers about Johnson's having been at the Mekong headquarters. They all asked me whether he had. I said, "Sure. I knew about it. I have a copy of the letter." I didn't have it with me, but I said I could send one.

I spent all that day really just not doing much of anything in this great rush. Wicky went on about her business, and that night we were invited to a big dinner they were having at the White House for all the mayors. After dinner Bird and the President took us upstairs to our rooms, and I said, "You know, Mr. President, I'm available any time. I've been here all day." He said, "Yes, I know," and he was sort of embarrassed. He said, "I just haven't had a minute to get at this thing." I said,"Well, when would you like to see me?" I was scared to death he was going to say, "Right now." You know, it was eleven-thirty or something like that. He said, "The first thing in the morning."

Then the first thing in the morning was between eight and eight-thirty. I went down to his bedroom and was there until twelve-thirty. I must say it was a fascinating morning, because he carried on all kinds of other business. I'm not suggesting that I had four hours of uninterrupted presidential ear.

M: Nobody ever did, I don't think.

G: What I had was, I followed him while he shaved and while he went to the can, while he showered, and those were the few times when I had him without interruption. But all kinds of phone calls came through and people came in with papers and stuff like that.

But as we talked about all kinds of things, including the U.N. and the U.N. policy, I made a big pitch that "You shouldn't talk about doing something for the Mekong or Southeast Asia alone with the pending attitude toward the Asian Bank." I'd discovered that the Asian Bank, the U.S. was very cool on. I said this was nonsense; that if the only way the people could ever get any help from the U.S. was to have a war, you will start wars all over Asia. "The Asian Bank is not going to cost us very much and for God's sake, let's support it so that we can then establish the fact that we're not merely interested in people who are at war."

M: You said that you had discovered that the U.S. was cool toward it. Does that mean that Johnson was cool toward it?

G: I didn't think he knew about it. I didn't know anything about it. They'd just been cool toward it all along, partly because the World Bank was cool toward it at one time; they thought it was a rival. It was just one of those silly things that gets bureaucrated into a position without anybody thinking about it, or some fresh five-year old like me pointing out that "You ought to look at this thing in the way an Asian would look at it."

M: It certainly wasn't too long after that we did begin to support it.

G: That day.

M: That day!

G: Yes. The thing that was interesting, this thing was up in ECAFE * at the time. And unfortunately ECAFE was over as of the day I got there. But they cabled out and had the representative to ECAFE explain his speech, which was against the Asian Bank, as being for the Asian Bank. It was one of those really cockeyed things.

M: "I said what I said but I didn't mean what I said I said." (Laughter)

G: They had to cable, Walter Kotschnig was there. Walter had to have a press conference and in effect change the U.S. position on the Asian Bank.

M: This was in Wellington, wasn't it?

G: That's right.

M: And so you caught that right at the crucial time.

G: Well, not quite at the crucial time. One of the first things I asked when I got down there and I heard, "We're going to do something about this Mekong and Southeast Asia," my first question was, "Where are we on the Asian Bank?" It's such a logical thing. You can't start talking about a great initiative in Southeast Asia when you're opposing a perfectly logical step. After all, we'd had enormous success with the Inter-American Bank which, again, the U.S. originally opposed. It was a U.N. initiative that the U.S. opposed. Eisenhower opposed it and opposed it and opposed it, and finally he gave in and it has been a great success. These regional banks can do a lot of things that the World Bank cannot do.

M: I have to see Mr. [Eugene] Black tomorrow morning at nine o'clock, as a matter of fact.

* ECAFE (Economic Commission for Asia and the Far East)

G: Mr. Black is a very interesting person to see. I think he has been one of the really very remarkable men in what he did for Johnson; I think he has really been, for the U.S. and the world. I wasn't a very strong Black man in his days as president of the World Bank, but when the President appointed him to this job, that man went to work and has become so much more of a statesman in his really broad look at these problems. I'm a terrific Black fan suddenly, but as head of the bank, I found him very sticky and very fishy-eyed.

M: A banker.

G: Yes. I'll tell you a funny story about Black. The President appointed Black after the Baltimore speech right away. In the first place, he said he was going to name a committee, which I always thought was a mistake. I think I told him that, but it was already in the speech. So he named Black. When they asked him about the committee, he said, "Well, Black is the committee." (Laughter)

M: That's really the most efficient kind of committee when you limit it to one that does the job.

G: Black went to work, and I saw him of course at the U.N. end. I was a U.N. official at the start. And before I went to the White House, I'd asked U Thant if he had any objection and whether I should take leave.

W: I think you've left out a rather crucial intermediate step in this picture in terms of your U.N. relationship, and I don't know that you've omitted it on purpose. But when Johnson became president,

before the time of the Baltimore speech, partly, I think, through Abe Fortas' advisory relationship to Johnson--and we have always been very close to Abe--Johnson asked that Tex come down to Washington and take a look at the whole AID picture in his behalf.

M: That was in 1964.

G: It was 1963.

W: Immediately after he became president.

M: Oh, the first month.

W: And at the same time he asked that I do something for him, which is unrelated. But Tex had already had to cross this bridge of whether he, as a U.N. official, could properly become an advisor.

G: To the President, that's right.

M: Don't leave that out.

W: It was at that point that you really sought U Thant's--

G: But I also talked to U Thant at this time. I didn't agree to go to Washington without talking to U Thant. I've always been extremely careful of things like that.

After the assassination Abe was just the President's closest confidant and advisor. Once or twice he called me up to ask about something. He kept warning me, "You'd better be prepared to come down to Washington." I said, "Abe, I don't want to come to Washington, I'm happy where I am. There's nothing I want. I don't want a job. I just don't want to come down there." He said, "The President has said several times, 'you've got to get Tex down here." Finally I said, "Abe, I'd like to come and talk to you about it, so that you

know exactly how I feel about it and you can guide the President's thinking in this matter. Because I think he wants to do me a favor and I just don't want any favors. If he needs my help, I'm prepared to do it, but I don't want him to think that he's doing me any favors. I want to explain my financial situation, the question of my pension, and so forth." There wasn't any job he could give me that would have been a favor to me financially and in terms of security that he was likely to give me. Of course, a cabinet post or putting me on the Supreme Court as the first non-lawyer might have been different. But I wanted to explain this all to Abe so that there wouldn't be any problem about it, and I agreed to fly down. He was terribly busy all the time. He said he would see me on Saturday afternoon if I'd come down. I was just going to take the shuttle down and come back. Abe I think invited me to supper at their house.

Saturday morning Carol called up and said, "The President wants you and Wicky to come down and have dinner with him tonight. You're to bring Wicky and you're to have dinner with him tonight."

W: That was within a week of the assassination.

G: It was before they moved into the White House. This was the time that Wicky was talking about.

I was terribly annoyed. I said, "Carol, I wanted to talk to Abe about this. I don't want to get any of this damned arm-twisting going on." She said, "Well, you'd better come early and have a chance to talk to Abe." I went early, but Abe was tied up with the President and I never got a chance to talk to him about it.

My main problem was that the President kept saying, "What does it take to get you down here? Whose permission do we have to ask? Adlai Stevenson?" He never could understand whether I worked for Stevenson or U Thant. I think it was part of his policy not to understand it. And I was constantly sidestepping this stuff. That evening no propositions were made, except this kind of joking business about coming down. I kept saying, "Mr. President, I've got a job I love. If there's anything you want me to do, I'll do it, but I don't want a job."

M: Don't do me any favors.

G: Don't do me any favors. I didn't put it quite that way, because it would have been ungracious, but I wanted to make it just absolutely clear that I didn't want to come to Washington. And what I didn't want to do, frankly, was go and work in the White House, which is the only thing that would have made any sense. Because I'm not a political figure, he couldn't have appointed me as a cabinet member; a subcabinet member would have been embarrassing because I had known the President better than the cabinet would have. I just didn't want it; I just didn't want to get mixed up in it. We like it here. Our children are here. We have a place in the country. And I just didn't want to move to Washington.

Nothing happened that night, but out of that night there was this call to come down and help on AID. The AID bill that year was in a terrible mess. Kennedy had appointed this nonsensical Clay committee, which was one of the great errors in judgment, and which, by the way, Black served on.

M: I was going to say, Johnson enlarged that to include Black, didn't he?

G: No, Johnson has nothing to do with it. The Clay committee was over when Johnson was in the White House. It had made its lousy report, a stinking report. And not only Black, but a dean from Harvard--he was also supposed to know everything there is to know about AID. [Dean Mason] You know who he is! The guy that worked closely with--

M: Harvard deans are not very well known in the University of Arkansas and University of Texas circles.

G: I'm sorry. I'll think of it. One of the big shots in AID. A hell of a lot of other people were on that that ought to have had their heads examined. Anyway, they got on this silly Clay committee, and Clay of course is a very self-important guy. And he just evidently scared hell out of them or something, because the only guy that didn't vote with Clay was Meany, wasn't it? One of the AFL-CIO people was a negative.

W: I don't remember that report.

G: Just a silly thing. Anyway, the AID bill was in a mess. Passman was in the saddle. This was December. When was Kennedy assassinated?

M: November 22.

G: This was a week later, more than a week later, because it was very shortly after that happened. It was December 16 that I went down there. The bill hadn't gotten through either House. They had this Clay report to kick the daylights out of it. Johnson asked me down to see what he should do.

I did go down. I went down and saw everybody in State and AID. And it was one of the most miserable experiences of my life. It really was a terrible problem. When I got everything lined up, I went in to see the President. I didn't see him [earlier]. It was all worked out through his staff, Mike Feldman and Ralph Dungan, and of course I was an old friend of Dave Bell. I sat there in Clay's ex-office and interviewed all these people, and most of them were trying to figure ways of cutting AID here, there and everywhere else. I finally got hold of Bell, and I said, "Look, if you staff comes in with one other notion of how to cut AID instead of giving me arguments why it ought to stay where it is, I'm going to blow my top. I'm sure that the President didn't ask me to come down here to cut the AID bill. If he'd wanted to do that, he would have asked someone else. If he wanted to sell TVA, he wouldn't ask my advice about it. He knows where I stand on these things. I just think it's silly for you guys to give me all kinds of--as if I were Otto Passman, trying to tell me where you can cut."

They were all in such a trauma. In the first place, they'd all been close to Kennedy, many of them had. Dutton, Bell himself, Poats and Gaud, the whole lot of them felt themselves to be Kennedy people. Johnson was a complete uncertainty to all of them. I don't think Bell had had ten minutes with Johnson before that.

M: No, that's true.

G: The only guy that stood up in that whole week I was there, it seemed to me, was Harriman. He's just as deaf as a post, and impossible as

he is, he was the only really outstanding figure that I [remember].

M: He must have known Johnson pretty well back in the older days.

G: I think he did anyway. At any rate, it wasn't whether he knew the President or not, but whether he stood up for something. Everybody else was in a state of shock, partly through the assassination and the changeover, but partly also through the battering of Congress over the whole year, the appropriations. They were actually operating on continuing resolutions, you know, after six months of the year was past. The appropriations bill was for the year they were already spending the money for.

I went in to see the President after all of this with just notes of what I wanted to say to him. I had decided that I couldn't, in that time, make an assessment of what he ought to do in the long run anyway. All I could do was to tell him what was important. And I also couldn't tell him anything about how to get something through the legislature.

M: He knew about that.

G: That's like teaching grandma to suck eggs in the worst possible way.

So I decided to make my whole pitch on a high moral plane, the importance of this thing to the United States, to our children, and to him as president, to his presidency, and to the world that we all wanted to live in. Real, none of this pap stuff. But I figured this was all I could do. I couldn't say, "You ought to fire this guy and hire this guy." I didn't have enough time or staff to do anything sensible like that.

So I really had a rough time with him, because I kept at him. He kept punching at all the things that were wrong with it. Of course he knew a hell of a lot that was wrong with it. I said, "You know, you've got some awfully good people in that AID set-up." He said, "There are an awful lot of crappy people in that agency. Every congressman who wanted to get rid of his administrative assistant got him in AID." And he began naming them. Of course I knew he was right, and I said, "Sure, you're talking about a few of these political things in the field, but you're not going to find a better man than Dave Bell. I've known him since he was a boy in the Budget Bureau. He's a dedicated guy and he can't be bought or sold by anything. He's doing his damned best to clean the place up. Why he took the job I don't know, except that somebody twisted his arm. He was happy as a clam in the Budget Bureau. You've got to support that guy and you've got to support the people around him. That's it. And what's more, you can't be against AID because it's absolutely necessary to your whole stance in the world."

He kept whamming away and going the low road on who was a jerk and what mistakes they'd make. I said, "That's unimportant. As a matter of fact, I think the place needs cleaning up, sure, but you've got the team to do it. You cannot let this Congress kick you around. I can't tell you how to do it nor how you're going to get out of this mess, but you're in one hell of a mess." You know, it went on those lines.

I then went back and wrote the memorandum after the conversation and left just as fast as I could; I didn't even say goodbye to anybody.

I left the memo with him and I didn't show it to anybody except Dave Bell. I let him read it. It was just two pages. But I didn't leave a copy with anybody else.

A day or two later I talked to Dave Bell and Dave said, "Well, Tex, I saw something that looked a terrible lot like the memo you showed me on the President's desk when he was telling us what we had to do. He went right down the line of what we were going to do and what the attack was going to be."

M: So he did listen.

G: He did. But, oh, what a miserable time I had in that office! I was just sweating, because he's such a bully physically and size--you know, I'm a little guy and he's a big guy, and he really does put you through the wringer. I said something about, "This is one of the most important issues you've got in the administration." He said, "You're the only one that thinks so." (Laughter)

M: Everybody that day was probably going to tell him their issue was the most important.

You said that you did something for him about the same time.

W: Yes, and it's very hard for me to reconstruct it because what I was asked to do never really came to fruition, though it appeared later in many of his speeches. He had an idea that he wanted to set forth a series of goals for the country and then domestically develop a method for their implementation. This was so awkward to try to structure that I worked on it with Wirtz, primarily with Wirtz, and

with Mike Feldman and wrote a lot of memoranda. It was kind of like the old Eisenhower "Goals for America," but he wanted not only to have the goals but to implement them, to have a method of implementation.

I think this later appeared in 1964 in his task force enterprise, of which I was an unhappy member of one. I was on one of those.

M: Which one?

W: I was on income maintenance. It was a very unhappy affair in my observation. I was also on the Kennedy task force, which had an entirely different mission. If you recall, those task forces--he finally did what he had asked me to help work on, and that was to state goals in terms of 1975. That was the assignment that was given. He made a speech, I think at Ann Arbor.

M: A little more than ten year projections.

W: Projections of goals up to 1975 and steps to reach those goals. That was really what he had asked me to work on. It got in a sense absorbed into the poverty program. I know a lot about the poverty program, but that was not specifically what I was asked to do at the time I was asked to do it. The big problem we had, and we worked on it--Wilbur Cohen and Feldman and Wirtz and I were the main people who worked on preparing these memoranda--but the big problem at that time was how could you set up such an enterprise and at the same time you were stating the President's goals involve the departments in what they then were doing. We submitted him a series of memoranda, but they got set aside. But then, as so often with him, as with Tex's thing

on the Mekong, nothing happened at that time.

G: It was from 1961 to 1965.

W: 1964. It was during the period of the campaign.

G: No, 1965. I'm talking about the Mekong.

W: Oh, on yours. I'm sorry, I was trying to reconstruct--

M: But again, this lag between the conception and the execution.

W: I could tell you a lot about the poverty program, but that was not what I worked on and I don't know whether it's germane to your--

M: It's absolutely germane.

W: If you want me to take a few minutes, I'll tell you what happened on that.

M: By all means.

W: Kennedy had a very different approach to legislation. For example, I worked on a Kennedy task force on health and social security, and his mandate was, "Tell me what I'm going to do next year."

M: Tactical, short run.

W: Yes. Actually these task forces were during the period between his election and his taking office. Wilbur Cohen was the chairman of the task force.

G: Ribicoff.

W: No, Ribicoff was the fellow that we went up to Hartford to see, with Ted Sorensen, and so forth.

But I'm only making a comparison because his goal was, "Tell me what I'm to do next year." We did that, and we had remarkable success. Everything that went into our task force report, with one exception,

was achieved. Everything! Not during his presidency, because it was short, but ultimately during the Johnson years everything was achieved with one exception which wasn't perhaps basic. But he had a very pragmatic attitude--I'm speaking of Kennedy--always thinking of the next step ahead. So there were a series of things that he had wanted to get that somehow had fallen by the wayside and were not being taken seriously. Someone, I think perhaps Wilbur Cohen, working with Ted Sorensen said, "Why don't we throw these bits and pieces together into a single package and we'll have a poverty message." Those bits and pieces were going to include the then-called Youth Opportunity Act, which later became the Job Corps and the Neighborhood Youth Corps, but they were at that time in a separate bill that Humphrey had originally sponsored. It was getting nowhere in that period.

Then there were some educational things that were sort of separate from the Elementary-Secondary Education Act. There were some manpower things. And this was the poverty package. So Kennedy set up a committee which included someone from Labor and Wilbur Cohen and Sundquist, who was then in Agriculture, and Moynihan, but these were people all working during the Kennedy years on what was to be a special poverty message.

Robert Kennedy had taken a good deal of interest in the juvenile delinquency program. The juvenile delinquency program had sponsored a series of community programs which in turn had been based on a

program initiated by the Ford Foundation under Ylvisaker called "The Gray Areas Program." They were efforts to deal with juvenile delinquency on a community-wide basis. They had one in Syracuse and one in New Haven and one in Baltimore or Philadelphia and one in St. Louis.

M: These were pilot projects?

W: Yes. And they had one in the Lower East Side, New York--I can't even think of its name, it was the thing Winslow [Carlton] was involved in. Anyway, they had a little thing going down here. The name will occur to me. These were all types of juvenile delinquency programs, and Robert Kennedy had his finger in that pie because the Justice Department had something to do with juvenile delinquency. So he said, "Why don't we try extending this community development idea on to a broader basis, dealing with poverty in its entirety and not just with youth programs?".

So that was the beginning of Community Action.

In the Kennedy days this poverty message had in it a recommendation for some small trial projects, demonstration projects, and the original proposal was that they would try out fourteen of these projects, seven urban and seven rural, and that was all there was to the poverty program.

However, as I say, it had gathered together a number of bits and pieces that the Kennedy programs were lagging in. Sorensen thought the President could give them a boost with a special message. I can't tell you precisely what happened, but I can only conjecture that when Johnson became president, he looked over the total array of the things that

were sort of cooking in various parts of the government to see what there was that he could identify with himself, that seemed to have a particular meaning for him. This poverty program had the looks to him of the old New Deal days.

Tape 2 of 2

W: The transition from Kennedy to Johnson was certainly a fascinating thing. One time I was riding up on an airplane with Mike Feldman, and we were having some discussion of comparisons because Mike was one of the people who worked for both and I had some exposure to both. He said, "Why don't you and I write a book?"

M: Everybody else was.

W: Yes. This was right at that time when everybody [was]. He has got a book somewhere, but it's never come out.

Anyway, he said, "Why don't we write a book jointly? I'll do Kennedy and you do Johnson." I said, "That's a heck of an idea. You take a martyred dead president and I take a controversial live one! It's an unfair bargain."

M: Right. You know who would have come out on top in that collaboration.

W: But this is an interesting aspect. I think that what happened was, as I say, he was looking over all the unfinished business because he had a very difficult problem at that time. He felt an obligation as a successor in the circumstances that he came to the presidency to carry out the Kennedy program. And he did. But he also had a necessity, because he was very conscious of the election coming up, to

establish himself as an individual..

So in looking over the pending business, he seized on this poverty idea. It sounded to him like the kind of thing that he had long been involved in in the thirties and he therefore began to build it up. And it grew and it grew and it grew. Of course Shriver became involved, and there was a committee, and it became a very large enterprise. Especially the Community Action, which had started out as such a small kind of experimental idea, blossomed into what the architects of the Johnson poverty program considered to be the key to the whole thing. That had not been true under Kennedy, although the people who did it were largely Kennedy people.

M: The same people, yes.

W: Now of course Moynihan has come along and taken it apart, and the poor fellow over in the Defense Department who got thrown to the wolves--

M: Yarmolinsky?

W: Yes. He said they never really meant it the way it came out. But these were the architects, these were the people who put it together.

But I think in some ways, like so many other people, this is going to be the key to the people who read all your material, trying to disentangle this very peculiar period and this very interesting personality. Johnson did have a capacity to almost hypnotize people--maybe that isn't the word, but certainly to carry them beyond what might have been their almost cautious judgment when he seized upon something as an idea, as he seized on this poverty program as an idea. The very people who were his architects were carried by his enthusiasm, his drive,

and his ambition, not only in the design of the program but in the speed of its implementation.

G: He got people to do things.

M: But you said the task force was an unpleasant experience.

W: That came later. That was unrelated. Let me reconstruct it for you. My assignment, when I was asked at the time he was working on the AID program, was presumably to help design a program under which the President could set forth goals of domestic policy and a method for moving toward their implementation. Various memoranda were developed. They got somewhere lost in the shuffle, but then they turned up in 1964 in this Michigan speech and in the task forces that he set up in 1964. I then became diverted because, as I said, he was diverted, I felt, by his enthusiasm for the poverty program. I then went off on a tangent to describe what I know of the process of moving from Kennedy poverty to Johnson poverty.

But then in 1964 he went to, I think, the University of Michigan and made a speech in which he set forth his vision of the goals for America as of 1975 or some other period: efforts to project programs, goals, and so forth.

M: This is the origin of the Great Society, the Ann Arbor speech.

W: Yes, that's true. And the method by which he saw setting this up was to set up a series of task force groups. These were very super secret. Nobody was ever supposed to mention that they were on one, which was quite difficult, I must say.

M: You went down to Washington to work and--

W: And the reports were never made public. He did this during the election period, and it was never very clear how they were supposed to relate to the election because they were not considered a part of the campaign. They were treated quite separate from the campaign.

I was also on the Democratic Advisory Council Committee in the period before the election, and they were clearly a part of the campaign.

M: Your left hand was not supposed to know what your right hand was doing in that case.

W: In the advisory council we actually wrote the Democratic platform for 1960 so this was clearly a part of the campaign. But in 1964 we were supposed to be off thinking. Johnson's mandate to these task forces was, "Never mind about how we're going to get to where you want us to be in 1975. That is my business. Your job is simply to tell me what's the desirable thing and then let me worry about how we get there." This really wasn't very practical, not at all practical. In the first place, the task force groups were made up of a combination of government people, people with very immediate objectives, and rather academic-type people who tended in this case to think somewhat more abstractly, and they could never get together. Those of us who were working on Medicare, for example, and trying to get it through, we couldn't think about 1975; we could only think about how we were going to get the bill through. In this sense, it tended toward a kind of unreal abstraction.

Now that may have only been true in our task force. Some of the others may have been more successful. But I think ours was really a disappointment to everybody who worked on it.

The staffing for it was done out of the Budget Bureau. Mike March [?] was the staff person for ours. Then we had this intermingling of government people. We had on our task force Wilbur Cohen, Stanley Surrey--

M: From the Treasury Department.

W: Yes, from Treasury. [Stanley] Ruttenberg from Labor. I can't remember who else. And then this queer assignment sort of unrelated to the immediate concerns. The result was that, while we worked hard, nothing ever came of that task force, as far as I could see.

M: I think that may be true of more of them. I think that's an interesting insight.

W: But I, having been on both of these two, in fact on three--well, I've been on many other committees, but three, the advisory council pre-Kennedy, the Kennedy task force post-Kennedy election, and the Johnson task force--could see rather clearly the difference. They were all on the same subject. The difference is the nature of the assignment. I think in many ways my estimate would be that Johnson, whom most people considered to be a total pragmatist, at least in his vision of the presidency was much more the ideolog than Kennedy.

M: That's very interesting.

W: But I would have to elaborate on that. I don't want to interfere with your factual--

M: No, I'm interested in both of your--

W: I understand that. But I think that his greatest successes were really carrying out what he felt to have been his mandate as inheritor of the Kennedy initiatives, and that when he went to trying to envision his own goals he tended toward somewhat of abstraction. This is absolutely contrary to the common interpretation.

M: Yes, it is. Did people have anything to do with that? In other words, was it because there were Kennedy people who were willing to push through the Kennedy initiatives and there weren't Johnson people who could do the same thing.

W: Oh, no, quite the contrary. I think the Kennedy Administration was really faltering at the time of his death in terms of legislative achievement. I think that what really pushed the Kennedy program through besides Johnson's driving energy was the sort of mood of guilt and contrition. There was a different mood in the country, but then there was Johnson's driving force. No, I think that Johnson wanted desperately to be a creative president. This was his great consuming ambition. But I think he lacked really the personal--I think his ambition outran his capacity and it made him become an ideolog rather than--

M: A creator.

W: Yes, but this I'd have to write about ten volumes on.

M: I suppose of one of the reasons is Mr. Goldschmidt's area, the fact that he did get dominated by this concern in Southeast Asia.

That brings up back to your Mekong project that I don't believe

you interrupted, Mrs. Goldschmidt. I may have interrupted, but let's go back to that.

G: No, you interrupted by saying that I had to go to U Thant once before to ask permission to go down to Washington or I felt I had to. And I did this time in 1965 as well because I wasn't sure exactly what was coming. All I knew was he wanted to talk about Southeast Asia. So I went up to see U Thant and told him, and I said, "I'll be glad to do it on any basis." He said, "Oh, by all means, if the President wants you to come, you must go." U Thant said, "If you see him, I hope you'll tell him for me--" By the way, at that time U Thant was in some trouble with the President.

M: I was going to say, that coincides with--

G: At various other times he was, too, but this time I think they both knew they were not seeing exactly eye to eye. U Thant said, "I want you to tell him for me what a great speech I thought his speech to the joint session was." This was the one on "We shall not be moved" speech.

W: "We shall overcome." (Laughter) "We shall not be moved!"

M: Much the same thing.

G: "We shall overcome" speech. He said, "I thought that was such a great speech. No American has ever made a greater statement." He just went overboard about Johnson's speech. This is only important because in that four hours we got to wrestling around about the U.N. and U Thant and so forth. I had to explain to the President that U Thant was a Buddhist who had kind of a different view of war and

so forth than he, the President, might have. I was trying to sell--trying to take some of the sting out of their relationships. Among other things, I made him give me an autographed copy to U Thant of that speech to take back to U Thant. I said, "After all, he let me go for a couple of days." Which he did for me.

We talked a lot about the U.N. during those four hours as well as Southeast Asia. We talked a lot about the character of the U.S. representation at the U.N. I say this because he obviously wasn't on the same wavelength as Adlai Stevenson and was worried that Stevenson wanted to quit and so forth. We talked about the future of that job. One of the things I kept hammering away at was that that job should not be held by a lame duck senator or a political appointee. I insisted that it had to be a distinguished American on the one side, and secondly, somebody that was known to be close to the President of the United States. I said, "You've got to find that kind of person, someone that's distinguished per se just by being who he is. You've also got to establish that he has your ear. [Someone] that isn't any lame duck senator, that isn't anything like that. That's what you've got to have, and for two very simple reasons: the distinguished business is in order to make all the liberals and do-gooders of the United States happy, because that's one of the jobs they look upon as being important, and the other one so that he'd be useful, because people will talk to him, if they think they can get directly to you, in a way that they won't talk to him if it's just part of the State Department machinery. The guy doesn't have to know a damned thing about foreign

affairs because he'll learn it quick enough. He has a whole seven floors or twelve floors, or whatever it is, in the mission full of experts to call on. Those are the only things you have to have."

The reason I mention this is because when Goldberg was appointed you could have knocked me over with a feather, but it was exactly what I ordered.

M: Exactly the specification.

G: Exactly the specifications. But I hammered away on a lot of things vis-a-vis the U.N., as well as this Southeast Asia thing.

Then when I finally left, there was nothing definite. You know, this conversation went, as I say, for four hours with all kinds of interruptions. I went back to the office in the White House and sat down and wrote a memorandum of what I thought ought to be said about Mekong and Southeast Asia and so forth, particularly emphasizing the fact that this should not be an American initiative; that whatever he did, it should be a response to Asian initiative. He could throw out the bait, but whatever we did must be what those countries wanted us to do and not to impose some kind of an American solution on the thing. I mentioned the Asian Bank. I wrote him a two-page memorandum which was obviously used, I think, in the Baltimore speech.

But I never thought any more of it; oh, of course, I thought more of it, but I didn't hear anything more. I just left. When I finished the memo I sent it in and didn't even say goodbye to anybody, and came back here. I didn't hear much about it. Then a week or so later, there was all this newspaper talk about his making an important speech,

and it zeroed in on Baltimore. I remember the evening that the Baltimore speech was going to be given at nine o'clock I went by the press room because someone told me the ticker had parts of the speech on it. I read the ticker, and it had a lot of stuff in it that sounded like the sort of thing I'd hoped he was going to say. I got back here about seven o'clock and was mixing martinis for Wicky and me when the phone rang. Wicky said, "Better come, the White House is on the line."

It was the President himself. He said, "Have you read the speech?" I said, "Well, I just saw the ticker stuff." He said, "I told them to show it to you." I said, "Well, nobody showed it to me." And then he said, "Well, I'll read it to you myself." I sat here and he read me that whole chunk, the peaceful part, not the war part.

W: I was listening on the other phone.

G: I was giving some ideas and throwing out things.

W: Mind you, this was an hour before he was giving the speech.

G: Suddenly he said, "My God, I can't go on with this. If you have any other ideas, give them to Dick here. I've got to shave. They won't let me take the helicopter to Baltimore because there's a fog. I haven't shaved, and I'm on the air in forty minutes."

M: "I've got to go give the speech I've been reading to you."

G: I was terribly excited about it.

W: But the most amazing part--I just wanted to remind you about the part that he thought he should cut out, that the State Department wanted him to cut out.

G: One billion dollars.

W: No. What was the thing that caused the most excitement in the whole speech?

M: The unconditional negotiations.

G: That's right. Unconditional negotiations. And I said, "Of course you've got to say that. That's the most important part of the speech." He said, "Well, they want me to take it out." I said, "Don't you take it out." He said, "Well, they talk about Roosevelt having gotten into trouble with unconditional surrender." And I said, "But, yes, that's quite a different thing."

M: 180 degrees different is all.

G: That's what it was.

W: It was so extraordinary that an hour before he was to give this speech he was still debating whether to take that phrase out that was really the punch line in the whole speech.

M: That's what makes it one of his major addresses really; that, plus the billion dollar Mekong thing. That's the two--

G: I asked him to keep that in. I said, "Of course you can't take that out. It's different from unconditional surrender."

W: It was a whole reverse twist.

M: Bad case of using history.

G: Then he said, "I want you to make sure that U Thant makes the right kind of response." "That friend of yours, U Thant." I also want you to call Jack Oakes of the New York Times. Those sons-of-bitches have got to do the right thing about it once." Something like that. He just absolutely twisted my arm on both of these things.

So I was terribly excited. I called up U Thant at home. He said, "Oh, yes, I'm going to listen to the speech. I read it this afternoon." Then I realized that in his kind of odd way when he had them take the speech over to U Thant from the mission--the mission didn't know me from Adam particularly, they looked on me as one of these technical assistance guys and certainly not one of these political guys--they had taken it to U Thant and Johnson had just assumed that he'd show it to me. But of course U Thant wouldn't show it. This was a confidential thing taken over by the head of the mission, and he wouldn't call me up on that.

M: Well, Johnson never could visualize the internal workings of the U.N.

G: But one thing, you know Johnson's arm twisting is terribly funny because I rarely do anything that I don't really approve of doing. In my life I've rarely done things that I don't think myself are all right to do, and this I didn't want to do at all. But he insisted that I ought to call the New York Times. So I called up Oakes. He could not know who I was completely because I had seen him a number of times and he was always very friendly. He was madder than hell about it.

M: Mad about the speech?

G: No,no.

W: About the President trying to influence the New York Times.

G: I didn't tell him I was calling for the President.

W: Oh, you didn't say that.

G: No, I was too smart for that. I just said that I thought that this speech was going to have some important stuff in it, and he ought to. . . He said, "Of course, I'm writing it now." He was very short with me, just barely polite. I knew I shouldn't do that. Editorial writers are a proud breed, and you don't do it. But I did it, by God, because the President asked me to.

Then the next day I got down to my office and the President was on the phone in my office. "What did you think of the speech? What is U Thant going to do? What are you going to do now? What's this? What's that? What's your response going to be?" As if the U.N. had anything to respond with, that much at any rate.

M: That ought to give you pretty good stature with your staff for a while.

G: Yes, my secretary was terribly excited about it. And of course all of this was kept out of the newspapers. Then he wanted some more. Had I gotten any evidence that he'd ever been out there? This whole thing came up again, although I had already run into that when I was in the White House three weeks before. I said, "No, Mr. President, I never saw anything in the newspapers." He said, "But you sent me a briefing on this thing." I said, "Well, I wrote you a letter." And now I realized it was kind of a briefing. The letter had sort of briefed him on who was who. I said, "I can send you a copy of that. I'm sure I've got one in my file."

He said, "That Mexican boy that was out there, maybe he has some." The Mexican boy that was out there was Ortiz, who was press officer in ECAFE at the time Johnson was there, and turned out to have been

one of Johnson's Mexican students when he was a teacher and had introduced himself as a former student of Johnson's. I called up Ortiz and said, "Ortiz, have you got any evidence, have you any clippings from the Bangkok Journal or anything else at the time the Vice President was out there? Didn't you get out a press release?" He said, "Oh, yes, I got out a beautiful press release." Do you have any clippings?" He said, "No, and I don't think I can find the press release." It was an ECAFE press release. So I said, "Could you write a memorandum about the President's visit out there, write a memorandum which I'll get to the White House?" About ten minutes later Ortiz comes rushing into my office and he had the cable of the press release,because they do cable the press releases back here,of Johnson. It was a beautiful press release about how Johnson mentions that "These are great plans, but when is the dirt going to fly?" Another place he said, "If the four countries can work together on the river, they'll learn to work together on other things." All this back in 1961.

M: Just what Johnson wanted.

G: Right, just what Johnson wanted. So I sent that to the White House. Then the next day there was a piece in the paper from Washington saying that an Arthur Goldsmith, or somebody Goldsmith, had written a speech for him, which of course wasn't true at all. I hadn't written the speech.

Then when I got to my office that day, all the newspapers were calling me. The AP guy is a great friend of mine. And I said,

"Look, Milt"--he wanted to come up for an interview--"I'm not giving an interview." He said, "Is the Times story true? I've been asked by my Washington office, I have to interview you. I can't get out of it. I'll lose my job." I said, "I don't want you to lose your job, but I also don't want to lose my shirt. I'll tell you what I'll do. If you find out where that story came from in Washington"--it was an AP story--"I'll give you an interview."

So he called back ten minutes later. He said, "It came from the President himself. It was one of these hikes around the garden."

M: Oh, boy. His own worst leak.

G: He was bragging to the newspapermen about what wonderful friends he had. "Now this old friend from Texas just came in and did his job and didn't even stop to be thanked!" And he said that's the kind of friends he had.

So then I did give him an interview, but I told him I wanted to play it down because I thought it was much more important to be able to see and talk to [the President]. Because all these ins and outs at the White House had never gotten into the press at all, and I was scared to death because I knew how Johnson hated these damned leaks.

M: But that's not the first one I've encountered where he was the leak. He'd just get mad at somebody and then it would turn out that he had told a senator or he had told a reporter or something.

G: As soon as I knew that he had leaked it, I didn't care anymore. Anyway, that was a great business.

So then I rushed out to the Mekong to see what kind of a response

we'd get on their side, because they were having a meeting of the Mekong committee in April, I think it was, of the year, at the end of the same month. Tom Niblock, Black's man, went out. Meanwhile Black came to the U.N. We had sort of strategy meetings with him, sort of cueing him in on the Mekong stuff, and he was great. You know, Black was one of the people who was very much opposed to the Asian Bank, as head of the World Bank, and yet he's the guy that made the Asian Bank possible. He really was. He did all the work on it.

M: Once he decided he was for it.

G: One he decided it was the right thing to do. I guess once he was out of the bank and there was no more--

M: Right.

G: But another thing. The Mekong Committee after all had been going for ten years before that happened. Black's first impulse when he came to visit us, and I don't know whether this is of interest to your tape, was he knew that this committee was a pretty low key kind of a thing, and the thing that was the most amazing about it was that it had gone so long in spite of the fact that the governments weren't on speaking terms. But it didn't have a strong staff and good engineers and all those hot and cold-running economists available, so his first impulse was that we ought to have a big study made by distinguished world figures. He was seeing C. V. Narasimhan, who was the chef d' cabinet, preparatory to seeing U Thant. And Narasimhan had me up there because he knew I was very much involved, and he didn't want to fuss with Black because Black was quite a formidable figure.

I said, "Mr. Black, I think there's nothing more needed than the study, but if we come up with a study after that billion dollar speech, that Mekong Committee will fly apart because they've been studied right, left and center." We had the Ford Foundation study and we had the good old Spec Wheeler study that started it out. "And if they think that all they're going to get out of this is a study when they've been struggling like hell to get this little dam built in Laos as the next step, there will be a real problem of whether the President was serious about it."

He said, "That's a lousy dam." I said, "That's not a lousy dam." He said,"The bank people say it's a lousy dam." I said, "The bank people aren't telling the truth. The only thing lousy about the dam is that it's in Laos, and Laos is a lousy country and they can't borrow money." He said, "I don't want the bank to be lending political money on political loans." I said, "Mr. Black, you're absolutely right. This shouldn't be a bank loan. In the first place, Laos hasn't the right to contract any more debt; and secondly, anybody would have to have his head examined to lend them any money. This has got to be a grant, and we've got to collect up enough money in the world to give them this grant. It's not a lousy dam, but the bank engineers have been asking all kinds of stupid questions and questioning all kinds of things because they haven't got the guts to say that nobody should lend money to Laos. If they said that, 'it's a good dam, but it's Laos,' they'd be right."

As soon as I said I didn't expect the bank to lend them the money and made this outrageous proposal that it ought to be a gift, Black

calmed down. He said, "Well, I'd better look into that. I understand this study. . ." You know, he was absolutely wonderful. He went back to Washington and he asked Spec Wheeler whether I was right about the dam. Wheeler--you know, the ex-Corps of Engineers--said, "Tex is absolutely right. It's a perfect dam, and the only thing wrong with it is it's in Laos." He said the same thing I did.

Once Black got the pitch and we weren't asking that his beautiful daughter, the World Bank, be raped, he was perfectly prepared for the most outrageous thing, to give Laos a gift of this dam, and he got that money personally. I think Black had more to do with it. A lot of people take credit for it, but Black really is the guy who did it.

When I came back from that trip to Asia, I was making a speech in Washington, May of that same year. I called up Jack Valenti, I think it was, and said I was going to be in town and if the President wanted to see me, I didn't have any. . . He said, "I'd like to talk to you about it." When I got there he said, "You know, you'd better spend the night here. I think the President might like to see you tomorrow morning." He called up somebody and had my bag--I just had a briefcase because I really hadn't planned to spend the night--put up in one of the rooms in the White House. After the speech, about eleven o'clock I sneaked into the [White House]. All the lights out at the White House. That was a most perilous journey.

And sure enough, the next morning I got word that the President wanted me, and I spent two hours with him, from eight-thirty to ten-thirty. I had then a copy of the original press release and some

stuff from out there, which he was delighted to have. Bird was particularly delighted with it, because it was such a typical Johnson thing. It was the same press release I was talking about, but it looked better as a release than as a cable.

We had talked about a lot of things, and then he wanted me to meet the press. He said, "I think you ought to"--because I gave him the response of the Mekong Committee and the sense of excitement at his speech. I said, "Mr. President, I'm not supposed to talk to the press. I'm here purely privately to tell you about this, and I don't think it's a proper role for an international civil servant. I can do much more if I'm not. . ." [He said], "No, they're all talking about the war. This peace stuff ought to get back in the newspapers. You've just come back from there and I think you ought to talk to the press." I said, "I don't think I should. I'm one of these passionately anonymous guys and I don't like to talk to them." "Who'll get mad? U Thant? I'll straighten U Thant out." He was always assuming I was under somebody's gun. I said, "No, I just don't think it's the thing I ought to do."

When he had gotten dressed and we went down, he said, "Come on, let's take a walk." So we walked out to the front. He shook hands with a couple of tourists, and then we walked back to his office because he wanted to give me something or show me something. Sure enough, of course, the whole thing was a sort of a trick because the press just came onto us and I had to give an interview with the President. But it didn't matter. I played it down.

But it was a typical sort of stunt, making me do something I didn't want to do by making it almost an accident.

In the course of our walk he asked me how Black was doing, and I don't know what kind of an answer I gave him because I was very excited about what Black was doing. But I must have said, "A hell of a lot better than I expected," or something like that, something slightly pejorative. He put his arm around me and he said, "I want you to know that was the smartest appointment I ever made. If I'd put some New Dealer like you on this thing--"

M: A wild-eyed radical!

G: A wild-eyed radical like you--"it wouldn't have worked at all. This fellow Black has got the southern congressmen eating out of his hand, and he's a bright guy." He began lecturing me on Black. I said, "Well, for God's sake, I told you he was doing a good job! I know he's doing a good job, and he's got a very able young man working for him." He'd just been out there and he did an absolutely brilliant job. I said, "I think it's great." But it was so funny! He knew by something in my voice that I thought Black was too conservative or something. He just is that way.

Anyway, Black did do a great job. He has been an absolute tower of strength in that situation, and always gung ho about it, never let up. And the President saw him. You'll get a damned good interview with Black.

M: If I can get the time. He's a busy man.

G: But that Mekong thing was just as I said, it was just hamburger.

M: What were his general comments about the U.N.? Do you have any strong impressions about what his thoughts on the U.N. were?

G: In the first place, Johnson was pro-U.N., just feeling the way Sam Rayburn [did]. Sam once said he was very pleased that I was working with the U.N. when I went to visit him.

M: The way all of us were who were educated back in the forties.

G: No, it wasn't you young squirts. They go back to Wilson. Rayburn gave me a long lecture on what was wrong--what happened to Wilson. He was for the League of Nations and he mixed it all up. Johnson just goes back enough to the southerner who was an internationalist, you see, to be pro-U.N. But on the other hand, he didn't like U Thant telling him what to do and he didn't like a few things like that. The trouble with the U.N., both in the U.S. and everywhere, is that it isn't part of the education of the State Department or the foreign office of any country. No major country takes the U.N. very seriously. They are slightly afraid of it, they are snotty about it, with some understanding. It's like people are snotty about a lot of things; they're snotty about the Senate of the United States as being not a very effective organ. Yet it's the best we've got. It's all we've got.

I think Johnson recognized that. I think he was pretty good about it. He was just annoyed about, terribly browned off about something U Thant had said just before this.

M: That was if the American people knew the truth they would feel differently about the Vietnam [War]. That was February of 1965, I'm sure.

G: That's what it was. He was really sore about that. He was quite annoyed with U Thant, so I thought it was quite a trick to get him to sign a very nice note to him on the speech about the Negro problem.

M: Did Johnson get more on the wavelength of subsequent ambassadors after Stevenson's death? Was he closer to [others]?

G: The thing about the Goldberg thing that amused the hell out of me was that I knew Goldberg wasn't close to Johnson. He knew him.

M: Yes, that's all.

G: But what did vis-a-vis Goldberg--and incidentally this thing came as an absolute bolt from the blue, as far as I was concerned. I was sitting in the press bar when I heard it. But what he did then was to have him down to the Ranch. He wrapped himself around Goldberg for about ten days. There wasn't any newspaper picture of the President where Goldberg wasn't over his shoulder or on his lap or somewhere. He was trying, after the fact, you see, after the appointment to establish that closeness. I know this sounds a little like Chanticleer. He might have thought of all of this by himself, but it was exactly what I had told him he had to do.

M: How did it work out then in the long pull?

G: For some time it worked out fairly well, I think, but I don't think they were as close later as they had been originally.

W: Well, it's an anomalous kind of relationship.

G: It's a cockeyed job anyway. But I think so many jobs are anomalous that I don't--

There are about three other points I ought to cover. I keep

trying to think of the early days. One of the things, we were invited to the White House several times after he became president, usually for some reason or another. I know the reason. We were in Iran for a year; Lady Bird tied us up with Iran. So we were invited, our first party was the lunch for the Shah. But this again is a typical Johnson business. It was purely one of these quasi-formal luncheons and we were all at different tables. I was with Bell at the table by the door. When the head party got up to walk out, Johnson saw me standing there. He grabbed me by the arm and whispered in my ear, "Go see Walter. The Interior Department has some power problem they want me to sign up on." And my job was at the U.N. and I just couldn't.

M: You hadn't been in the Interior Department for fifteen years!

G: I hadn't been in the Interior Department for a hell of a long time. Then he goes on. The Shah and the lady Shah and Mrs. Johnson are already down the hall half the way when he's whispering, "Go on over and tell them I want your advice on this thing."

It turned out to be this big western inter-tie--the big issue of tying Bonneville up to this huge system that Bonneville and the Bureau of Reclamation Corps of Engineers and others had worked out. It was a very complicated business in connection with the Canadian deal, kind of an effort to wheel Canadian power over Bonneville transmission lines, very mixed up. This had been sent over by the Interior Department with a letter to the President, saying that he should make a big speech about this and make a big deal out of this, send it up to Congress as a great example of a love feast between the public and private power.

I was to study this very complex engineering and economic problem and let him know by the following Monday whether he should follow Udall's proposal. But the guy who had been the main negotiator was the present head of the Conn-Edison, Chuck Luce. It had been something that had been worked out over months.

M: You're supposed to do it in twenty-four hours.

G: And I wasn't to talk to anybody or tell anybody what I was doing.

So I came back home and I studied the thing over the weekend and checked up on a couple of things with people I knew had worked on it to find out more about it, without telling them why I wanted to know. Then I wrote him a letter, or I wrote Walter a letter--I've forgotten--in which I said I thought that he ought to do it, I thought it was a good thing to do, that the tie was sound, but I damn well didn't think he ought to make any speech about a love affair between public and private power. And I didn't think he ought to do anything without checking with some of the public power people in the Congress, like Mansfield, who were interested in Bonneville, and this whole issue, and among others, the guy who was head of the National Rural Electrification Co-op, Clyde Ellis, who was close to him.

I didn't know whether he checked with him or not, but I do know that he didn't make the statement about the great marriage of public and private, which I thought would do him some harm. The public power people did get it modified. They raised some hell with it and got some modification.

The main thing in that case was PG&E with its enormous power,

and Brown being a sissy on public power and California generally being a difficult state, I didn't feel that they could get anything better than this, but I also didn't think they should try to make a virtue out of a liaison that was a necessity.

M: The best of the evils.

G: But that was so funny because I had absolutely no [warning]. It was just bingo, right out of the blue.

M: You said there were a couple more?

G: The only other thing, I guess, is my own appointment by him which really came out of the blue. We came home one night after a cocktail party and he was on the telephone and said Jimmy wanted to resign and he wanted me to do that job. I begin hemming and hawing, and Wicky was out making some soup to try to sober us up anyway. She said, "Why don't you hang up? You're not being very rational." (Laughter)

W: "Why don't you call him tomorrow and give him an answer!"

M: He doesn't like that. He wants to know right now.

G: I said I needed to talk it over with my wife and I wanted to talk it over with my boss, and I said I'd like to talk to Goldberg first. I didn't particularly want to do it. Wicky and I talked about it, and I did talk to all these people. It was kind of silly talking to Goldberg. I don't see what he could say. I'm sure he had another person in mind, and this wasn't his idea. Jim Rowe called me up the next day and he said, "Don't let anybody tell you that they put this idea into the President's mind, because he thought of it all by himself because I was there when he thought of it. He was terribly

proud of having thought of it, because he thinks it's such a natural." And of course it was. It was an extraordinarily sensible seeming appointment.

Anyway, he said, "No, don't call me back. I'll call you." And sure enough, a couple of days later he called me back. I said, "Mr. President, I'd like to come in and talk to you about it." Because I wasn't terribly happy about some things; you know, how much I'd get involved with Vietnam, that kind of business. He said, "Look, Tex, I've got the State of the Union Message, I've got the budget here, and I've got three cabinet officers. I'd love to have you come down to the Ranch, but we wouldn't have much chance to talk. I know what you think anyway. If you can't afford it, that's one thing." So I said, "Of course, I can afford it."

M: What else can you do at that point besides--

G: Then he said, "Well, the thing you've got to do is, I want you to call up Macy and give him the stuff to get out a press release." I said, "Mr. President, you can't get out a press release. I haven't been cleared by the FBI." He said, "What do you mean? You're working for the U.N. Don't they clear you for the U.N.?" I said, "Yes, but it's a completely different issue."

M: It goes back to what you said about not understanding the internal workings of the U.N.

G: So he said, "Oh. Well, then forget everything until you hear from me. Don't say anything to anybody about it. I don't want anything said to anybody about it."

So I didn't say anything to anybody about it, but the next day the FBI was all over the U.N., they were all over the place, they were everywhere.

M: Supposed to be secret!

G: People were calling me, asking, "What are you being appointed to?" Because everybody claimed the FBI said, "We are from the White House and this is urgent!" Sure enough, within forty-eight hours I got a call from Valenti or somebody to get my name spelled right and did I want to be from New York or Texas. I said, "Well, you'd better ask the President. I don't care. I'm voting in New York, and I'm not a professional Texan in spite of the nickname. But I think the President might have some ideas about this. He might think it would be better to name me from New York." And that's what happened. Because it would have looked like a more crony appointment otherwise.

We went to a very private little dinner between my appointment and my confirmation in Washington at the Fortases,and the President showed up there, I think there was only about half a dozen. When he came into the room, he came up to me and said, "Now don't tell me what's wrong with my foreign policy until you're confirmed," or "what's wrong in Vietnam," or something like that. A very perceptive comment.

M: A question I want to ask. Your implication there is that you might have had some criticism about Vietnam, for example. Were his old friends able to talk to him about Vietnam? If they had criticisms, were they able to make them and did he listen, or did they pretty

well just avoid the subject after a while?

G: We talked about it some during that Baltimore speech period, but I must say I never. . . I just don't know the answer to that. I'm sure that Ben Cohen felt himself out of the picture on the Vietnam thing.

W: Vietnam had such a tendency to polarize, and people tend still to feel so passionately about it, that it seems to me that most of the people we know probably tried to express their views but found they were up against a total difference. They either had to give up all contact with the President or just avoid the subject or go along. I think an awful lot of people in the government felt it was politic for them to go along on the subject whether it was in their field or not. Of course, people in the State Department or in the Defense Department, well, you always go along on policy questions for which you're responsible.

G: You have to go along on policy.

W: But I think a lot of other people felt that this was something they'd better not. . . A person like Helen Douglas, absolutely passionate on the subject of Vietnam, but affectionate in her feelings toward Johnson, and he toward her, even though they were just totally in disagreement. She's been all up and down the country passionately denouncing--

M: But she doesn't make the case to him at any point. This is what I'm [getting at.]

W: Well, if she ever tried at any point, I don't know, but I think she would feel it was impossible. Maybe she's written some letters, I

don't know.

G: My feeling about Vietnam was that it ought to get de-escalated; I mean I've always felt that. But the point is that when you're kind of caught in a situation like that, you can't say, "Let's just pull out." Nobody with any sense would say that, because everybody would get hurt in pulling out. So your real problem is one in which you're almost talking tactics or something like that, in which you aren't sure of all the plays. I'm not privy to it.

M: Certainly not.

G: One of the people that I have a very high regard for as an intelligent, able, decent person was for a short time the ambassador to the United States from Vietnam, an old friend, and also someone who came out of the U.N. I've known him in the U.N. for fifteen years or more. I met him first in Saigon back in 1956. And Vu Van Thai was for the [bombing]; you remember he sat right here and argued in favor of the bombing of North Vietnam. But his view was that it ought to be intermittent and played with negotiation offers and so forth. But the kind of subtlety that was needed in the Vietnam situation, that at least I think was needed, you just can't get through the army. You evidently can't play it that way with the way things have to go once they're on the. . . .

W: I think your question of whether people talked to him, if I understood what you were asking, [I think] that there is always a tendency around a person in power for people to say what they think he wants to hear. So you've got a certain kind of courtier psychology around a person in power. People who disagree with him strongly but who are still friendly

to him are terribly concerned for him. You don't go to a man who is as driven as he was in the White House, as exhausted, under as much pressure, and say, "Look, old fellow, you're just a hundred per cent wrong." In the first place, it wouldn't do any good; he wouldn't listen. In the second place, you are inhibited by a degree of concern for him. And the people who disagreed with him in official positions generally tended to move out--I mean, if that was their business. So I think it's a very difficult question to answer, and it seems to me to be one of the great handicaps of being the president. You naturally accumulate a set of people who think that your premises are correct. You become more committed to your premises, more passionate about them, more eager to have people around you who will feed you. . . .

At one point Johnson became very absorbed in his role in history, as you know, and the Congressional Record used to just be full of comparisons. Comparisons to George Washington, comparisons to Abraham Lincoln, rather untenable, I thought; comparisons to Churchill; and of course to Roosevelt and to Wilson and to everybody who ever fought a war.

M: Used to have the Policy Planning staff at the State Department work on those papers, so they could do that.

W: Oh, yes, I'm sure, and they used to get fed to congressional [members] for speeches.

But obviously you seek to have the people who will document you in the direction that you think has been advised and they reinforce you

in that direction. It's very difficult to see really precisely how the president comes to make an about-turn, because everything feeds the direction in which he has chosen to move.

M: I wish you'd write that book. I don't know whether it's because your insights agree with mine or because they're so brilliant. I tend to agree with what you say your position on Vietnam is, and yet it's difficult to find anybody who ever told President Johnson, really.

G: Oh, but he almost said that sort of thing himself. The curious thing about it is that he has been on all sides of the situation in a way.

M: At one time or another, he has.

G: And almost at different times of the day, or with different people. It's a very complex thing. This business of looking at Vietnam simply is just absurd. In the first place, all of us who are concerned about America's staying--I mean, I am worried about neo-isolation.

M: Quite obviously a perfectly valid worry.

G: It's a valid worry. I think the truth of the matter is that we've been bemused by this power complex, when power just no longer works. It just hasn't worked. We've dropped more bombs on Vietnam than we dropped on all of Europe or that everybody dropped anywhere, in the last year.

W: I think that from the point of view of the historian, in looking at Johnson, the thing that always struck me about him was that during all the time he was president--he didn't have the responsibility as vice president, though he inherited a continuum, a series of events--that he was always convinced that we were winning that war militarily,

always, up to this very moment. This was his first conviction.

G: He still thinks so.

W: We were at the Ranch in April, and that is still the belief: that it was this criticism at home and particularly newspaper criticism and so forth that had defeated what was otherwise a clearly winning policy. And that is a historical fact that we know.

M: That's important, because many of the experts, at least, don't think so.

W: It isn't really very important, I suppose it's not important at all what we think, but I think it is terribly important what he thought. And all of the time that the observers and people from other parts of the world, including this friend Tex speaks of, Vu Van Thai, were saying, "This war cannot be won militarily," he was convinced that it was being won in that way.

G: What I can't understand is how in the hell Johnson didn't eat the ass out of a lot of generals that gave him one view or another, because I've seen him eat out people with a hell of a lot less provocation.

M: If no one was telling him otherwise, this is the whole point!

G: You don't need to be told. If a guy tells you, "Look, I'm going to take just this long and things are looking up," and then the next week things are looking worse, month after month after month, you don't have to be told.

W: I think there's another explanation, although this is what Tex says isn't an explanation. But I think there is an explanation with Johnson and that is, that like many excellent politicans, in fact all the good politicians that I know, rely heavily on expertise. I for instance

am called by members of Congress on questions relating to social security. They know they don't understand the social security system. And Johnson has that quality. He's aware of his dependence on expertise, so if he thinks he has a military problem, he relies on the military. And of course the State Department wasn't really arguing with the military as much as they might have done.

So if his policy was historically a failure and that remains to be seen--I'm not judging it--but if the verdict of history were that it was a failure, it seems to me that his failure and that of his predecessors would have been in defining the problem. If Senator Harris calls me up and asks me about social security, and his real problem is purely a fiscal problem, he's defining the problem wrong. He ought to be asking a tax expert. If Johnson and Kennedy and Eisenhower defined this problem as a military problem and a problem of aggression when it was something different, then that was where. . . Because once he defined it as a military problem, then he felt that it was his job as political leader to take the advice of the experts.

M: Never asking the right question, in fact.

W: That really is--

G: I agree with you. That's a very good point. But still that doesn't answer how these guys managed to live through a set of five years of failures. Because, really, it's incredible, what they promised him! And you just go back and look at that over and over and over again, you know, the light at the end of the tunnel.

W: It's that old business of the generals always fighting the last war,

but they never fight a war really politically, for all the courses in the Army War College!

M: Actually, they're fighting two wars ago. Wasn't it World War I where they had the fifteen minutes more strategy? We've just to hang on for one more day or for one more attack or something, and then it'll be all over.

G: This thing obviously took up more and more of the President's time, and obviously he was more and more impatient of it.

W: I always say that nobody could understand that who wasn't raised in the tradition of the Alamo, and I never was, so. . . .

M: You could disassociate yourself from the Texan. Good for you! You and me!

G: We're getting off of Johnson now, but I got a wonderful play one time in the General Assembly on an issue where I knew we were licked by the developing countries because they could out-vote us, but I also knew we were absolutely right on our side. It was just one of these things they feel passionate about. Everybody knew how the votes were going to be, but I wanted to get our position crystal clear on the record. So I started the thing off by saying, "You know I come from a part of the world where we have made a big thing out of a defeat. You know, the Alamo, as all you people who watch western movies know, was where we got the hell beat out of us by the Mexicans, and yet we make a big thing out of it. So I don't mind getting licked on this Alamo issue, but I'm still going to stand up. (Laughter)

W: One little evidence of the degree to which the Alamo had impressed itself on Johnson was the speech he made to the Urban League when he was vice president. This is one reason he turned so quickly to Whitney Young, because they had asked him to come and speak at their annual meeting when he was vice president. It was the first Negro-oriented organization that had ever made him that gesture. So we went around to hear the speech, and when he got going and departed from his text he took off on some oratory that related to his support for Gonzalez when Gonzalez was running for Congress. He said, "And I stood there with this great Mexican-American in Alamo Plaza, and as I watched the sun set over the Alamo--so-and-so and so-and-so. And Tex said, "Good God, you couldn't possibly see the sun set. He must have been there at sunrise because he was to the west of the Alamo."

M: Literary license in that case. (Laughter)

G: Speaking of that, old Alvin Wirtz--getting back to the early days--used to kid us an awful lot. He was an absolutely great guy. He was a man of enormous charm.

W: And incidentally, really Johnson's original political mentor. Sam Rayburn came later.

G: Much later, way after he got to be known.

But Wirtz was a terribly nice guy and a sort of a father to him and to all of us younger people. He used to like to kid and he used to fuss in a kind of a kidding way at us for all kinds of things. He'd go after Lyndon for his exaggerations. He told this marvelous story about how Lyndon had come into his office, fussing about Carl somebody-or-other

who was the chairman of the Lower Colorado River Authority and he loved to hit the bottle. Lyndon came in to fuss with Wirtz about Carl--he was then chairman, he was an old country boy, you know. He said, "He's going to give us a bad name." You know, Lyndon wanted to watch everything that happened. "This fellow will give us a bad name. I just saw him walking down Congress Avenue with a jug in each hand and one under each arm." Wirtz said,"Oh, go on, you're exaggerating!" "No," he said, "I saw him. I saw him weaving down Congress Avenue." Wirtz said, "But you know he's only got one arm." (Laughter)

M: Exaggeration by half in that case.

G: Anyway, at that dinner party I tried to tell that story when he was president and, oh, he didn't like it at all!

W: With the credibility gap.

M: That's about the time he was being criticized for some of his grandfather at the Alamo stories and things of this sort.

G: Well, it may be, but, no, it was just when he got in the White House. I think he thought if was sort of lese majesté or something. It's curious because it was only just a bunch of friends and we were trying to take his mind off of things. He'd been terribly busy.

One thing I remember about that dinner party, the reason he was so late he had dropped by to see Walter Lippmann and had gotten lost, finding Walter Lippmann's house. It was in the newspapers about his getting lost. So they'd showed up late for dinner, or the President did; Lady Bird was there, and the girls were there.

I wish I had a tape of that. He told about what Walter Lippmann

told him he ought to do, but he put it all in good Texas earthy language. Remember that?

W: I don't remember what he said.

G: I don't remember the details of it either, but I remember it was just terribly funny.

W: Of course later he became very disenchanted with Walter Lippmann.

G: But at that time he was still buttering him up.

M: Yes, he heard him pretty frequently in the early days.

What about Lady Bird, her influence and her place in all of this? You both have had a good chance to watch that over a good long period of time.

G: We're very fond of Lady Bird, as everybody else is. You'll find it in the Goldman book and everywhere else that she just comes over very well indeed. She has a little bit of southern girl mannerisms of being terribly polite and terribly sweet and trying to hide her intelligence, which most southern girls try to do because they're taught to rather early in life, to play down--being a blue stocking is a dangerous thing. I don't think she's particularly bluestocking anyway, but she also takes the southern girl role. I think she's a terribly bright and very able gal, and a very sensitive gal.

M: How important is she in substantive things, as far as his actions are concerned?

G: I don't know well enough, but I should think she'd be quite important in many ways.

W: I think she influences him a great deal by indirection. I don't think

she tells him straight-out what she thinks he should be doing at any given moment, but I think she kind of edges him in--

M: She doesn't argue directly.

W: No.

G: I think her instincts by and large are pretty good, too.

W: She's an extraordinarily honest person.

G: A very decent person.

W: She's very straight in her thinking and very down-to-earth.

G: The only time I was a little cross with Bird--it's a silly thing--she came and had dinner with me one night when she was Mrs. Vice President. I got into trouble with my cook because I didn't give her any warning and we only had cold roast beef. She had been here on a shopping trip and had called up on the off-chance to ask Wicky and me to come and have drinks with her at the Waldorf. I said it was too hard to park at the Waldorf and why didn't I pick her up and bring her home for supper and she could get her plane back. My little daughter was here, and we had a very amusing evening, very pleasant evening.

But she'd just been reading Drury's Advice and Consent and she thought it was such a great book, and I just blew my top. I said I thought it was shocking that anyone with her husband's loyalty to the Senate could like that book because it degraded the Senate so. But she said, "I didn't feel that way about it." I was kind of annoyed. It just didn't seem like Bird to me to like that book. I think it's a terrible book; it wasn't a terrible book, it's an unimportant book. But it just didn't seem in character for her to like that book.

W: I think perhaps on a thing like that her judgments would not be sophisticated. But on the whole I think she has been an enormously steadying influence on him, and of course very, very protective of him and of his health. [She was] very worried about him at the time of his heart attack and very worried about him during the presidency, I mean of his ability to stand this terrific pressure.

G: She obviously right now is worried about him, too, I think, don't you?

W: Yes.

M: You're guiding me at this point. I don't want to cut you off, but I don't want to torture you unduly either. If there are other anecdotes or episodes that you think are worthwhile, by all means--

G: Well, he kissed Wicky on television.

W: That was just a very funny thing of no importance. But when he first became president, he had a great nervousness about the press, particularly about television.

M: Which came through.

W: It was partly because Kennedy had had such a tremendous flair for these television press conferences. So he didn't have any for a long time. The television men around the White House were getting restive.

He was putting a lot of pressure behind Medicare. Of course, for a long time he was not very supportive of it, but by the time he got to be president, he wasn't worrying about the Texas Medical Society any longer. This was part of his program. He had been urged and agreed to have the representatives of the old people's organizations and other groups supporting Medicare to the White House to encourage them. The

television men all gathered around because this was the first time they'd really had him on television in that kind of a group. He spoke to them, and I was there. Then he said, "Now I'll come down and greet you." So he went around shaking the hands of the old people, and he shook hands along the way. When he came to me he did what he always does with wives of friends, he kissed me, he gave me a great old bussing. Well, I thought nothing of it, though my friends kind of kidded me about it. But it was really apparently about the only visually newsworthy item, so it went out over all the wire services and into all the television things. I, after my years of anonymous good works and efforts, was suddenly precipitated into the limelight.

G: You said it was great, you got through all the secretaries after that. There was a fine one in the Long Island paper with a big sign, "Health Bill and Coo."

M: What about the women's rights thing? Is there anything in that of any importance?

W: This is purely my own interpretation. Again, when he became president, he began thinking about the points at which he could distinguish himself from his predecessor without criticizing, which he obviously was not going to do. I think it must have occurred to him or been suggested to him--but I don't know this as a fact, this is pure supposition--that one point on which Kennedy had been rather weak was on his recognition of women, as governmental figures.

G: He recognized women all right! (Laughter)

W: He had his own views on women, but they did not include. . . .

Mrs. Roosevelt, after Kennedy got elected, was always getting up lists of women. Practically every week I'd get a request from somebody to make up a list of women for appointments, and then she'd trot over to the White House with them. One time Kennedy was reputed to have said to her when she was complaining that he hadn't appointed more women to things--I, for instance, was the only woman on a Kennedy task force, and that was rather accidental. But she was complaining, and Kennedy is alleged to have said to her, "But, Mrs. Roosevelt, I don't know any women!"

(Laughter)

M: That'll be the day!

W: Anyway, Kennedy was quite criticized in the women's circles in the Democratic Party and elsewhere. And I think Johnson may have thought, well, this is one point where he could make a big pitch, so he started on this pitch of appointing women. They did work at it hard. John Macy has told me that they really did search for women, and he did make quite a number of really quite outstanding appointments. But there was a real limit to it because during World War II and post-war years there had been a return to the home. All the young women were busily having babies. There was a sort of hiatus. Now feminism of a sort is having a resurgence, but there was a big gap in there.

I think it was, in one sense, a political ploy in that everything a politician does, in a sense, is directed toward it, but I think he sincerely believed in giving more recognition. . . . I know John Macy said they just searched and searched for women. And the President kept after him all the

time. So it was a genuine thing. But I really think, though I've never seen it suggested by any commentator, that it was part of his effort to distinguish himself from Kennedy.

M: And it was a difference, very obviously, when you add up the appointments.

Anything else?

G: I can't think of anything else.

M: You all have been so patient to sit here this long and talk. It's quite delightful for me, but I don't want to keep you from saying anything that either of you want to say.

W: I can tell you one thing that I think is very typical of Johnson. In 1956, he was then majority leader, and our big effort that year was to amend the Social Security Act to include disability insurance. Senator George had been sold on this idea in a very amazing fashion by Nelson Cruikshank in the AFL-CIO, who went to George and said, "You need a memoriam now. You need something to leave behind now that you're leaving the Senate. Wouldn't this be a great thing to do!" Senator George agreed to do it.

It had passed the House, but when it got to the Senate Finance Committee, Senator Kerr, who was a powerful man in the Finance Committee and very much influenced by the Oklahoma Medical Society, put his foot down and defeated it in the committee. And this was a terrible blow. The Finance Committee voted against it.

I sat down and wrote a memorandum which I sent to Jim Rowe, pointing out the political significance of this proposal; that it

was the only way that the Democrats could clearly distinguish themselves from the Republicans on social security issues. I spelled all that out in the memorandum and sent it to Jim. I never heard what happened on that. Jim was then working for Johnson. I didn't send it to Johnson. I thought it would be better to send it through a staff person, but it was clearly intended for Johnson.

To my astonishment, with no word to me, they took the bill to the floor and, lo and behold, Senator Kerr moved the amendment to add disability insurance, having personally defeated it in committee; argued for it. Johnson gave it all his support, lined up all the votes and passed it, and because of all the things in the bill and it being an election year, Eisenhower really did not have the nerve not to sign it, and he did sign the bill.

Then Kerr was the keynote speaker at the Democratic convention that year, and, lo and behold, to my vast astonishment he launched his speech about the fact that the Democratic Party, the really crowning jewel in its achievements, was this action of achieving disability insurance over the bitter opposition of the Republicans and so forth and so on.

I just thought the whole thing was terribly funny, but later on Tex was seeing Walter Jenkins somewhere and in making conversation he said, "Oh, Wicky was so pleased at what happened on disability insurance. It really was an amazing turn-about for Senator Kerr." And Walter said, "Well, of course, it was her memorandum that did it."

M: But no word to you.

W: Well, no, but this was typical. Johnson had taken this, had seen the political implications--one could always argue on humanitarian grounds--and he, who was very close to Kerr, had persuaded Kerr of the logic of it. But this is an example of--

G: This business of not getting an answer is a good [sign]. The only time I ever wrote him when he was in the White House was right after the election when the State Department escalated this Article 19 issue to a point where they even refused to contribute to the U.N. development program on the grounds that somehow it was sort of an effort to get votes on our side on Article 19.* I was so shocked at such stupidity because I know how the developing countries feel about it; it didn't hurt the Russians a damned bit--this hurt the developing countries. One of those typical bureaucratic bits of nonsense. I was furious and I called up some friends in the State Department to raise hell about it and got nothing but a lot of guff from them. So after trying to get Abe or someone else, Abe said, "Call the President yourself." I didn't want to call him on it; after all, I wasn't supposed to be doing things like that. But finally I sat down and wrote him a real hot one-page letter, saying I doubted very much that he knew about this and doubted that it had gone up to him because I couldn't imagine his approving it--I suspected this was just a bureaucratic thing, but it looked like hell to cut out the aid contribution because the Russians weren't paying their dues to the UN; it's like being mad at your wife and kicking your cat. I never got an answer to that; oh, I got a very friendly acknowledgement, you know, "Love to you and Wicky" kind of

* See attachments at end of transcript

thing. But I'm sure many other people took the same line, that this was nonsense. But he never spoke to me about it. I know he got the letter. I sent it through the right channels.

M: What about those channels? Did Walter Jenkins' departure hurt pretty badly?

G: It hurt me, because Walter was somebody that you knew you could get to the President [through].

W: It hurt the President.

G: One thing about Walter, I don't know the other people as well, but you felt that if you told Walter something, the President would get it exactly the way you told him. There wasn't any body English on it, there wasn't any effort to put himself into the picture. You could be absolutely sure that what you told Walter would be transmitted in the way, with all the inflections and manners. I suppose if you were dead drunk when you told him, he might even mention this.

But the problem always is how you get to the President in a way that doesn't have any other forces there.

W: Yes, I think that despite the fact that we seem to stress specific contacts because it's what you want, we pick out those occasions in which we have had communication with him directly or maybe even had influence, had been asked to advise him. One really exercises this initiative very, very rarely.

G: Oh, God, how I searched my soul before I wrote him that letter! Even at the end of my assignment, I wrote him because I felt he should do

something about the question right now on the size of the U.S. contribution. I debated at great length before I wrote him.

W: I think one reason that he will occasionally turn to someone like Tex and me is that we do not press our projects or aspirations or desires of the moment on him except in really very acute situations.

I was going to tell you one funny anecdote, but it's a good example of the way that Johnson tends to transfer associations from one person to another. As I say, I knew him really quite well from 1935 and theyears that followed that up till about 1950. Later on I recommended to him that he take the advice of Wilbur Cohen on social security matters, whom he didn't know at all, but I had known Wilbur over many years. I have the exchange of correspondence where I wrote him and he wrote me and said that he appreciated my advice and he would do so. And he did. Later, when he became vice president, Wilbur was there as a Kennedy appointee and he was practically the only one of the Kennedy appointees with whom Johnson had any sense of association at all. He greeted him as an old associate. It was all derivative from me because he hadk-own me a long time and he associated Wilbur Cohen with me. (Tape ends abruptly)

[End of Tape 2 of 2 and Interview I]

November 17, 1964

Mr. Jack Valenti
The White House
Washington, D.C.

Dear Jack,

I would be grateful if you could get the enclosed letter to the President. As you will see, it is intended only for him.

Warmest regards from Wicky and me to you and MM.

Sincerely,

Arthur Goldschmidt

Enclosure

544 East 86th Street
New York, New York 10028

November 17, 1964

The President
The White House
Washington, D.C.

Dear Mr. President,

Helen Douglas has persuaded me that we whose love for you adds a dimension to our high hopes for your Presidency have a special responsibility to write you letters such as this.

The sound US position of insisting on the payment of United Nations assessments is being undermined by withholding the US pledge to the UN voluntary aid funds. A more serious consequence is that this tactic is harmful to US prestige because it gives the false impression that we are ready to sacrifice our policy of aiding the poorer countries to the dues issue. US failure to contribute does not hurt the Russians; instead, it has removed the onus of their failure to meet their obligations. Nor is it likely to produce more votes for the US position.

The attached New York Times editorial called the shots accurately. This is the first time in my fourteen years here that I have heard only universal criticism of a US move from delegates, even though there is general agreement with its position on UN assessments.

What seems most unfair to your personal friends is the tendency to blame you for this tactic. Perhaps it is because diplomats do not believe such a mistake could come from their profession. Moreover, it is assumed that such a radical position would require your blessing if not your initiative. This is serious: the way the people abroad feel about the President is the single most important factor in the foreign image of the US, and the popularity of the US President in other countries is a key instrument for US policy. This comes at an especially unfortunate time when all supporters of international cooperation were relieved by your resounding victory and its implicit repudiation of isolationism and strong-arm tactics in foreign affairs.

I have no easy answer for overcoming these effects. Could you, personally and publicly, announce your own support for U Thant's proposed higher target of $200 million even though the amount so far appropriated by Congress provides 40 percent matching for only about $150 million? Additionally, some early large multilateral initiatives, such as using the UN in the development of the Mekong River, might be helpful. Finally, you might speak here and repeat your enormous success with the delegations at the last General Assembly.

I am leaving for Africa on Friday for a few weeks, but I felt I had to tell you what was in my heart before I left.

Warmest regards from Wicky and me to you and Lady Bird.

Sincerely,

Arthur Goldschmidt

He knows that the spread of nuclear knowl-

'Bombshell' at the U.N.

The decision of the United States not to pledge any more funds for United Nations technical assistance has been greeted with dismay in the world organization. A high U.N. source termed it "a bombshell." The explosion will be even greater if the United States carries out its implied threat to reduce other financial contributions to the United Nations.

Cutting technical assistance is ill-advised because the sufferers are not going to be the Russians, whom the United States wants to punish for refusing to pay their arrears for the U.N. peace-keeping machinery. The underdeveloped nations and the poor people who need the assistance are the ones who will suffer.

A possible purpose of the United States move is to put the underdeveloped nation-members of the General Assembly under notice that they either vote as Washington wants them to vote or they will lose their share of the $60 million the United States was expected to contribute to the technical assistance program.

This sort of policy inevitably boomerangs, aside from creating a deplorable image of the United States. Second thoughts are in order before the pledging conference meets Nov. 16.

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

November 20, 1964

Dear Tex:

I am always glad to hear from you. Your good sense and your judgment are invaluable to me. I will give what you say serious consideration.

Lady Bird and I send our love to you and Wicky.

Sincerely,

Mr. Arthur Goldschmidt
544 East 86th Street
New York 28, N.Y.

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Legal Agreement pertaining to the Oral History Interview of Arthur E. Goldschmidt and Elizabeth Wickenden (Mrs. Goldschmidt)

In accordance with the provisions of Chapter 21 of Title 44, United States Code, and subject to the terms and conditions hereinafter set forth, we, Arthur E. Goldschmidt and Elizabeth Wickenden, of New York, New York, do hereby give, donate and convey to the United States of America all our rights, title and interest in the tape recording and transcript of a personal interview conducted on June 3, 1969 at New York City, and prepared for deposit in the Lyndon Baines Johnson Library.

This assignment is subject to the following terms and conditions:

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(2) The tape recording shall be available to those researchers who have access to the transcript.

(3) We hereby assign to the United States Government all copyright we may have in the interview transcript and tape.

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A. E. Goldschmidt
Donor

March 18, 1979
Date

Elizabeth Wickenden Goldschmidt
Donor

March 18, 1979
Date

James B. Rhoads
Archivist of the United States

April 27, 1979
Date