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INTERVIEW I

DATE: June 14, 1971

INTERVIEWEE: CHARLES M. HAAR

INTERVIEWER: JOE B. FRANTZ

PLACE: Mr. Haar's office, Cambridge, Massachusetts

Tape 1 of 1

F: This is an interview with Mr. Charles M. Haar, former assistant secretary of Housing and Urban Development. First of all, we might get into one personal question. That is, how you became associated with Lyndon Johnson in the first place. Had you met him previously?

H: Yes. I became associated with him in 1965, when I worked for him on a task force on the preservation of natural beauty, when he appointed me as chairman of that group.

F: Previous to that you had worked with Robert Wood here, right? I'm leading the witness a little bit.

H: No, no. When Archie Cox, who was at the law school, was running the brain trust for John F. Kennedy at that time, Archie asked me a few times to prepare some speeches on housing. And I did that. I prepared a couple of speeches for John F. Kennedy, and of course, I had met him when he was by here. But that was really where my expertise was, in housing, finance, and management.

F: You had worked also, as I recall, for Teddy Kennedy in that campaign against Edward McCormack.

H: Yes, that is right. I was one of the three or four academics, with Sam Beer and Robert Wood, who had seen merits in the brother and thought that nepotism was not that strong a factor here. I went out

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with Edward Kennedy, as a matter of fact, on one of his campaign rounds through the state of Massachusetts, and spent a whole day and an evening until we landed in New Bedford about five o'clock in the morning, and just watched him campaign and how he responded under pressure. At that time it was pretty rough on him, because most people were thinking he was trying to ride in on the coattails of his brothers, which to some degree perhaps he was. Especially at that time the big issue was the separation of church and state. I thought he handled himself very well on that. Even though he'd been pushed and badgered by a couple of Knights of Columbus informal meetings that Eddie McCormack had been by, and said he was going to give us all we needed for the parochial schools, and even though there was nobody there except the people asking him the questions, himself and myself, he still stuck to his guns and thought that that was a question which hovered over the brim of unconstitutionality, and therefore he would not sanction it.

But I guess this is a little peripheral to what we're talking about.

F: What I was trying to establish was that you did have a Kennedy connection, but you really didn't use that as a step to Johnson.

H: Let me tell you how I met Mr. Johnson. I think it all started when I took my family--is it all right to get personal and to spend time on that?

F: Oh, yes.

H: I took my family to the New York City World's Fair at that time. I remember we had gone to see the General Motors show, which was very impressive. Then there was a tremendous thunderstorm that day, and we

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had all gotten soaked. I drove over to my sister's house in Great Neck, Long Island, which wasn't too far from the World's Fair--we had driven down from Cambridge--and there was a telephone call waiting for me there from the White House, which surprised me a great deal.

F: It gave your sister something to think about, didn't it?

H: Yes, it certainly gave my sister something to think about. It also helped my sibling relationship with her, and gave all sorts of prestige. I was rather surprised in that I wasn't then accustomed to the relentlessness of the bloodhound quality of the White House operators, because they had traced me, I don't know how, to where I was. They had figured out I would be visiting my sister and called us there.

It turned out to be Dick Goodwin, who was at that time at the point of putting together those original eleven task forces for President Johnson. Dick, who had been a student of mine here at the law school--in fact, I think he was a student in Property I the very first year that I was teaching, so we both were freshmen or starting off on the same level. At any rate, Dick called me, and he said that they were setting up some task forces, and there was this one on cities that he would like me to be on and which was more natural for the kind of work I had been doing. I had been working with Dick earlier. He had been sending me some memoranda and some questions on speeches and so on, and I had done some work. Earlier I had had an opportunity to come to Washington to work, but I really had not thought of myself as working in government. I considered myself simply a professor and to teach, and so I had simply had the best of both worlds by coming in and telling them what they

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were doing wrong and then getting out before anything else could happen.

At any rate, Dick said there was that committee. But he also said there was this thing they were trying to put together. They weren't quite sure what it was. It was the environment, it was the quality of life, it was beauty, and it was a very amorphous and difficult subject. But he wondered if I might not like to be on that one rather than perhaps the more obvious one of the cities. Well, I thought about it for thirty seconds, and I said, "Yes, that sounds pretty good; it sounds interesting." So he said, "Well, fine. Why don't you come down to Washington on such-and-such a date?"

Such-and-such a date arrived, and I came down to the Bureau of the Budget building and was admitted there, and again [was] much taken back by all the badges and all the security clearances and so forth. I met Dick in the hall and he came out and shook hands and said, "How are you?" I said, "Fine," and so on. He said, "Listen, you're chairman of this task force." I jumped back because, inexperienced as I was, I knew that the Washington game was to get some people, but then to get somebody who had to do the work, which was one of the things I thought of in my mind that I would not do. I never knew what the story was. I think that the most logical person to have been chairman was, of course, Laurance Rockefeller at that time. But it could be that either he did not want it, or because of his status as a Republican, if that had been an issue, or perhaps they wanted more an academic kind of background

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for chairman. I don't know. But he told me I was the chairman, and I said, "Well, all right."

Then we walked into the room, and there was a group of people who had been pulled together by Dick. They were quite an interesting crew. There was Jane Jacobs who, as you know, wrote The Death and Life of American Cities and who had discovered women's liberation before it had become a popular movement. There was Loren Eiseley, who's a marvelous poet, anthropologist-poet, who writes about nature--

F: I know Loren very well.

H: Yes? He's a remarkable guy. There was a more practical man, Goddard--shall I spend some time on that?

F: Yes.

H: --who was in charge of the water laws of the state of Pennsylvania, and a very detailed kind of person, not one that you would tackle for vision. But we had enough vision, and he knew a tremendous amount of the practicalities and realities. Then [there was William H.] Holly Whyte, an organization man and now part of the organization of conservation and natural beauty; Laurance Rockefeller, of course. Now let's see, who else was there? Ken Galbraith was a member of the task force, but he did not show up at this meeting.

F: Did Edgar Kaiser, Jr. work with you on this? I know he got together with you somewhere in life.

H: No, that was later on. The one who worked with us was Lamb at the Bureau of the Budget, who's now with the Rockefeller group. And Reston, Jr., James Reston's son, was assigned to us. I think he was a Fellow

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in Interior at the time, and he worked with us. Whom have I not included in that group who should be there? Perhaps it will come to me.

Well, we sat around in this large room in the Bureau of the Budget. Dick Goodwin gave us our mandate, which was to come up with some ideas for a legislative package dealing with beauty, with beautification, with what the federal government could do to aid private citizens, states, and local governments in doing something about the--

F: Did he set any outer limitations for you, or were you in a sense to think on this in a blue-sky manner, to come up with whatever you--

H: It was very much in a blue-sky manner. He had been tentative over the telephone, and I guess he hadn't been able to get more concrete with the subject. He had some ideas, and the people there came up with some notions. Some were very familiar with the Department of Interior, and there was a thought that we ought to do something about rivers. Later on we came up with something, the Clean Rivers Act, but at that time that was not there.

We also had some ideas about zoning. We talked a little bit about land pollution as a concept, as well as air pollution and water pollution, and that things might be done with that. Of course, the Bureau of Public Roads came in for sharp criticism in the way it managed to destroy the environment, and dealt with cities the way it dealt with the countryside.

F: Probably the Corps of Engineers.

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H: Yes, the Army Corps of Engineers was considered. We were told that Joe Fisher was over there working on the organization of the cabinet departments, and I guess Mr. Nixon is also still working on that. Presumably his successor will still be working on getting the Department of Agriculture and Department of Interior into some kind of Department of Natural Resources and so forth.

I wasn't quite aware at the time of how interesting and how important a job this was. I thought it was sort of a one-day affair. I didn't know that, a) the President was terribly serious about this, and b) that we were going to have a great deal of power in the sense of being able to drag out issues, cross-examine high level people in the various governmental departments, and really try to come out with some sorts of concepts.

F: You really had the effect of a subpoena power in a practical sense.

H: We did, as will come out shortly.

At any rate, we were here, and then Dick said, "Come on over and meet the President." Now this was, again, a surprise to all of us. Again, I had not thought that this was of such moment that the President would take time from his schedule to see us, but I was delighted, naturally, as I think all the rest of us were. So we ambled out, and we went over to the West Wing of the White House. The President was in some kind of conference, and we were ushered into this room which is just off from . . . .

F: The Fish Room?

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H: The Fish Room. We sat down in the Fish Room. Everybody was sort of quiet. We were sitting around in the chairs. There were some nice paintings on loan there, including some of the Remingtons that were there at the time. We just were talking. Then the President walked in. He went around shaking all our hands. This was the first time that I saw Lyndon Johnson in person. At this time, I think he was doing extraordinarily well, and he bore himself in that fashion. I know I was struck by the fact of what a big man he was. I of course had seen him on television, but this first time that I met him and also all the subsequent times, I was always surprised at how much bigger he is than his pictures or television gives him.

F: He looks tremendous, really.

H: Yes. First of all, he's tall. I mean I'm six feet tall, barely, but he seems much bigger than that. His bubble is much smaller than most people, you know, this phrase the anthropologists use. He had this habit of coming very close to you, of drawing you in very close, of putting his arm around your shoulder, and sort of hugging you and bringing you in close. In American society we don't do that as often as we should. I think in European society you do that much more. Also you don't expect that to happen to you when you're dealing with the president of the United States. So the combination is sort of unnerving, a mixture of pleasantness and unpleasantness. You know, you just wonder what are you doing here with this man.

F: You're not sure how you're going to react.

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H: Right. He was there. As I say, there was a tremendous presence that you felt in the room. Now, I've seen Mr. Nixon since, and I suppose this is a different attitude, but I did feel that Lyndon Johnson had a tremendous sort of a star quality, a charismatic magnetism in a small room of this sort, that when he came in he just dominated the whole room. It seemed to be small by contrast with his presence.

Well, he went around, shaking all our hands. He didn't know any of us except for Laurance Rockefeller, but he shook all our hands and said he was delighted to meet us. He went around and shook hands and then sat down. Then [he] talked for about fifteen to twenty minutes on this subject matter of natural beauty. He was highly eloquent. This was not a prepared speech. This was something that Dick hadn't written for him, but this came right off, as we say, the top of his head. (Interruption)

H: Should I continue with this sort of irrelevancies?

F: Yes.

H: All right. Now what did he want? He said something which I heard him say many times thereafter, and he meant it. He said first of all, he wanted us to probe for the merits, not worry about the politics at all. Leave the politics to the professionals, to himself. What he wanted was the best answer, the best possible solution for the country at this time to this particular question. Whether it was realizable or what sacrifices would have to be made for how you traded off for other purposes, leave that to him, but come to him with the best thinking we could.

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Then he did another thing which I heard at times, which I don't think has been enunciated enough. The other thing was how grateful he was, how genuinely grateful he was that we people who were so busy [were] taking times off our lives, our private lives, our public lives, to come do it for the American people and for himself, to give the best of what was in us to this particular problem.

Now of course as far as I was concerned, I was having a ball at this time. This was the greatest thing that could happen to me.

F: You were waiting to get home and tell your wife what he said!

H: Yes, I could hardly wait to tell my wife and my friends! And to think that I was sacrificing myself. Well, I guess I thought about it a little bit. I couldn't think about anything else.

Then he talked about beauty. In a way sometimes it seems incongruous, and I don't know why it should be. You think of a little girl on a calendar perhaps, or you think of Lord Tennyson looking at Tintern Abbey or something and making a poem up. I think this has been the problem of beauty, and this may be in American life. It sort of has a feminine aura to it, you know, and it's something sissy-like. It's a bad word, "beauty," and that's one of the struggles we had on the task force.

F: Ladies' garden clubs and so forth.

H: Ladies' garden clubs. You throw a few flowers, and the blacks are supposed to be happy inside the ghetto. I mean, it has that kind of incongruity about it. Now, when Lyndon Johnson talked about it, it became a much more masculine

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approach, and it became much more talking of natural parks and society. It became much more acceptable.

(Interruption)

As I was saying, he gave it that kind of elemental power, which I think the object wanted. We sort of came up with things like the quality of urban life, which I think is a little bit better and in a way precedes the ecological drive and movement. It's no better and no worse. Really, these are terrible words to try to give a content to. I know in our final report I used a quotation from Thomas Jefferson which the President also used in a speech, and there he did use the words "natural beauty" and the needs for that.

But at any rate, the President was a very inspiring--I would say it was a very inspiring fifteen or twenty minutes. You know when you're in the presence of power--and later on when we went back just to talk about what we would do next--there's a tendency in the present time to be a little flip about it in some ways. But that was not at all the case here. There was a very serious charge and he carried it off, and he indicated that he was most serious about doing something. This was the most encouraging thing about that particular performance.

F: Did he give you a timetable--

H: Yes.

F: --or were you just to get the job done?

H: Yes, we had a timetable. It was an impossible timetable, which I guess is characteristic of good executives, I've decided. It was after exams.

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I had come down after grading, so it must have been some time in June, and he wanted this thing in by September. Really we came in on time. What he had in mind was the legislative session, and it was going to go through the Bureau of the Budget and get some clearances and so forth.

So that was the very first time that I saw the President, and it was a most impressive occasion.

F: Did you get the idea that he had named you as chairman out of the group or that Dick Goodwin had done it?

H: I think I would like to believe that the President had made me his chairman, but I have the impression that he did not. Well, he did know who I was as chairman. It could very well have been because later on I found out that he paid attention to details, you know, and that kind of detail a great deal. I never did check [it] out. I think it was Dick's idea, and that he must have suggested it to the President, and the President said, "Well, if you know him and it seems all right to you, it will be okay with me." I mean, something of that sort. He just simply checked it off when you get this "Yes-No" kind of memorandum to him: "Okay."

F: Did you pick your staff, or was it picked for you?

H: The staff was picked for me in the sense that we were given this man from the Bureau of the Budget, who was the examiner for the Department of Labor, George Lamb, and he was very good. Then we were given a budget. As I understood later on, say for instance, when talking with Bob Wood, who was at that time chairing the city one, we had a totally different relationship than he had with Weaver at HHFA at that time.

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He had trouble a) getting information; b) getting staff; c) getting money.

So as far as Udall was concerned--who I guess was our prime source, although we didn't work with him because we were being very critical of his department--he was as helpful as could be in that sense. He gave us a budget of fifty thousand dollars, which we didn't spend all of. But we had fifty thousand dollars. We were free to commission things. What I did was, I commissioned a couple of papers from some of my colleagues here, whom I have a good deal of respect for, and one or two papers elsewhere.

Then the rest of it was simply all of us sitting around, meeting about every week or so, and just talking about the things.

F: Were you on per diem?

H: Yes, we were on per diem. We were on the White House per diem.

F: Everybody more or less kept his own job, and this was just something you tacked on top.

H: That's right. I think they all were on that kind of operation. I think I was making--what was it?--$83.45, something like that, from the Bureau of the Budget per diem, which was less than you got for a private practice but was standard for government practice, no more. They were very conscientious about it, to keep within the budget limitations.

The other sources of information were the government departments themselves. Do you want me to spend time on this sort of thing?

F: Yes, I do.

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H: I went around with George. As chairman it fell on me to go, after talking to the task force members, who were most helpful, to--we tried to get some things . . . . I really ought to pull out some working papers to be full with you. I don't have them here. It would take some time.

F: I can come back.

H: All right, that will be fine. What I did was, [I] went to various departments. I still recall I was much impressed by the Department of Agriculture. We had told them about our assignment, and we were ushered in--I guess it was Baker who was then assistant secretary of the Department of Agriculture--and there was this enormous room. I was not used then to government offices and the splendor which older departments have bequeathed to them from the past. He had with him about fifteen people. I walked in with George, and we talked with them and told them very briefly what our assignment was. He introduced me to these people, and they all were heads of the bureaus. They were head of the department of conservation, there was the Extension Service, there were the economists, the Forest Service.

We talked, and we said we were interested in immediate legislative proposals that ought to be done which would improve their programs and give a better service to the consumer. We were interested in any of their programs that had an environmental impact. Did they license any coal mining? Did they do any stripping of timber? Did they do any polluting? Did they have any relations to cities? Did they have any recreation and open space program? And what surprised me about

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agriculture was a) how much manpower they had. I've always believed and sensed that they're overstaffed, which I think is no news to anybody who knows Washington.

F: Agriculture declines in relative importance in this country, and the department gets larger.

H: Yes. When I was in HUD they had about 110,000 people, we had 14,700. Maybe that's why they do a better job than we did. But at any rate, they had this tremendous staff. And they were eager for a mission. So they produced for us, subsequently, about--well, it measured about eight inches in depth, but it was a tremendous sort of report of what they did, changes in legislation, and kind of their recommendations.

On the other hand, I remember we walked into HUD, and they had just gotten at that time the very first program on beautification. We went in and we talked with Bill Slayton, who was then urban renewal commissioner. Bill had a couple of guys with him, and he was as cagey and as cautious and as nonresponsive as I'm afraid I was at times when somebody from the White House was trying to get some information out of me that I thought they would be much better off not having, because they couldn't really quite understand how to deal with it. He was very noncommittal. I asked him for some criteria they used, and he agreed he would furnish us some papers. We never got them from HUD. Later on George followed up. I know that we went back to Bill, and Bill called up Weaver at HHFA. I guess they were shorthanded and also they didn't have very much on beautification.

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At that time the man in charge of beautification was Art Davis. He came later on. We also brought in some people to talk to the task force. That was our fourth way of getting information and ideas. One was the specially commissioned papers; two was from the departments;--what was three?--I gave you a third; the fourth was having the people themselves who ran certain programs [come in]. We had the Open Space head, Sullivan, come in from Interior; we had Art Davis come in from HUD, and Art did a very beautiful job of presenting what the department was doing. It turned out that this was more like a Bureau of the Budget presentation: objectives; goals; policies; how you try to put open space with public housing laws; how you try to provide some recreation. But at that time, as you recall, there was a different criteria. They were brand new programs, Open Space. Interior was sort of doing some imperialism, coming into the cities, working through the states, making grants to cities for Open Space, and giving 30 per cent grants. HUD, on the other hand, was supposed to be in the inner city and was giving 20 per cent grants, except when there was a metropolitan area coordination where it would give 10 per cent more. All the communities we talked to, the smaller communities, the mayors, just didn't know what the heck to do. They didn't know which program they qualified under. They'd submit an application to Interior and six months later they'd be kicked back and [Interior would] say, "Go to HUD." Or they'd go to HUD, and they'd be kicked back to go to Interior. There was this sort of confusion because they were new programs.

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I guess the United States at that time was just groping a little bit for the environment. It was the beginning of the movement that somehow the standard of living, the gross national product, was not enough. That as the most powerful, most technologically advanced country in the world, we also ought to have some kind of environment, some kind of physical setting which was worthy of this kind of production power and of some of the more emotive ideals.

F: Did Interior seem to think you were intruding?

H: No. I think Interior welcomed us, not as warmly as Agriculture; I think Interior was a little bit worried. I would guess Agriculture had nothing to lose, in a sense. HUD was afraid it might be losing some of these new programs, and anyway, "What are these guys doing? We ought to be advising the President directly!" I think Agriculture [people] were shrewder bureaucrats, and they figured that you might as well get along with these outsiders.

At this time this was something new. It hadn't been tried. I remember talking with a fellow whom I got to know at the Bureau of the Budget, and sort of commiserating and claiming that, you know, it was a very short time and enormous amounts of material. I found myself absorbed. I was reading more and more of these reports about the rivers and mountains, national parks, about state and local programs, trying to figure out what you do. Because our problem was, how do you get all this philosophy--a man like Eiseley could write so beautifully, and at times he talked in the room about the kind of America that we were and that we ought to be. It was just inspirational and marvelously

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written. We captured, I think, some of that in our final report. But my problem the whole time, as a lawyer, was what do we do with it? I mean, it's great talk, it's great for speeches, it's great for inspiring people, but how do you spend money for it? How do you get a department to do something which it otherwise would not do? How can the President tell somebody to do something? What's the handle? What's the lever? That's what I was looking for all the time, and I was really groping.

F: Did the legalities concern you as a lawyer, or did you just sort of dismiss legalities?

H: I think there are hot lawyers, cold lawyers. I tend to be a hot lawyer, and I think the welfare clause has been broadly interpreted ever since the Davis and the Sewing Machine case. If it makes sense and has some morality behind it, it will probably be constitutional. Then the other statutory part you just draft. No, I don't think that was the real problem. The problem was--

F: Translation.

H: --translation. How do you get into implementation? There is so much difference you have in ideas. [It is] like belling the cat. You have a great idea: it would be nice to bell the cat; it would be nice to do something about industrial pollution. How do you work it? Do you put a sanction? Do you hit them over the head? Do you try incentives? What things move people certain ways? That was where I kept pushing things and trying to find out.

F: Aside from the fact that during your obvious brainstorming everybody would go off on his particular tack, was the committee fairly cohesive?

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H: I think we were one of the happier committees. I gathered this from Dick, too, who sat in on a few. First of all, we felt that we were onto something which was new. We felt we were onto something that hadn't been done before. We felt that we were onto something that was very important. I would say that there were very few people there who were industry-minded. I guess almost by natural process of selection we were all activists. We all believed in government action. We believed things could happen by way of legislation and money incentives. I don't think there were any real extremists.

We had some problems. I tell you, at one time--and I learned later from experience--task forces have lives of their own. There is, first of all, the first meeting or two where people by and large are reluctant to speak, and when they speak it's for station identification. It really is. They're up there. It's not particularly pertinent or relevant to whatever you're discussing, but they're sort of letting you know that they're a professor at MIT. They're pretty smart. They specialize in mathematics, and they think this problem has been slighted because you haven't put equations into it. Or somebody gets up and sort of indicates that they're representing, even if they're a man, the woman's point of view, and that women's rights--you know, it's that sort of thing that goes on.

Then there are times when you move on, and you think you're making wonderful progress. Then there comes a couple of sessions when, gee, you wish you'd never got mixed up with this ball of wax. It is just annoyances. Everything is so difficult! Then there are other periods.

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But you do make progress. I was on quite a few task forces for the President over time, everything from aviation to nursing homes to housing to suburban problems, and I do think they have lives. They vary. They differ depending on the chairman and some of the quirks of the individuals.

In our case, if I may say so, Jane Jacobs was very funny. Because she got up one time, and she sort of said that, "Everybody in this room is just talking a lot of nonsense, a lot of horse shit. We don't know what we're doing. We don't know what we're saying." That she thinks the whole problem--I guess at that time she was sort of groping towards the notion that the problem was private property, and as long as you had the profit motive it wouldn't work and so on. Now, you can utter that kind of criticism and get away with it. She uttered it in such a way that she really couldn't get away with it. She was a very smart woman. I don't know if you ever met her--she's up in Canada now, in Toronto--a very smart woman. She's an individualist. She sees the world in a nonconventional way, in a very interesting way. But the way she did it, she sort of became a lightening rod which united the rest of us. Instead of thinking how long-winded this man is, or instead of thinking, "When is he going to get to the point?" or, "Well, that's interesting, but it has been done before. We ought to do something else," you sort of sympathized with all of the people you worked with. And then she was sort of out there for a while. Then she came back in because she is a professional writer. She wrote for and was a good friend of Holly Whyte, who is also a professional person.

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No, I think it was a very compatible group. I may be wrong, but I think it was. We didn't have any question of a dissenting opinion, or a minority report, or anything of that sort.

F: No schisms or anything.

H: No, no. I've been in a few, like on the Safe Streets Act, where it was pretty violent, but I don't think anybody ever lost their temper. Part of it was, we spent some time in New York. We had some offices at Radio City which Rockefeller provided at that time. We had these sumptuous meals. So that relaxed everybody.

F: What did you do in New York?

H: We just met as a task force. It was more convenient.

F: You didn't go out and do kind of a field study?

H: One of the things we wanted to do--because this was kind of an interesting thing to do--we had gotten the army to agree to give us a plane, and we were going to fly out and look at some of these national parks, and go up to Alaska and look at some of the lakes, and make some recommendations. It turned out though that our time was too short, and we just couldn't make that trip. I wish we had made some field trips. I wish we had interviewed more witnesses. That's what I learned later on to do.

But the thing was, this was brand new. There was a lot of capital accumulated. A lot of people in departments had been thinking ideas. Some of my friends had stuff. People were clipping items, and you got that.

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Really it was so big that wherever you bit, you could hit gold, as it were, come up with some ideas that were later put together. Tax law. There was a lot of stuff on the tax law. I had a couple of my colleagues here. Wolfman, who's now the dean of the Pennsylvania law school, did a memo on what were the tax incentives and tax devices to encourage people to give easements, or to give gifts of land, and that kind of thing.

F: To a great extent your job on this early task force was as much to pull things together as it was to initiate them.

H: That's right. I think it was really to raid the capital that already existed, to tap it and put it into some legislative do-able form for the President. I think that's how we saw the job. Well, after all, you have two months, and it's not a full-time job, it's a part-time job, and you have this kind of limited budget. I mean, fifty thousand dollars is a lot of money, but still when you think of a secretary or hiring somebody, you eat it up damned fast.

So we were moving very quickly. Also what struck us were two things. One was how to capture the conscience of the king. This was one of our items. I did not know at the time, nor did other people know--and I would have thought that the pipelines of the Rockefeller group were as good as any there--of the great interest of Mrs. Johnson in this operation, nor that the President was going to make this one of his very carefully nurtured babies. I didn't realize that at the time. What I was trying to think of was how do you capture the conscience of the king when he's in the middle of foreign affairs, he's in the middle

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of housing and slums, in the middle of this great education [program], his health programs. How do you tackle him on this?

That was one of the [reasons] why I thought earlier we should write a very short report. I gathered from my friends whom I called up--John Gardner was in Education at that time, chairing Education--that a lot of them were doing encyclopedic reports. They were pulling in appendices. I could see it where John, for instance, had been doing a lot of work at Carnegie where he was president at the time. You know, he had a lot of stuff. He just pulled them out of his desk and put it in and said, "We ought to have a whole foreign program." I didn't have that. So I thought to make a virtue out of it was to write ten, twenty pages at most, which would tell the President what the problem was, what the dramatic choices were. And as we worked on it, it seemed to me that one theme we could do was this "New Conservation." That we'd had the "Old Conservation" with Theodore Roosevelt and [Gifford] Pinchot, and with Franklin D. Roosevelt, who I knew was a hero of the President's. And here was a chance to tell him that here was the "New Conservation." This was going to be his domestic program. Instead of the "Old Conservation," which dealt mainly with the West, with open lands, with minerals, grazing rights, this was the new conservation. And it got the phrase, "beauty is in the eye of the beholder," that cliche. Well, if beauty is in the eye of the beholder, we ought to encourage beauty where the beholders are. And where are the beholders? They're in that

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damned standard metropolitan statistical area which is that dull census collation. That is where the people are.

So I wanted to give him the theme of the "New Conservation." That this would be his baby, and he would be the president responsible for launching it. The way the two Roosevelts brought the West and that part of the heritage of America into the mainstream of politics and thinking, so Lyndon Johnson should bring the "New Conservation," the rivers, the harbors, the parks, the working class areas where the people were, right in the cities, and in the metropolitan areas, to the people. That would be his conservation. That was the theme that came out, and I think was a very good theme and a very useful one.

But the point was to write a punchy kind of thing to him. One that would capture his imagination, and would have five or six immediate legislative steps that he could do. Tax was one. The rivers was one. A demonstration project hit me very strongly. We played with that for a while. In other words, you concentrated your resources instead of dissipating them all over this big country; a little bit here, a little bit there, it just gets swallowed up with no result. Let's take something specific.

So for a while we horsed around with Washington. Let's make Washington a demonstration city. I didn't like that because of the disparities in the black and the white population, that poverty. Then how about the Potomac? Could the Potomac be made a model? I was a little reluctant. We finally put that in, take the Potomac and really demonstrate how if you concentrate the Army [Corps of] Engineers, Interior, HUD, stop the

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silting from subdivisions, you could reclaim that river. We came up with some sort of river program.

The National Parks seemed to be one that there was just a lot of trouble with. Then the highways. That's a lever. You're already doing highways, and that's where we introduced what later became Section 127 of the Highway Act, which provided for using some of the trust fund money for landscaping, for treeing it, and for also trying to avoid some of the more egregious kinds of land-takings and disruptions of homes and communities that highways too often do.

So that was really the kind of program we wanted to come up with, and I think did come up with. We also made some recommendations about organizations, how HUD should move. We also tried to cheer on people, you know, told Interior that it was right in moving in this direction, but it ought to move with a little more energy, a little more forcefulness.

Agriculture had some marvelous programs which we put in. We were dealing with junkyards, billboards. That later became the Billboard Program too, and the junkyards came out of our deliberation, this sort of thing.

F: I don't have to ask you whether you thought you got the President's attention. What came down the line sort of shows that you did. Incidentally, did you sort of issue the first call for this White House Conference on [Natural Beauty?]

H: Ah, yes. That was an interesting one. Our original report did not contain that provision. It came up in discussions with the group.

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"Let's have a White House Conference on Natural Beauty." Well, a couple of the people who were more experienced than myself, people like Holly Whyte again, George, they said, "Oh no, not another White House conference! We've had so many White House conferences under the sun. Nothing can come of it. Everybody is going to recommend a White House conference, all the task forces. It's just no good." And our first typed version, which I have somewhere, did not include it. I also did a one-pager at the beginning of what the main recommendations were.

Then talking with George Lamb on the phone because it was being typed in the Bureau of the Budget--that last version--I said, "I don't know, what do you think of the conference? We have a bunch of recommendations here, maybe we ought to try that one." He said, "Look, you can put in what you want." I said, "Well, the task force hasn't seen it. I'm not sure I want to do it." He said, "They will have a chance to react to it. We'll send it to them. Why don't you try it?"

I thought some more and went back to that fount of wisdom, to my wife, and talked about it some more there. And I said, "Well, what the heck have we got to lose?" So we did put it in. We recommended a conference, in our recommendations, for that.

At the recommendations stage also we had a chance to see the President, and this was a sort of funny incident, to me at any rate. You probably have heard so much of this it's probably boring to you.

F: No.

H: We went to the White House to present to the President our report. I went down, and George was with me; just the two of us were going to

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present it on behalf of the whole task force. We'd had some thought of all of us flying down to Texas, and this was supposed to be arranged. We were going to go down to the Ranch and present it to him. Then he had some other things to do. I think he had some visitors, so we didn't do that. So the next weekend we went down there.

I remember we got outside, and there was Secretary Udall. Oh, he'd come in also and talked with us once or twice about our program. I asked Dick what he was doing, you know, [why] the Secretary was there, and he said, "Oh, he'll come in with us, too, to present this to the President." I said, "That's fine. It'll give it more weight," and so on. Dick said, "Well, you know, he hasn't seen the President in four months." This came, again, as a shock to me. I don't think most people are aware of the fact that a cabinet officer may see the president so rarely. I suppose he sees him in the cabinet session which often turned out to be simply sort of lectures, or just going through the main item of business, and how little time . . . . Then it came out again, incidentally, I guess, when Hickel resigned, that he hadn't been able to see the President for months at a time in his case. Until you sit down, you think about the president of the United States, and you figure he has to sleep--though Johnson slept very little and had this double session--but still he has to sleep. He has a family. He has got to go to certain ceremonials he can't avoid with ambassadors and Polio Week and so forth. Then he has got to see the Congress and the majority leaders and the minority and he has got to meet with certain other people. You begin to figure it out. You see that the number of times that a cabinet

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officer can pick up the phone and talk to him, or can meet him like we're talking here, are so limited. But that was quite a surprising thing to me at that time to discover.

And he was most interested, again, in our task force. We came in. Just a few minutes he sort of ruffled through it, and he said, "It's a good report." I said I thought it was an excellent report, and so he just sort of smiled and put it away, and that was it. And we were ushered out. It was a very short, formal presentation of the report to him.

F: But you had the feeling that he would absorb something out of it?

H: I think we did. The other item that we did to catch the conscience of the king was we got a set of photographs together by Ansel Adams, some beautiful photographs, and we made a book out of it. Luckily we had the Rockefeller money behind us at this time. He subsidized that; he just paid for it, and we put it together. It's a very beautiful green book, and we presented that to the President at the time.

Now I don't know how many people read that report. Mr. Udall liked it and printed about five thousand copies of it. This would have really sunk us, I gather, at this time--this is what happened to the Heller proposal--but fortunately it was called back, and so that never leaked and never got out. He put it together with some very pretty pictures, but it never got out.

But that was also--sort of caught our breath. It was some of the excitement that was going on in the air, all these mistakes and

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possibilities. I got to know Mary Lasker, who was very busy on this beautification. Have you interviewed her, by the way?

F: Yes. It was the only place I ever took a private elevator with a Picasso in it.

H: Yes. That's nice, over in Beekman, over in east side New York. She called me at one time and said that she had read the report. She thought it was a wonderful report, the beautification report. She was very nice about it. So she had read it. How she read it, I don't know! Really, I should have asked her. You ask her some time how it got into her hands, because it was supposed to be a very private report, just for the eyes of the President and the Director of the Budget, I guess.

F: From your experience with this and the other task forces that you served on, did you get the feeling that the task force idea was really a pretty integral part of the kind of government capital from which the President could draw?

H: Yes. I'm all for task forces. First of all I think they bring together different groups. Even though you can kid about the fact that you're going to have a woman, and a businessman, and a trade union leader, and somebody who has made a contribution to the President's Club, they do represent certain different interests. They come to it not with the self-defensiveness that I began to find in myself when I dealt with my own programs of government. They come for a moment because the President is like a man in space with all the stars and lights glittering saying, "Look at me, look at me," and there's a tension that's pulled in all

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these ways. They serve for a moment to pull the President's concentration on a particular subject.

F: And they feel the significance of their task.

H: Oh yes, they do. They feel the significance of their task. There is something that you must have seen, too. When you walk into that West Wing, or when you walk into the Indian Treaty Room in the Bureau of the Budget, even if the President does not come in, but he sends his special counsel for the occasion--he'll send in Joe Califano or Harry McPherson--there is something that goes on with these people, and I've seen it with sophisticated, decadent almost, professors as well as very powerful industrialists like Edgar Kaiser; there is something in that room, an aura. The people come as close, I think, to being as selfless as they can. I don't think that I ever--perhaps a little bit self-defensive sometimes with the HUD issue. But other than that you really would say you're working for the President and he emphasized what is best: "Let me worry about the political." Of course, he worried about the political realities, because you knew if you told him something ridiculous like "nationalize all land," you're not going to be serving him or yourself. But the sense that you are a little bit at the levers, those enormous levers of government, and that something can happen which will make the situation different and hopefully better, I think it's a tremendously inspiring thing for people.

F: Did the Executive Office pretty well go down the line with your task force report on suggested legislation?

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H: Yes, they went right down the line on that. And you know, they had some problems later on. You remember when he kept the Congress in session, that time when he was going to the hospital, on that beautification [bill], because that's when Mrs. Johnson . . . . But they went down the line on that.

We were not terribly expensive. I always tried to draw money from existing funds like the Highway Trust Fund; in other words, that you wouldn't need a new tax or a new bill. The programs were in there, we were trying to make them run a little more efficiently. The Clean Rivers would have been very expensive, and so we started with a low budget on that. But I think this was the time still of euphoria; this was the time of the Great Society. The Michigan speech was still there.

F: And you thought it could be done.

H: Yes, thought it could be done. I still think it can be done.

F: Did you run into any witnesses who sort of equated what you were doing with, say, the home-and-motherhood concept? In other words, "So what? Everybody's for beauty."

H: Oh, yes. That was a question I kept asking, too. Who were the groups who were against us? I mean, everybody is for motherhood. This got us to some of the questions of "user charges" which we began recommending for the pollution. In other words, that you have an economics of welfare, and that the price of increased production should be borne by the consumer of that particular product, or the industrialist, which I suppose would raise a good many issues.

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We got into it later on at the conference, when I guess I chaired that panel on scrap, on junk yards, and on these number two bundles.

F: Is that the White House conference?

H: Yes. And the number two bundles. U.S. Steel was opposed to this program. The billboard group, which was hit most directly by what we were suggesting, of course fought it tooth and nail. They lobbied it, and they sort of weakened the legislation considerably as it went through the Congress.

F: Among certain billboard people in Texas, it caused Earl Warren to be replaced in the public esteem with signs to impeach Lady Bird . . . so that Earl retired at that point.

Did you get involved with the planning of the White House conference, or did you just come in to do your bit?

H: No, I was involved in the planning to a certain degree. I was not in on the major decisions on that time. I was teaching. I was full-time occupied. I was asked which panel I would like to work on. There were three or four panels. I thought it would be more interesting to take a specific panel and one which would have some conflict in it, and which might also come up with something do-able. So I chaired that particular one. I was on the phone I guess a couple of times with [Henry] Diamond, who was Rockefeller's staff man, and with Holly Whyte, who was doing parts of that.

F: Did you work with any blacks on this?

H: No. We were not in the black period at this time. I don't think there was a full awareness--and it was a mistake, but I guess that's part of

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the cultural atmosphere. For instance, last year I was here at Sanders' Theater [on] Earth Day, a year before this one. I was kind of intrigued, because one of the things that hits you in government is this Christian Dior fashion. You know, the intellectuals, like everybody else, this year it's long dresses, next year it's mini skirts, without any more reason for the change than perhaps boredom and without any more promise of success than the previous program. Of course this environmental binge in ecology rather than housing, or rather than slum clearance, you know, has to be weighed.

F: A certain amount of fadism.

H: It certainly is. Well, Dr. Frantz, in this case George Wiley was there. He's the head of the [National] Welfare Rights Organization, NWRO. Senator Muskie was one of the speakers at this earth thing. Wiley came up with what I've heard subsequently from developing countries. I've done some work for the World Bank. His argument was very much like the nineteenth century industrialists. He said, "Well, you white people, you can talk about environmental quality of life and all that sort of stuff. So far as we blacks are concerned, we want jobs. We want smoke. This means to us bread. This means to us money. This means to us power--this pollution." It has now come clearer and clearer to me. If you're going to close down a plant and shut a town down, that's all right for middle-class people who have other sources of income or who are the people who sail or the people who swim. But what about these poorer groups?

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Now we did have something in our task force, come to think of it. One of the points that was raised--interestingly it was the first time in my life that I had really heard that point--was one of maintenance. That in other words, you don't need new programs. If you look at all these government programs, they're all capital. Congressmen like to cut ribbons; presidents like to cut ribbons. We did provide for maintenance on parks and cities, and we tied that in with educating the poor and educating the blacks and trying to upgrade the dignity of these jobs, if you were going to pick up a park and so on. Just like you're trying to upgrade kitchen work, which I think--well, you don't have to be a great Escoffier chef to make it a lofty kind of profession. But it has a lot of qualities and skills which ought not to be ignored. So we did have that sense.

But really, in terms of the black, the problem and the isolation of the ghetto, and the cleavage between suburb and central city, I think even though it was only 1965-66, it seems like it was an era before that. It really was.

F: Oh, Lord! The amount of change and acceptance of some things as you move to new springboards for the purpose.

You returned then, more or less, to strict professoring for a while.

H: That's right.

F: Then you came back on another task force to--as I gather, either working--I don't know whether it was with Kermit Gordon on federal aid to cities, [to] reorganize the federal aid?

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H: Well, yes, that was what turned out to be the Model Cities task force.

Then the next time that I saw the President was just about the day before we were leaving for Greece. I remembered it very well because I had to walk out on an American Law Institute meeting in New York City to get down there. I shaved in Washington. This was an evening in June.

F: You mean by we [that] you're just talking about a family trip?

H: Yes. That's right, my wife and myself. Yes. It was a private trip.

I had gotten a telegram from Bill Moyers inviting me down to a stag dinner in honor of the task force chairmen. So I went down there and came in. It was a pleasant evening. I wasn't used to that sort of thing. It was at the mess hall in the West Wing. Moyers was there and Goodwin. They were sharing the chairmanship of the dinner. There were all the other people from the different task forces, and I guess some people from the Bureau of the Budget at that time: Charlie Schultz and [?] Hughes. I didn't know quite what to expect, and I don't think anybody did, which is what I later find out is par for the well-planned organization.

F: You just show up.

H: Just show up, and you don't know what is going on. So we sat down. First they served us some nice drinks and hors d'oeuvres. We were eating and drinking. Then we sat down and began our dinner. Goodwin told us at that time that--there was almost an embarrassment, because most of the ideas that we had come up with in our reports had been accepted by the President and had been adopted by the Congress at that time. This

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was in June. That was a very fruitful year, that spring term. Most of the ideas on education were there, on housing, rent supplements had gone into housing, on beautification. All these different programs had come in. I guess there was only one foreign task force. That was the one chaired by Carl Kaysen, and that was the one on agriculture. It was just a peculiar part of foreign relations. These were all domestic, the things the President was most interested in. So there was nobody there from foreign affairs, in a sense.

But at any rate Dick said that here we were . . . you know, it was all sort of a congratulatory [speech] and everything was nice and so on. We had almost finished eating. Then Dick called on--I guess Moyers was chairing it, really--the different chairmen to begin [telling] what they had done, what their task force had done, and what had happened to it in legislation, to let all of us get a feel of what had been going on among the group of us. We had met previously as a group with Moyers, and I guess Valenti, at the Algonquin Club in New York, I think it was. That was the night when that scandal broke out with Jenkins; that was the evening that we met there.

But at any rate, we had come here, and people began talking about it. It was about ten-thirty, ten o'clock or ten-thirty. And then the President came in. Again, I must say I was surprised. He's dealing with all these congressmen, he's dealing with all--why does he bother with task forces and so on? I think this is really a driving quality of Johnson.

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Well, he came in. He hadn't had any dinner it turned out. So he sat and he ate. Again, he went around the room shaking hands with everybody. And again this bubble business struck me so much. You know, if somebody comes close to you, you move back, because you're used to a one-and-a-half-foot distance except if it's a pretty girl. But he always used to break through the bubble, come very close. You would sort of want to move back, and couldn't move back, because after all it is the President of the United States, and maybe he's not aware of what he's doing, although I'm sure he's damned well aware of what he's doing.

So we sat there. I remember he was served these very huge portions. Oh, we were eating steak and lobster tails, which was quite a comedy, and he ate that. He sort of kidded around with the people in a very nice way. You know, he did have a very good sense of humor. None of these qualities, I'm afraid--people must have been telling you over and over again--very few of these qualities came through on a television screen or in a large group. In a small group, he was telling funny stories about politics, about Rayburn--Mr. Sam. It turned out that he had not eaten that day, that he had been busy, and he wondered what we had been eating and so on. Then when he finished his meal, he asked for vanilla ice cream, and I think that they brought enormous gobs of vanilla ice cream, which he then proceeded to put away.

But while he got to the ice cream, he said, "Why don't you keep on going?" I think it was Gardner at that time who was speaking. So Gardner resumed. He told [him], "Mr. President, we have this foreign

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program of getting scholarships." He was on the foreign program at that point in time. The President asked him a question or two, and he reported on that. Then all of us went around. One or two had already given their reports, and they never had their chance at fame and at doing the ballerina role. Some of us had not, and so we talked for a few minutes. Moyers kidded about me and beauty, again, and I sort of told the President . . . . He was quite interested in what we'd done. He said, "That's fine work," and so forth.

At that point the time was about eleven, eleven-thirty. Humphrey, the Vice President, walked in. So when Hubert came in, he went down, and then the President left. Before he left he went around and he shook hands again with all of us and said, "Now, I want you, each of you, when I come here, I want each of you to tell me his name. I want to remember what you're doing." And before he left, he again told us this business about how much we were doing for the country, what great ideas, and we had to come up with new ideas, and how this thing had to work out. Then he left. Hubert took the chair there where he was, and a few more reports went through. It was getting around twelve o'clock, and all of us were getting a little tired and sleepy, about ten after midnight or so.

Then the President came back. It was after midnight. The President came back. We all stood up, and he said, "No, no, no," and we sat down. He sat at the end there at the table, and the things finished. Then he said, "Gentlemen, you've all been very patient and very helpful, and so on, but I have something I'd like to discuss with you. It's a question

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that has been bothering me, and I would like to--you people are so smart,"--you know, sometimes there was a little bite in what he said--"you guys are all these professors," and so on, "maybe you can help me out." That was really the first time that I got introduced to Vietnam. It was at this particular case. It was a very moving and dramatic thing that he began. He said that he'd spent that morning with the wise men of foreign affairs. I guess he had this committee at that time. There was Dean Acheson and John McCloy, the whole Eastern Establishment on foreign affairs. The problem was whether he should escalate--I don't think he used that word--whether we should send more troops to Vietnam. He said he didn't know, and he didn't like it. He didn't want to get more involved. He said that he got home, [and] he had letters from these women who had sons who were killed in Vietnam. He turned to Mrs. Johnson--he referred to his wife very frequently in these things off the cuff--and he said to her, "What would you think of a man who was president of the United States who sent your son to be wounded or to be killed on this thing?" He said it was terrible. He also said that he watched, that he didn't go to bed at night; whenever any planes went out, he didn't go to bed. He got a report on when the planes came back, on who was injured, on who was killed. He kept all those figures, and this was the drastic thing, and this bothered him.

But he said, "But what do you do? I've called up Eisenhower." It was the first time, too, that I learned that presidents call other presidents. I supposed they do it for reasons of politics as well as for reasons of knowledge. He called up Eisenhower: "What do you do?" [He

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said], "And he tells me you have to move ahead, put in more troops. Acheson says you have to put in more. My Secretary of State says so, my Secretary of Defense. I call up all these people." He indicated too that he'd talked with [Clark] Clifford. "You have to put in more people. If we don't, what good is our word?" He said, "I know a lot of you gentlemen are critical." It really was the beginning of Vietnam. I wasn't even aware of the escalation. "A lot of you gentlemen are critical. But what would you do? We've given our word. Eisenhower gave his word. John F. Kennedy gave his word. If we don't give our word as a great nation, and keep our word, what will happen to us?" Then he gave what turned out to be the domino theory.

Later on I found this thing about Johnson, that he would talk the same thing out with lots of people. He probably tried it to himself. He'd try it on Mrs. Johnson. Then he would try it on any friends who were around, old friends, Congress. Then he would try it on a group of labor leaders. He'd keep trying it, telling you differently each time, polishing it, watching the reactions, till finally, he'd get what he wanted to say. You know, it's like writing a brief. You have the ideas on the case and you do one draft, then you try another draft. Now I've never done this verbally. He did it verbally all the time with a lot of the stuff he did.

There was a real silence there, because I think that most--it was about one o'clock or one-thirty, and he was going on strongly because he was deeply moved. Most of us, I think, had not thought about the problem, or if we thought about it, we thought we ought not to get involved. Then

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he said, "Now, what would you do? Is there anybody here who has got an idea, anybody got a question?" He kept on with Vietnam and the details, and what it meant to be president.

Then he said something which I've thought of quite frequently since then. He said, "Gentlemen, I know all that you've done." He always made you feel--I mean, at other times he was much rougher, but at this thing he made you feel you were a part of a team, you know, you would sort of look around you. ["I know] what you've done for this country. This legislation we're trying to get through. What we're trying to do for the kids. What we're trying to do for housing. What we're trying to do for the beauty of this nation." And he said, "I know what happened to the New Freedom of Wilson. He had this great domestic program, the Federal Reserve"--you know, the President had a remarkable memory of statutes and details--"I know what happened to the Federal Reserve Program, the Antitrust, all those programs. There came the first World War. And I know what happened to Franklin D. Roosevelt's New Deal. There was the war. He lost and had to stop all the momentum. All the energy of getting the things going had to stop. I don't want that to happen to the Great Society. I don't want that to happen. I don't want to get involved in a war. I don't want to get involved in entanglements abroad. We've got here the makings of the greatest people, the greatest country. We have your programs. We'll develop more programs, and I don't want that to happen."

When this was going on, we'd seen, my wife and I--you've now reminded me I have to define with greater precision when I say we, since I'm not

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the Pope, of what I have in mind--we'd seen Richard Burton in "Hamlet." And that was a very peculiar performance, virtuoso performance, which disbalanced the whole thing. There was a very bad Ophelia, and Hume Cronyn was terrible as Polonius. But Burton I thought did a marvelous job as Hamlet in that thing. We were up close, and we could just feel the emotion coming out of him. Well, in a sense the President came through that way that time. It was a most moving thing, and everybody there wasn't ready for this kind of energy, not at this hour of night. It was one-thirty, quarter to two, at this point of time. We had all flown in and some of us were a little tired. Let's see who was there. Paul Samuelson was there, an economic swan, and I guess John Meyre was there on transportation, and some others. We all said some things, "Mr. President," and so on, raised a few questions. I was in on a few of these sessions on Vietnam, although that one was on domestic. Nobody really challenged him. He's a tough man to challenge in that kind of a public group like that.

But that was a very moving and a very--right at the beginning, and there was all this thing, all the right thoughts of dead boys, of what are we doing over there, of a mother. He made it very personal. He'd tell us about one plane that hadn't come in. And there was that thing about losing his Great Society which I keep remembering.

Then finally it was getting after two o'clock, and he was still going. He couldn't stop on this. And Bill Moyers said, "Mr. President, we appreciate so much your coming, but I know how tired you are, and I think we ought to call it a night." I was sort of surprised at that.

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But the President [said], "That's right." He stood up, and we all shook hands. I remember going over to Don Price--I guess you've interviewed Don, haven't you?

F: Yes, I've seen him.

H: He was on one task force on organization, and he was there. We really couldn't sleep after that. I remember going back with John Meyre and two others and just talking about this.

F: It was the sort of thing that if it had been a decent hour, you would have repaired to some tavern somewhere.

H: Well, we sort of [did]. I think we went around and we sort of just sat down somewhere. I think it was the White Tower or some great place like that open in Washington at that hour, and just talked about that a little bit, and didn't get to bed until about four o'clock. But that was a tremendous evening in terms of the whole thing, but then this Vietnam, coming through this domestic thing. It was an orchestration. It was almost like a Wagnerian opera, and it came through.

And here was a man, you know, he saw it, and I think he saw it much more clearly than any of us saw it, at least than I saw it at that time. Because later on, when I took the job as assistant secretary, I said to myself, "Why do it? What are you going to achieve?" It was so clear how resources were going. I talked to John McNaughton, who was a professor here, who's now on the New York Times. I noticed a lot of his memos came out Sunday and Monday. He was assistant secretary for defense. I remember talking to him about coming down. We all thought at that time--this was Model Cities in 1966--well, Vietnam was going to

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wind down. Resources are going to be made available for housing and domestic programs. But the President had something there, and he must have been saying this to other people. He had some kind of sense of this conflict. His staff talked a lot more about both butter and guns, all this sort of thing. But he really said [that] about Wilson and Roosevelt, the New Freedom and the New Deal, what happened to them when they hit the war, and this was not going to happen to the Great Society. He would not let it happen to the Great Society. Of course, it sure as hell happened.

F: Almost an inexorability about it.

H: There was.

F: That he just was being pulled.

H: Yes. Maybe there was something fatal about it, a magnetism about it. But I remember that. I don't know if he ever kept any notes, or something of that sort, but I remember that evening. And I do remember those two things. You look back on it, it's one of these premonition sort of things. It's a Shakespearean thing.

F: You've seen that moment.

H: Yes. I think it was one of the most exciting nights of my life, really, and I think this was true for a lot of the other people on that task force. It was a small group. There was the President, and he was leveling, I think, at that time, at that hour of the night. I think it was coming out of him, and it was just gushing, and there it was.

Well, where were we in our--? Oh, we're back to the Model Cities task force. It so happens that this night was the night that Joe Califano

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came over. He was introduced to all of us. He had come over from McNamara at that time.

Then in the fall, I guess, of that year I got a call from Califano, saying that whenever I was down in Washington, would I come by and see him. So a few weeks later I came by, and he was then in the White House. We talked a little bit about housing and other things. And he said that the President needed some kind of program, and so forth, and maybe I would come down with Wood, who had chaired the other task force--we had the two domestic task forces, beautification and environment, and cities and housing--and talk with him about it.

So a couple of weeks later there was Califano, and Kermit Gordon was in there--I guess he was retiring as budget director--and Charlie Schultze, the new budget director. I guess Larry Levinson was there, too, myself and Bob. And we just hacked around.

Now the immediate impetus to the Model Cities task force was this letter that Reuther had written to the President. Reuther had written one of the typical Reutheresque letters, those marvelous, charging-forward letters which say, "Let's do something, for Christ's sake." And I think that they were marvelous. He said, "Here we are, this great country. Let's put some money. Let's put some energy. Detroit is ready. We've got the labor; we've got big business; we've got consumers; we've got the land; we've got the know-how, the financing groups, the developers. Just give us some subsidies. Let us get going. Loosen up your urban renewal program, and let us put fifty thousand units in

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Detroit, and it will be a model city for the whole United States. It can show what you can do if you really mean it."

Now it happened that earlier Dick Goodwin had sent me a copy of the letter, and had asked me what I thought. He was now out of the White House at this time. But earlier he had sent it to me and asked me what I thought. I must confess that I thought it was nothing new, that he didn't suggest any new programs. He just was going to suggest the old, and if you had the money, fine. Then my question was, "If you have the money, why do it in Detroit? What will Daley say, or what will New York say, or what will the little cities say?" I didn't think it was a very good idea.

At any rate we were talking about it at this time. I don't know what goes on behind the scenes. I suppose you must have gotten some more inklings what was going on in the President's mind, whether he felt he had to answer Reuther, or whether he felt he was getting more involved in foreign affairs. Or whether--I doubt this last point, but which was true--the congressional people, his congressional liaison, were telling him that urban renewal was sort of bad news at this time. You couldn't get any more money for urban renewal. People were fed up with relocation. The blacks were calling it Negro clearance instead of slum clearance, and there weren't too many results. After all, you're waiting seven and a half years from the time you take a project to where you see something. You see the pregnancy come to some results. All you see is a lot of screwing around, you don't see any product. But [whether] he knew something else, I don't know.

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But anyway, as we talked, the six of us in the room, it seemed that there was something that might come out of some kind of task force. Kermit was most interested, as most economists are--you know, they're the last idealists--in getting something which would be innovative and reform institutions. The two institutions that he was most bothered about--although I don't know why I should say it, let him say it in his thing--were the property tax and building codes. He thought the property tax was so messed up, and the building codes so antiquated and restrictive that you couldn't get any decent housing. And that if we could develop some kind of incentive, some kind of programs that would get rid of these two bottlenecks, it would be very useful.

Then we hacked around as to who would be on the task force. They wanted us two to be on that. Bob was in on a task force, I think with--from Syracuse, what is his name, who was head of the Maxwell School?

F: I don't remember.

H: They were on some sort of task force. We weren't sure who was going to chair this task force. We kicked that around. It was going to be he or me, and both of us were doing Alfonse and Gaston, since we are good friends, that the other fellow should do it. We thought of Edgar Kaiser. I don't know how Edgar got onto this task force, whether one of us mentioned him, I'm not sure. And then Ben Heineman, who was mentioned by Califano, because I guess he was very close to the President. The President had a lot of respect for Heineman at that time. Reuther was an obvious one because he started this thing. He kicked it off. Who else was on that task force? I thought I wouldn't forget it.

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F: I don't remember.

H: Heineman, Reuther, myself, Bob finally chaired it, Kermit Gordon, oh, and Whitney Young. So we had quite a task force there. It was quite a group of, again, distinguished people.

F: A group you could sit down with.

H: Yes, it's a good group to sit down with. Bob and myself went back on a plane and we decided, "Let's do it differently. Let's really--since this seems to be something that's [affirmative]. Let's get a staff, and let's get some real money, and let's really try to absorb this thing." It had gotten beyond the point of being a defensive reply to Reuther. "See if we can come up with some affirmative program."

So ultimately we got a staff, Chester Rapkin, and he in turn got Bernie Friedman, Grace Milgrim, Jack Noble; and we had a real staff that looked into lots of things for us. We had our meetings to try to work out some kind of program that ultimately became the Model Cities.

I think it's fair to say that we started off as a direct response to Reuther, probably with a negative motion. I know I had that.

F: You had the feeling all he was doing really was accelerating.

H: Was accelerating and spending and there was nothing new. Charlie Schultze, I think, also was very strongly against any new spending program as director of the budget. I didn't realize how tight the budget was at that time. And here we began our task force discussions.

Then in the middle of it the President added the organization of HUD to our job. That's when we got Senator Ribicoff onto the committee, which broke all the rules that I have known as a good constitutional lawyer and law professor. Here was the executive branch, and we were

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picking up the legislative branch. But this was, later on I found, not uncommon. The White House and the Congress, instead of being separate and challenging branches, checks and balances, are often arm-in-arm as they go forth into the sunset.

F: Did you get the feeling that Robert Weaver was something less than enthusiastic at the outset of Model Cities?

H: I think, first of all, this thing was kept very secret from Weaver. We were told not to . . . and this was also a characteristic of the President in all these task forces. He had a notion that if it leaked or it went out, either, somebody was up to some nefarious purpose, which I think is quite true. In other words, you're paranoid but there's reason for the paranoia. Also, I think that he liked to have the credit. And thirdly, he thought if it went out without any thought of how it would be organized, it might get defeated much more readily.

We were to keep it away from Mr. Weaver. I don't think that Joe and Larry--and they were expressing the President--had a terribly high regard for Weaver at this time. A note I think was changed very frequently. At the outset, after he was designated as secretary, after we had finished our report--I worked on that subcommittee, I chaired that subcommittee on organization with Ben Heineman. Oh, Bill Rafsky, of course, was also on that task force, from Philadelphia, where we put all those little boxes and tried to figure out whether we stole the urban part of the Bureau of Public Roads and put it into HUD, and what you do with FHA--sort of a make-weight kind of game because you really can't tell what it's like without personalities and without being there and without the Congress.

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But at any rate, he was not for Model Cities. But it was the President's program when he became secretary, and we both got on board, Wood and myself. Then when it was on I think he was fully for it, after a while. You know, it was the President's program. He did come up with that notion for urban renewal, which was a very good one of two hundred fifty million dollars. Because much to my surprise one of our great oppositions to Model Cities was the NAHRO group, you know, all these officials, National Association of Housing and Rehabilitation Officials. All these guys just cared for urban renewal for Title I. They wanted to do more slum clearance, more land write-down, more of this two-thirds and three-fourths grants from the government. There was nothing wrong with it. They just regarded, quite rightly, Model Cities as a competitor for funds. So they were opposed to it. Then when Weaver came in with his two hundred fifty million dollar notion for urban renewal, which you also needed for your base. You'll recall the supplementary grants were based on the basis of 80 per cent.

F: I have picked up the word, not from Larry, that Larry's role in getting on with Model Cities was crucial. Do you have any light to throw on that?

H: Yes, I think it was. As a task force we were supposed to be shepherded by McPherson, and Harry came to a few of the meetings. But as usual the day-to-day job just pulled him off, so he didn't follow us.

When we did our final report to the President, Larry, I think, read it. He has great ability at boiling down and doing that one, two-pager, and he did the one, two-pager. I think he was quite enthused by the

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notion of a Model City. He sort of was able to grasp the notion of coordinating the different programs, of then having free money, in effect, having what they're trying to do now with revenue-sharing within a plan set by the local people. No, I think Larry's role was very pivotal on that. I know he called me on the phone every once in a while, and he asked, "Charlie, how are we doing?" I am very fortunate, you know, I had Larry as a student, too. This Harvard Law School is a breeding, incestuous place, and you can meet these guys, and if they remember you . . . and you have a peculiar feeling for them. I always felt both with Dick Goodwin, who has problems of personality, and Larry, who has far less problems--I have problems, too--that because of our common experience, you can say things to them and work with them. It's a much nicer relation in many ways than if you're coming in cold.

F: That's a curious thing, of course, about the Johnson Administration, diverting slightly. It had of course a strong Texas overtone, a regional overtone. I suppose it's normal, those people you know first, but there really were a lot of Harvard-Yale types.

H: Sure there were.

F: I mean, it was shot through with people who were East Coast, but somehow or another you never felt it with Johnson. You see these little breakdowns in communication, and you don't put your finger on why they're that way.

H: No.

F: I guess it's, in one sense, because he represented the Texan to the average American.

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H: I think the part of Texas that he represented, like came out at that library, even that part didn't come through, that if people had seen what . . . . I feel differently about Texas, by the way. You know, my wife is a Texan. She went to the University of Texas. Her father graduated from Texas and the Texas law school. In many ways he reminds me--

F: Who was she?

H: Her maiden name?

F: Yes.

H: Natalie Zinn, Z-I-N-N. Her sister went to the University. So did her brother. But her father was a lawyer, also talked very much like Johnson, and the two remind me very much [of each other], and there are some very fine qualities that would appeal to us, especially in these periods, a certain seriousness, a certain morality, a certain openness. These qualities which I think are very important in human and individual terms were not conveyed to the people. I think if they had any notion of the kind of guy he was, they'd say, "Well, he screwed this up. It doesn't matter. It doesn't matter. He really meant to do well." He really wasn't a manipulator and a dealer and wheeler only. You've got to wheel and deal in politics.

F: Right.

[End of Tape 1 of 1 and Interview I]

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