INTERVIEW II

DATE: May 6, 1979

INTERVIEWEE: BRYCE HARLOW

INTERVIEWER: MICHAEL L. GILLETTE

PLACE: Mr. Harlow's residence, Harper's Ferry, West Virginia

Tape 1 of 2

H: The budget for the 1957 year--I'm talking about calendar year so it must have been the 1958 budget--was prepared by the budget director, who was then Percy Brundage. It was too big a budget and was out of hand. George Humphrey, the Treasury secretary, was outraged by it and he protested to the President. He had a press conference in which he said that if this budget was implemented it would bring on a depression "that would curl your hair." That remark got a tremendous amount of publicity. This was the President's own Treasury secretary attacking the President's own budget, and Humphrey was a very powerful man.

So Eisenhower was asked about it at a press conference, and the fact was Ike didn't like the budget any better than Humphrey did. He said, well, he thought the budget probably ought to be cut, and he invited the Congress to go do that. That's also unheard of. You're not supposed to do that.

Well, Sam Rayburn and Lyndon Baines Johnson, both from the Lone Star State, said, "Ah, ha. We've trapped that old coot in a political faux pas that is just without parallel." So they challenged him to tell them where to cut it. They sent him a letter. Mr. Sam did, I recollect, as speaker, though both he and Lyndon had worked out the strategy. So

Eisenhower said, "Well, that's just fine, boys." So I prepared an answer, with a tremendous amount of help and consultation with the [Bureau of the] Budget and others. We sent back a letter and told them exactly where to cut it--I don't know of any exchange quite like that before--which put the monkey back on the backs of the Congress and the Speaker and LBJ in the Senate.

Well, the Eisenhower budget was thereupon cut. It became right then politically fashionable to cut the budget deep because of all of this. So Lyndon cut the national defense budget by five billion to one-up Eisenhower. I remember that interchange in 1957 on the financial side of government, which came to mind when you mentioned the tax cut of 1958 which I don't seem to remember much about right now.

G: It was the issue of increasing the debt ceiling in 1958.

H: Well, that generated every year, every couple of years, a great fight, always does. It's a political toy, that's all that is, for the two parties. The party that's out of power uses the debt ceiling to whiplash the other party for fiscal irresponsibility. It's largely meaningless otherwise.

G: One of the themes that seems to run through the late fifties is politics looking on toward 1960, and the candidates lining up and frustrating each others' efforts in terms of legislation. I was wondering, in particular with regard to Jack Kennedy, if you saw any indication of politics entering into his relationship with Lyndon Johnson and his efforts to get legislation that he was interested in passed, as opposed to LBJ's political interests.

H: Well, LBJ was concentrating essentially in the national defense area. At least I think he was. He was mixed in with the struggle on national defense very heavily, even though as majority leader he was involved all across the board. I don't need to remind you, as I told you before, that he and Mr. Sam were meeting right along, under my wing, with Ike in the evenings over at the White House, about once every six weeks, having a little branch water and so on, happily reviling the Kennedys. They just really intensely, intensely disliked them. But Lyndon was working mostly for his political publicity in the national defense arena. He was sharing in this missile-gap business of Stu Symington, and ballyhooing that a bit, much to my disappointment in Lyndon, I must say.

G: Did you ever talk to him about that?

H: I don't know that I did. I knew why he was doing it. It was just straight politics. But I was also certain he knew better. I was certain of that. I may have been wrong. But I didn't think he should have done that, because Lyndon was a good patriot on national security matters, by and large, and Sam was, too. And of course I knew Stu and [Hoyt] Vandenberg were protecting their flanks, really, because they had created this so-called "gap" by going for the B-36 years before instead of for missiles.

You don't care how long I talk, I take is, so I'll tell you a little anecdote that's probably irrelevant, but it's funny. There was a senator in 1950, at the beginning of the Eisenhower years, 1953 and 1954, named Senator [Herman] Welker. He was from Idaho.

G: Herman Welker, is that his name?

H: Hiram Welker? Welker, though, anyway. He was a cowboy's cowboy and tough and blunt to the point of disbelief. He had gotten elected somehow out there. He was the roughest, toughest man you could get in the United States Senate in modern days. He was a throwback to about 1875. Wore boots and talked boots. Well, he called me up at the White House in 1953 and said, "Harlow, Welker," which was his manner. I said, "Yes, Senator." He said, "Come to my office immediately." I said, "Senator, I'm sorry, but I--" He said, "I said now." I said, "Senator, I'll see if I can." Well, I thought I better go see him. I went to see him, truckled like a governmental slave is supposed to to the great. I went up as ordered by Herman Welker.

So I got in his office. He sat back. He said, "You're going to write me a speech." I said, "I am?" He said, "Yes. On Stuart Symington. I'm going to collapse that s.o.b. I'm tired of listening to his wailing around out there on that Senate floor about the state of our defenses, about which he knows nothing. He's out there playing politics and I'm going to shut him up. So I want the report written for me to deliver on the Senate floor which talks about his peccadillos and flaws and mistakes, which are countless, when he was in charge of the Air Force. You can include Vandenberg in there as much as you want. I'll need that by next week."

I said, "Senator, I will do what you say, but I will not be responsible for it. You obviously want a hatchet job on the Senator, and I will do it for you on the condition only that I am not identified

with it in any fashion. I have no business writing a hatchet job on Stu Symington from the White House." He said, "Yes, I know that. But you were the chief counsel of the Armed Services Committee of the House all those years, and you know more about Stu Symington than anybody in this town. So you're going to do that for me, and you have it in my office a week from now. You bring it in to me."

Well, I did know, and some of what I knew about Stu shouldn't have been written. I knew lots. So I sat down and I patted my typewriter, and I said, "Write, honey." I sat down and wrote that at home at night. And I wrote it and I wrote it. I wrote a vicious, awful speech that no person in his right mind would deliver, just a horrendous attack on Stu Symington, which I knew Welker wanted.

So the following week I got back up to Welker's office, carrying this thing written on asbestos, and I hand it to him. I said, "Before you look at that, Senator, I must tell you I recommend that you do not deliver it. That's a vicious attack, a personal attack, and the Senator has every right to take personal exception to it. It's too nasty. It's too dirty. It's too bad a speech. But it's all documentable, what's in there." He said, "Harlow, I'll decide whether it's bad enough. You just sit there and let me look at it."

So I sat, and he read. He started grinning about the third page. By the middle of the speech he was chortling, and by the end of the speech he slammed it down on his desk, and he said, "That's exactly what I want. Now, Harlow, I'm going to toughen that up, and I'm going to give it on the Senate floor. Then I want you to see what

happens, because I'm going to prove something and I'll tell you later what it is." I said, "It's your business, Senator, not mine, and it's your speech and it's not mine." He said, "That's right."

So I walked out of there shaking my head, went back down to the white place. Sure enough, in about a week here was Herman Welker out there in the Senate. He had telephoned Stu Symington, said he wanted him to be on the floor to listen to him give a speech, because he thought Stu ought to be there since his name was involved in it in some respects. So Stu came to listen and was sorry he was there, because it excoriated him and excoriated him and excoriated him and excoriated him, and he had to sit there and take it. Well, when he got through, Stu Symington stood up and said that he would respond to that unwarranted, vicious attack in due course and a short while. And Herman Welker said, "Be my guest."

All right, so I'm down at the white place and the phone rings and here's Welker. He said, "Harlow, I'm on my way to proving what I told you. You'll see. Here's what happened today. I gave the talk and that s.o.b. got up and said he was going to answer. I know what's going to happen. I ain't going to tell you yet, but I'll tell you." Okay. I said, "All right, Senator."

So in about three weeks I got a call from Welker. He said, "Okay. The proof's in now." I said, "What's that?" He said, "Well, it worked out exactly as I knew it would. Symington went off to write himself a speech to respond to my attack on him. I sidled up to him in the cloakroom over there, back there behind the floor. I said, 'Stu, I want you

to be ready to be back on the floor right after you answer my speech, because I have another one that takes up where I left off, and I want to give that right after your speech. So I want you to stay on the floor. I'll be there when you answer me, of course. But you stay there. Don't you leave after you give your speech, because I'm going to have a few things to say that you need to hear.'" He said, "Stu looked at me and he walked away, and I walked away grinning, because I knew what was going to happen."

"So the next day Stu walked up to me. He said, 'Herman, this is getting out of hand and it's ridiculous. Hoyt Vandenberg's a sick man. He's getting involved in this thing and it's not fair to him.' So he says, 'I suggest we just call the whole thing off. I won't give my speech if you won't give yours. Is that a deal?'" He said, "Now, Harlow, let me tell you what I did. What I wanted to prove was that he was a yellow-bellied son of a bitch. I just proved it! I knew he'd do that! I knew he would do that! He doesn't have any guts. So I started playing with him. I said, 'Now, Stu, I can't call that off. My staff's been working and working and working.' I told him my staff has worked themselves half to death on that speech against him. 'I can't, in fairness to my staff, not give it. They've been working day and night.' I made him ask me five times. Finally I said, 'Well, all right, I'll do it. Somehow I'll make it up to my staff.' All the time hadn't written a word."

This was in the very earliest days of the Eisenhower years. It's always been an amusing tale of this terribly tough guy. He just had one term in the Senate. I think he died.

(Interruption)

G: It's a good story.

Now, on these Kennedy measures that John Kennedy was offering in the late fifties, the administration seemed to oppose him on and LBJ seemed to oppose him on some of them. One was an amendment to the Mutual Security Act that would give the president power to grant economic aid to communist satellite countries. That was defeated by one vote. It seemed like the State Department was in favor of it at first and sort of was ambivalent toward the end on its support. Do you remember that?

H: You have a problem there that I can describe for you briefly. I can't tell you about this particular case. We had a little difficulty with the State Department vis-a-vis Lyndon, because they were playing games with Lyndon, Bill Macomber, in particular, Butts Macomber. Butts and Lyndon were valuable to each other, so they had games going. Butts is a close friend of mine, so I'm not talking against him. I'm talking about the way Washington works. Here he was assistant secretary handling their congressional stuff. I had a lot of trouble keeping him from crawling into Lyndon's pocket all the time. I had to keep getting him back out of his pocket.

This, I think, was one of those things where Bill was wobbly and so was the Secretary. You see, [John Foster] Dulles, by this time, was gone. You're talking about Chris Herter, I guess. I don't know.

G: I think this was when Dulles was sick.

H: Yes. But anyway, that prompts another recollection. It may have been any one of those terminal years, probably 1960 though, so maybe you

don't want me to mention that now. But you better grab these things out of my head when they come to mind, because they will go away.

G: Is this the story of Macomber and [the foreign aid appropriation]?

H: I told you that before?

G: Yes, I believe you did [in the first interview].

H: About Lyndon calling me back and forth?

G: Right.

H: Okay. That was a similar proposition, probably generated in the same fashion, of Lyndon working over Butts Macomber, Butts taking it back to the State Department and they start wobbling around trying to make time with Lyndon.

[It was] the same way with Tom Gates. Now, Tom was afraid of Lyndon, or you might say he recognized Lyndon's power, and he was very circumspect about challenging Lyndon because Lyndon could hurt and was not averse to hurting. And Tom knew that. He was testifying. I had a terrible time with Tom on the testimony he gave to Lyndon's Preparedness Subcommittee. I wonder what that subject was? The point was that Tom was supposed to stand up like a man and say what the President wanted said, knowing perfectly well Lyndon didn't like it. But Lyndon told him not to say it. What was the issue? I don't know at the moment.

So I had to read Tom the riot act. I told him that the President wanted that statement made like he knew he wanted it made and he expected him to make it that way. He said, "But Bryce, Lyndon said he wanted no prepared statements at all. He just wanted to interrogate the witnesses

and no prepared statements." I said, "Of course that's what he wants! That's the way he prevents the witnesses from giving any statement of position. The President wants the statement of position, and you'll never have it unless you have this prepared statement. But Lyndon won't let you have one." We argued and I finally just had to tell him, "Tom, the President wants it that way. You have to do it. Don't fuss around about it, do it!" He said, "Boy, I don't have any stomach for it because Lyndon is going to just be furious about it." I said, "I know that, sure. The President knows that, too. But you're the secretary of defense, and he can't tell you you're not to have a prepared statement if you think you should."

So Tom went up with a prepared statement against Lyndon's flat orders not to have one. And I, meantime, got hold of Lev Saltonstall, who of course was the sweetest man in the whole world, and wobbly. Then I got hold of Mrs. Cantankerous, Margaret Chase.

G: Smith.

H: She was off at the Mayflower at some function. I got her called out, "White House calling," and I said there was this critical meeting that morning, as she knew, of this Preparedness Subcommittee, and that Lyndon was determined to go right down Tom Gates' throat, and we needed her help to stop it. So she said she would go there. She, of course, was very hard to deal with, but she went.

Well, the hearings started. Sure enough, Mr. Gates had a statement. Lyndon said, "Well, I respect the right of the Secretary to have a prepared statement. But in the interest of saving time, all of us have

this statement here before us and can read it. I suggest that we have it inserted in the record and proceed with the interrogation. You'll all be able to read it in the record, and the committee members have it here and they can read it during the day. Is there any objection?" Tom ran right out on me right there. He said he didn't have any particular objection to that. Well, that was not playing the game he was supposed to play. He ran out on the President right there.

Well, Lev Saltonstall said he didn't particularly mind, that was all right with him, the senior Republican. But my dear friend Margaret Chase sat forward and said, "Mr. Chairman, I mind. This is the Secretary of Defense, and this is a statement that has been carefully prepared on a matter of great importance to the security of this country. I want to hear him present it to this committee, and I want the press to hear it in its entirety. I demand that the Secretary be allowed to proceed with his statement." Lyndon was not dauntable by any human being on earth except Margaret Chase Smith. (Laughter) He looked over at irate Margaret and he capitulated and the statement was presented to the committee.

After the hearing, Tom Gates called me--he didn't know I knew what had happened--to tell me that he had carried through on the thing and delivered his statement. (Laughter) I said, "I understand, Tom, and I know you did." Right on the heels of it came a call from Margaret, and she was so mad she just skinned me from one side down the other, ripped me up and down, which she was prone to do, just enraged. "You call me out of a meeting at the Mayflower. I go up there to carry the

administration position. The first thing that happens, the Secretary of Defense doesn't carry it. Then the senior Republican doesn't carry it. What do you mean calling me into a situation like that?" and da da da da da. Oh, boy! So there I was.

But Lyndon came out of it, you see, very disappointed, but it didn't hurt him badly. He went out and told the press what he wanted to tell them anyway. Now, I don't know what that incident was. You have it in your stuff somewhere. You're bound to. It was a big issue at the time, and that probably was 1960. But he and Tom Gates were very close friends.

G: There's also a Kennedy amendment to the Temporary Unemployment Compensation Act of 1958 that would extend the duration of payments by sixteen weeks and provide for federal administration of the funds if the states didn't act on that. That was defeated. Do you remember that one at all?

H: No, but you're talking about federalization in a sense. It's an ancient saw and it's been an old fight. Where did Lyndon come down on that? Was he against the federalizing of it?

G: I don't know.

H: Or for it? I don't recall. But the administration was chronically opposed to it, in the House as well as the Senate, much to the distress of the Secretary of Labor.

G: There was also an amendment sponsored by Kennedy to aid India that was passed over the opposition of the State Department. Do you remember that?

H: No.

G: Okay.

H: Not at all. I don't remember that at all.

G: James Hagerty, in his interview, indicated that President Eisenhower, during the latter part of his term, would tell people that LBJ would make a fine president, not in any way an endorsement, but just to--

H: Well, it was an odd situation in a sense. The only thing that Lyndon and Sam had against Eisenhower was that he turned Republican, which enraged both of them, most particularly Sam, who regarded it as an act of apostasy to the Democratic Party and to the Democratic President Roosevelt, who he said created Ike and that Ike had no right to go Republican. He wanted him to be a Democratic president. So that was between them forever. But, nonetheless, Lyndon and Sam liked Eisenhower, personally, immensely, and he liked them immensely, the two of them.

So the President thought that in many ways Lyndon would make a great president. He was very able and respected him as a man of great ability, leadership. But he also had the flat assurance from Lyndon, not once but repeatedly, that he was not going to run for president under any circumstances. This would run right up until 1960, that there would be absolutely no chance of that. The President believed that from Lyndon and was absolutely nonplussed when Lyndon came out and tried to make it. And further, both he and Sam indicated that under no condition were they ever, ever to have anything to do with Jack Kennedy, because he was an abomination to them both. But then Lyndon took the number two place on that ticket, even though he had told Ike repeatedly he wouldn't. Again, Eisenhower's mouth just fell wide open and he said, "It can't be!" Well, it's politics. It makes strange bedfellows. That's a very old saw, in this

case particularly. But Eisenhower had, of course, a lot of respect for the ability of Johnson and his leadership quotient.

G: Did you ever hear him speculate on Johnson's presidential ability or the fact that he would make a good president or anything like that?

H: No, not really.

G: Do you recall the circumstances of LBJ's assurances to President Eisenhower that he was not going to run?

H: Well, I'm talking about these evening sessions over in the Mansion.

G: What would be the point of them? Was he trying to get something from President Eisenhower and didn't want it to look like it was a political [move]?

H: No, the President would talk to him about, "Why don't you run, Lyndon?"

G: Oh, I see.

H: "Why don't you run?" [Johnson would say], "Oh, no. I wouldn't have a thing to do with that. I know better than that." He'd get that kind of answer. It would come from Ike, pressing him for fun or pressing him for serious. I don't know which, maybe just a conversational ploy. I don't know. But Ike wasn't that devious, really. He wouldn't try, the best I knew him, to do something that way just to pull someone out so very much. I think it probably was rather genuine, "Why don't you run, Lyndon? You're the ablest guy in the party," [that] sort of a thing. But he would always get that, "Oh, no." And then this tremendous bile about the Kennedy thing. Hardly any session we would have with the two of them failed to end up with some expression of revulsion

about Kennedy. They felt so bad about him, resented him so keenly. Both of them [did], because he was a dilettante in the House, and a dilettante in the Senate and didn't do anything worth a darn. They both resented it and thought he was a playboy. Yet he was running off with all the cudos, and they didn't like that.

G: How do you account for Lyndon Johnson's willingness to--?

H: Take the number-two [spot]?

G: Yes.

H: I'm told Mr. Sam made him do it. You'd know the answer to that; I don't know, and your records show that, I'm sure.

G: In that case you've got two who changed their minds, rather than just one.

H: Oh, yes. Mr. Sam said, "The party requires it. That's the only way you can win. We've got to win this election and so you've got to do it." That's what I'm told happened, and it makes sense to me. But that's what I've always understood was the situation.

G: There's some indication that both of them were persuaded by the argument that LBJ should run to keep Vice President Nixon from getting elected.

H: Well, it's to win, yes. Because the answer was that Kennedy couldn't win without him.

G: Well, the notion that it was worth running to keep Nixon [from winning].

H: Well, they hated Nixon so much. Oh, I think that could easily have been in there.

G: During these late meetings did you get any sense of that at all, as you did the antipathy toward Jack Kennedy?

H: Well, no. They didn't feel free to do that with Ike.

G: I see.

H: I'd say. I don't recall. We knew they hated him, Nixon, but I don't recall ever [hearing them say it]. They wouldn't do that. It wouldn't have been sporting.

G: They were more discreet, I suppose.

H: Well, it was the President's vice president. To sit in there and call him something bad and things would have been kind of gross. They had lots of fun in those meetings. They really enjoyed them.

G: Let's see, Secretary [Robert] Anderson would be there?

H: Well, off and on. He'd be there and he wouldn't. He'd be there oftentimes, and oftentimes it would be the President and me and Sam and Lyndon. Then maybe we'd have Bob in there, too, when he was in town and available , because they loved Bob. Sam Rayburn said he was the ablest man ever to come out of Texas. He told me that.

G: Did anybody in the Republican administration accuse Anderson of being too sympathetic with LBJ and Rayburn?

H: I told you about the filibuster, didn't I, against one of these bills you mentioned here, the postal pay increase? Where Bob ran out on us playing Lyndon's game.

G: No, I don't believe you did.

H: Of course he tended to play Lyndon's game. They were very close friends. And where he could without injury or disloyalty, he would. They remained very close all the way.

Well, what happened was there was a postal pay increase bill--I don't know what year, 1960 probably--that came passing through the Congress, which was a typically grotesque and bad bill. Neither the Democrats nor the Republicans had the intestinal fortitude to stand up against the postal unions. The postal unions became, in those years, very, very arrogant. They would come to Washington and it would almost be like a revolution. They would take over the galleries. They would grab the members in their offices and walking to and from the floor, and maybe put two or three men on a congressman and harangue him all the way over. It was almost scary.

Well, they forced this bad legislation through the House and they got it over to the Senate. Eisenhower was fit to be tied. He couldn't believe that our system had deteriorated to that extent where an organized group like that could dragoon the legislature. He thought it was frightening. The question was, what could be done in the Senate? Well, the Senate Post Office Committee capitulated pretty quick. Then the question came to the Senate floor. I told the President, "We can work up a filibuster on that and kill it." He said, "Show me a plan that will work." So I called up Barry Goldwater, and I said, "Barry, would you be willing to lead a filibuster on this?" He said, "Can you give me the troops?" I said, "I think I can." He said, "Where is Ev Dirksen going to be?" I said, "I haven't called him yet. I want to be able to tell him that I have the people in the proper slots before I call him." He said, "Well, if Ev will stand up, I will. But I warn you, Ev won't." I said, "Well, we'll find out."

So I get hold of Ev and I tell him that we've got to get a filibuster going to kill that awful bill. "Oh, Bryce, I don't think we had better do that. You know that a filibuster is bad." And he went off. Ev didn't like it, didn't want any part of it. I said, "Ev, we've got to do it. We've just got to do it." I said, "Barry has signed up for it. We can get a minimum of twelve senators; this is all you need to sustain it. We can get the twelve, but Barry needs to have you willing to stand up. So you think about it and we're going to have breakfast down here tomorrow morning, as you know, with the President, and we can talk about it again then."

So that afternoon I get a call from Bob Anderson. He said, "Hey, Bryce, I had the strangest call from Lyndon. He said that there's some damn fool in the White House, and he can't find out who it is, who's trying to work up a filibuster on the postal pay increase bill, and it will just be a catastrophe. It will just horribly embarrass the President. It will cause all kinds of difficulties and ill will and trouble and whatnot, and he's trying to get the thing caught before it gets out of hand and causes the President and everybody else all this trouble." I said, "Is that so? Well now, Bob, isn't that curious? Are you recommending that I get hold of it and do something about it?" He said, "Yes, I think we've got to, you know, and I'd like to call Lyndon back." I said, "Well, would you feel any differently about it if you knew that Dwight D. Eisenhower was strongly in favor of it?" There was a long pause. He said, "Well, is he?" I said, "He most assuredly is. Bob, that's a ghastly bill, a horrible, nasty, terrible

bill, and the President is trying to stop it so he doesn't have it on his desk." He said, "Is it in concrete?" I said, "No. We have to line up Ev Dirksen. There will be a breakfast in the morning and we'll see." He said, "Okay." I said, "I hope you will leave Lyndon alone between now and then." He said, "I will." I said, "All right."

So in the morning we have breakfast. Ev Dirksen says, "Mr. President, the filibuster can't work. We don't have the votes; we don't have the support. I've checked the boys and they won't stand up. I think it's terrible, but there's just no way to bring it off," this, that, and the other. The President looked at me. I looked at the President. We had several other leaders there. I said, "Mr. President, I will do something that is awesome. I take issue with the data of the Senate Minority Leader, which is something, of course, I mustn't ever, ever do. But I do. I say we can mount a filibuster. I say we can win it, and that all we need to do is to have the Senate Minority Leader support it."

Ev looked at me, and I tell you, I was turning to shish kebob right there on his skewer with the garlic on it. He persisted and said it wouldn't work, that he would not go along with it. The President finally realized that Ev would not do it, that he was going to play instead with Lyndon, and he did. So the President let it go, and he and I talked about it on the way back over to the President's office after the breakfast. I just said, "Mr. President, Ev, he works with Lyndon just like a hand in glove and that's what did you in. Lyndon killed the filibuster himself by using Everett Dirksen." This

shows the great adroitness and power of Lyndon because Ev Dirksen was no fool. He was a fellow of enormous influence, but he loved Lyndon and respected him and liked to work with him.

G: Anything else that reflects on their relationship, any other incidents?

H: Those two, you mean?

G: Yes.

H: Oh, it was just always very good. They knew each other in the House of Representatives very well, too, and respected each other's capabilities. Ev Dirksen, of course, was the most beloved minority leader in, I suppose, the history of the Senate or just about. Lyndon was the most powerful majority leader, and they made quite a pair. Ev was, of course, a far more enjoyable person for Lyndon to work with than Bill Knowland. And Ev kept insisting that the oil is mightier than the sword, so their situation was uniformly good.

G: Of course, in this period that we're talking about, Alaska became a state and Hawaii followed a year later in 1959. Do you recall anything on the politics of voting statehood here and Johnson's role in it?

H: Well, I remember drawing the federal line on the state with Fred Seaton in my office. But I don't recollect the Lyndon role in it.

G: There was some suggestion that he persuaded John Burns to wait a year on Hawaii with the promise that if they could get Alaska through then the next year he could get Hawaii through.

H: Well, I faintly think that's right, but I can't [recall]. It's faint.

G: There was a big movement for labor reform. Of course, you had the McClellan rackets committee meetings. I guess the issue was whether

you would really have a strong labor bill or one that was more suited to the liking of organized labor. Kennedy sponsored a weaker bill and others were in favor of a more stringent labor reform bill. Do you recall Johnson's role here?

H: At one point here there was legislation that Kennedy was the chairman of the conference committee. Am I right about that?

G: Yes.

H: Is this the bill?

G: I believe so.

H: And the administration prevailed? Kennedy was unable to pass his own bill? Was this the one?

G: I think that was the Kennedy-Ives bill, was that right?

H: Well, you see, I'm asking you. I don't remember clearly, except that I recall that this was a test of Kennedy leadership in the Senate which didn't work out right. I always thought that Lyndon made sure it didn't, which I understood completely. We beat Kennedy on that bill, made him look real bad. He couldn't deliver. I always figured that we had--and I don't remember any detail of it--Lyndon's covert or even overt, I'm not sure, but covert, at least, collaboration in it. You couldn't allow him to look like as effective a Senate leader as Lyndon--no way--and make [this] the issue on the nomination. That was one of the major political items leading to the convention.

G: Anything on the creation of the [National Aeronautics and] Space Agency?

H: Yes, I worked a great deal with Lyndon on that. He was red hot on the thing and red hot on creation of a space council in the White House, like the National Security Council and formed in the same mold. Because Lyndon had worked on the unification statute, of course, and his staff fellow, who's one of these very smart fellows, became a good friend of mine, ended up later on the Washington Post.

G: Gerry Siegel.

H: Gerry. They put together this proposal to have the President as the head of the [National Aeronautics and] Space Council, like the National Security Council, with the Vice President on it, all these people on it, and with all kinds of requirements on presidential participation, and that the President had to consult the council before he could do this and do that and do the other. I engaged in bloody warfare with them on this council, and then later in the House with John McCormack on the same issue, and forced them to dilute it. I got them to dilute it, because I told them, number one, they couldn't make the President consult with anybody. I said, "I don't care what you write in the law. He'll have a meeting with himself. He'll just never call a meeting of the council. You can't do that, and it's ridiculous anyway. Lyndon, as it is, the President's bored with the NSC half the time. You can't do that. And cabinet meetings, the President is bored to death with cabinet meetings. Are you going to put it in the law that he has to have cabinet meetings and attend them? Well, then he just won't have any. So it won't work; you can't do that by law."

I talked to Gerry and Gerry agreed with that. At any rate, we changed it and then got McCormack to go along with the change. But they didn't take it all out because there was a matter of face involved. [They] left some dangling language around. Everybody came out of it where the thing wasn't really absurd, and yet they still made the point that the President ought to go to these meetings.

Well, then Lyndon gets in the White House and in a short space of time discovers that this Space Council is the bane of his life. (Laughter) I thought that was real retribution, and I kidded Walter Jenkins about it half a dozen times. I said, "Boy, talk about chickens coming home to roost. That's a beauty!" So he got rid of it himself.

But that was where I had the biggest struggle with him that I recollect, on the space issue itself. Of course, it became very highly political on the charge that the Eisenhower Administration had neglected space. The problem was that Stu [Symington] and Hoyt Vandenberg had neglected big boosters, and it turned into a big political thing because of the Soviets.

G: Anything on the location of the Manned Spacecraft Center in Houston? Was that something [in which you were involved]?

H: No, I don't know anything about that that I recollect.

G: Anything on President Eisenhower's decision to send troops to Lebanon in the summer of 1958 and Johnson's position on that?

H: Well, let's see. I was very much involved. I have a poor recollection of events preceding the decision to send them in, but those were

in-house meetings with the President with his advisers, and Lyndon wasn't in that.

Again, I remind you of what would happen in those meetings with Lyndon on these kinds of matters. Lyndon would be brought in with the leaders of the Congress, not separately. The President and Sam and Lyndon would meet together on these sporadic occasions I talk about, but never with an agenda. At the leadership meetings, ordinarily Lyndon and Sam would just sit there silently throughout the vast majority of the meetings. The conversation from the Democratic side would be carried normally by, let's say, [William] Fulbright and his House counterpart, the chairman of the House [Foreign Affairs] Committee, and those fellows. Maybe George Mahon would get in and this sort of thing, but not LBJ and Sam. They might, at the very end, make just a very inchoate statement of "Thank you, Mr. President, for your courtesy in consulting with us," and that sort of thing and so on. Then they would go outside, after these meetings, and meet with the press, and Lyndon would speak for him and Sam. He would say, "No commitments were asked and none were given." This was a pat thing. They would come out every time. In other words, "It was just a discussion, and we came in there with our views, whatever they were, and they had theirs, and we left the same way." This was always the practice.

On the Lebanon thing, I don't recall the leadership meeting per se on it. There is a full detail on that in the Eisenhower records that either I wrote, or the minutes of it that someone else wrote by that time. Arthur Minnich probably wrote them. You'll have a full account

of what was said, by whom. But Lyndon normally was in full support, normally was a good supporter for strong national action abroad and strong leadership of America abroad and bold action abroad.

On the question of the U-2 incident, there is a little episode there that supports the allegation I just made about Lyndon's basic approach to these kinds of things. The question was, should Eisenhower own up to the U-2 flying over Russia or not? The question was should he lie about it? So we had a leadership luncheon in the State Dining Room in the White House. I assembled all the solons. It ran to about thirty-eight people, normally. Then we had the President and the Vice President and the Secretary of State and the Joint Chiefs and so forth.

There was a presentation, Allen Dulles and so forth, on what the U-2 had been doing, and why it was so successful, and that they couldn't intercept it, and so on. That Khrushchev knew it was there. That they had been totally aware of the flights all the time. That they couldn't mention them because they were so embarrassed because they couldn't stop them, and so they wouldn't say anything about them. They'd known for a long time about these flights, but now they were coming up with this charge that they had the plane and pilot. We didn't believe they did. We thought it was a ploy, because there was no way for them to get the plane and pilot. It would self-destruct and the pilot was to destroy himself instead of being captured. This was the arrangement with the pilot and the arrangement on the aircraft. There was no way for them to capture the plane or pilot. Knowing that, and with various fail-safe systems, it was their best judgment that this

was simply a ruse on the part of the Soviets to make the United States own up to being such a bad boy, and maybe let loose with some secrets that the Russians needed to know. So with that as a premise, the thing to do was, until the things clarified, for Eisenhower to deny the whole thing and see what the Soviets came up with next, to see whether they were playing for real or not.

Everybody in the room agreed to that except Bill Fulbright. Everybody. Of course, Sam and Lyndon were there, and the chairmen of the committees, and everybody else from both parties and so forth. Fulbright took sharp exception to it in the meeting, argued vehemently against it.

G: What was his position?

H: That the President should own up to it--that we should just go ahead and tell them that, "Yes, we have this spy plane, and we have spies and everything."

Well, he was a pariah in the meeting. Everybody thought Fulbright was terrible. They really disliked what he said. It took a lot of courage on his part to do that. I've admired him for it ever since. I didn't agree with him, but I've admired him very much, the guts he had to do that. The only other guy I saw do that in my years was General Max Taylor one time do that with Eisenhower in the presence of the other Chiefs. That takes a lot of steel.

At any rate, as we broke up and the meeting was adjourned, it was agreed that Eisenhower should stay in the stance that this is all a bunch of nonsense, until they knew better what the Soviets had at least. As we were leaving the dining room, I don't remember who was walking out with the President, but I was behind him, and then Sam Rayburn and Lyndon fell in stride with me right behind the President. I was in between the two of them, and we were walking out. Sam says to me, "Bryce, you give Ike a message from us. Tell him to ignore that overeducated son of a bitch. Tell him nobody in the Senate listens to him. That the United States should not listen to him, and above all, Dwight D. Eisenhower should not listen to him. And that's from Lyndon and me."

Well, I just cite that as an example of the tilt of the two men which was instinctively about the same as Ike's, really, on nearly all of that kind of thing. It was in that case exactly, and I wasn't at all surprised by what Sam said.

G: Before Senator [Theodore Francis] Green retired as chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee, LBJ could sort of speak for the Democrats in terms of foreign affairs, but after Fulbright took over Fulbright himself was the logical voice for that. Did LBJ, to your knowledge, try to keep Green from retiring?

H: I don't know that he did. I doubt that he would have. I understood why he might have in the light of what we're saying, but by that time Senator Green was pretty thoroughly worn out and would go to sleep in committee meetings and so forth. It was a pretty bad show. I think

probably Lyndon would have thought that. I do know that he and Dick Russell went to great lengths to keep Stuart Symington from getting the Preparedness Subcommittee chairmanship.

G: Oh, really?

H: Oh, yes. They became enemies, you know.

G: I've never understood why though.

H: Well, it's two hot rods in the same area. Who's going to be number one on national defense: the former Secretary of the Air Force--that's Symington; that was his claim to fame--or LBJ, who was big on the Armed Services Committee in the House and a big national defense man? Russell, who Lyndon leaned on, didn't want Symington messing him up, and he was partly helping Dick Russell keep Symington in line.

G: What did they do to keep Symington from getting that post?

H: Oh, they just didn't let him have it. Lyndon took it himself. They banked Stu into the side pocket, and in desperation he turned to the Foreign Relations Committee, started playing games over there and trying to use the jurisdiction of the Foreign Relations Committee to get into national defense subjects, much to the growing ire of Lyndon. But those two very old friends became rivals. There was a lot of unpleasantness between them towards the end.

G: Do you remember any of the bills aimed at curbing the power of the Supreme Court, like the Butler-Jenner bill or the HR 3? Howard Smith, I think it was, [sponsored it]. Johnson's role seems to have been one of persuading the southerners to accept some lesser resolution or measure.

H: No, I don't recollect that.

G: For example, they got a bill by Senator [Styles] Bridges through instead of the Butler-Jenner bill. I think all this bill did was restore the anti-subversive laws that states had passed and that the Supreme Court had nullified.

H: I'm sorry, I don't.

(Interruption)

In 1958, 1959 or 1960, we were back again in our ancient fight on 90 per cent of parity, with the Democratic Party wanting 90 per cent of parity for the farmers, and Ezra Taft Benson wanting 75 per cent. So the Democratic Party passed the 90 per cent parity through the Congress, and the President vetoed it, and we're back squarely as usual. That's par for the course, both parties getting their politics out of it.

Well, then I sat down with Benson's people, and I sat down with some of the agriculture people up on the Hill and worked out a deal which I passed through the President, got him to accept, and got Benson very reluctantly to accept, to work out a new compromise on a farm bill which would actually be a good farm bill. Both parties would just close their eyes and not vote on the record and pass it. This would be good for the farmers, for a change, instead of being so good for the politicians and being so bad for the farmers.

Okay. I sold this, and I got it ultimately a long way through the process. I got Lyndon to buy it if Sam would, only with Sam I said that, "Lyndon will buy it if you will." He said, "Well, can you sell this to Bob Poage over there?" and I said, "Yes. I can sell it to Bob." He

said, "What about Page Belcher?" I said, "I don't know. Page is the problem more than anybody." He said, "Milt Young over in the Senate?" I said, "I've already sold him. I've got Milt." And so on.

I got everybody sold on it, and it was in the course of trying to sell Mr. Sam that I told him the President knew I was there, knew what I was going to say to him, this was terribly confidential, and it was a deal to set up this farm bill. "Here is the skeleton outline of it. Here is what it will do. The idea is for the Democratic and Republican leaders to agree that they will pass this. They'll run it through both houses on voice votes, quick, and we'll have a law everybody can live with." He said, "Did Lyndon buy it?" I said, "Yes, he bought it. Call him up and ask him. He bought it, if you will. Charlie Halleck's bought it; Ev Dirksen's bought it. It's all laid on. Benson's aboard; Eisenhower's aboard. It's ready to go." Well, he looked at me and he grinned. He said, "Bryce, I tell you what. You go down there, and you tell Ike that if he'll just keep that Ezra Taft Benson in that job, I'll do anything on earth he asks me."

(Laughter)

G: That's a good story.

H: I might add that the Republican Page Belcher shot it down and stopped it.

This is the election where the President got so badly defeated, 1958.

G: Yes.

H: Here's the foreign aid bill. I told you that foreign aid was only one of the big battles coming up before Congress could quit and go home. I told you Lyndon would hold that as the shillelagh to use on Ike, and he'd hold it to the last always.

G: There was also the National Defense Education Act. Do you remember that?

H: Yes, to educate a lot of scientists and so forth for national defense.

G: I gather it was really an aid-to-education bill that was sort of styled as a national defense bill.

H: Well, it was so intended. I don't think it was a shell game. It was to concentrate a tremendous amount of strength on technology and science. The President came down to Oklahoma City, as a matter of fact, and made a big speech on it there. That's where he really tossed it out.

(Interruption)

Somewhere in here, 1959 or 1960 it must have been, Lyndon came down very confidentially to the President, drove in in his limousine to the South Lawn and came in through that entrance by design. We arranged it that way, because he wanted it to be so private. He wanted to have the President not approve a civil rights proposal that as majority leader and whatnot he could not oppose in the Senate. He said, "That's just a bad thing. You mustn't go along with it. It's real bad. But I can't be caught out in public saying that." I'm trying to recall as I read this what that item was.

G: Was it in 1959, do you think?

H: Well, it would certainly be 1958, 1959 or 1960. I don't know. Of course Lyndon wanted it to be kept totally secret that he was there on that issue because of the politics in it. And [I] of course respected that. This is the first time I've ever mentioned it, as a matter of fact.

G: Did this have anything to do with the attorney general's enforcement powers?

H: I'd have to read and read to go back and recapture to pick that up.

G: I get the impression there were two schools of thought in the administration with regard to civil rights legislation. That one group was more identified with Bob Anderson and Jerry Persons, and the other one [with] Vice President Nixon and [William] Rogers on the nature of civil rights legislation needed.

H: That is what this is here [reading a document].

G; Yes. Do you recall that there were two different factions?

H; Well, there always is.

G; But in this particular instance?

H; Well, I think this is correct. Jerry's from Alabama and Bob's from Texas, and both of them [were] trying to live with the southern bloc and working with them. Then you had this other crowd, and that's the way it always is in the White House on that issue. But this is the Johnson bill. It must not have been this. I suppose his appointment records--he may not have even put it on there; I don't know--would show his going down to see the President. He came alone. He was very worried about

it leaking that he was there, too. He talked to me about it all the way back out to the car. (Laughter) I told him, "Lyndon, don't worry about it. I'll protect you."

G: Did it have to do with the extension of the Civil Rights Commission?

H: I think maybe that's it. That sounds right. That strikes me as likely to be it.

G: That ended up passing in 1959, I think, as a rider to a tax bill, or to a foreign aid appropriation.

H: Well, I don't recall.

G: He was opposed to it?

H: I think this was it, that he was opposed to it and couldn't say so, thought it was bad. I'm not certain that that's it, but I think that's probably it.

G: Early in 1959 he proposed an airport construction bill, federal aid to airports. The President opposed this and there was some speculation that LBJ was doing this in order to ruin the administration's balanced budget program. Do you remember that, the politics involved there?

H: Well, I thought at first I did. What first flashed into my memory was some contretemps with the U.S. Chamber of Commerce on it, and I don't remember what it was. My recollection is that they were irretrievably split on the issue, the chamber was. But I can't help you with that.

G: This was one of the bills that President Eisenhower threatened to veto and he stopped it as a result?

H: Well, I don't know. It sounds thoroughly right. This sort of thing,

of course you know, is chronic, gamesmanship of this kind. That's what wrong with split government.

G: Anything on LBJ's role in the Sherman Adams situation?

H: No, not a thing. I don't think I knew of his involvement in it at all. As a matter of fact, that happened in 1958 and I wasn't involved in his demise either, really. I don't know. I guess maybe Jerry Persons handled that. Oren Harris, who was doing it to Adams, was a very close friend of mine, but I don't recall ever lobbying that issue at all. I don't think that the White House had a whole lot of lobbying activity with it, because he was under investigation. Somewhat like the problem with Nixon on the impeachment stuff, you have to kind of stand away. It's a very difficult thing to work with. But I don't recollect Lyndon involved in it at all. I'm sure he was, but it may have been through Sam.

G: How about the depressed areas bill? This was something that the Democrats were sponsoring?

H: I just remember it, but no maneuvers about it.

G: During this period the liberal Democratic senators would occasionally attack LBJ's leadership as being one-man rule or too much power vested in one man, [William] Proxmire, [Joseph] Clark, and Senator [Albert] Gore. Do you remember Johnson's reaction to these attacks?

H: I don't. That is, I didn't see them. I know what they were, knowing Lyndon.

G: Do you think there was any validity to the charges that Johnson had too much power as majority leader?

H: No. He had as much power as he could get, and that wasn't too much. He had as much power as they would let him have, because the power he had was at their sufferance. He ran off with nearly all of it, nearly every bit of it, because they let him and therefore it wasn't too much. They reveled in it. It made them all irresponsible, "Let Lyndon run it." It's comfortable to have a leader like that. But too much [power] for good government, you'd say, that sort of thing.

G: Yes.

H: Well, I don't know that that's so. The Senate isn't worth much of a damn most of the time. It can't legislate. You know, they can't do anything in the Senate. Lyndon made the Senate perform like the House. I have to admit that he completely confounded the purposes of the founding fathers. They didn't expect the Senate to run like that. What Lyndon did in that sense is something that I tried to get others in the Senate to do later. I tried to get them to re-establish party responsibility on Capitol Hill so the two political parties would mean something again. You see, the collapse of the caucus system is what started the destruction of the two political parties. I've tried whimsically now and again to get them to reimpose "King Caucus" so that when you vote Democratic, or you vote Republican, you're voting for something. As it is now, it's all individual and no party discipline is worth a nickel on the Hill.

Well, Lyndon made the Democratic Party stand for something in the Senate and of course Mr. Sam [did] in the House. Those two Texans made the Democratic Party perform by the force of their leadership in those

two bodies. Then it all came apart after that, once again, with sweet Mike Mansfield.

G: Do you think that was a reaction to LBJ's strong arm?

H: No, there was no one else like LBJ around, before or since. I guess [Henry] Clay was like that, maybe. But it wasn't a question of reaction. Mike Mansfield had to rationalize the fact that Mike was not that kind of leader, he was a conciliator. So he made a virtue of that. Mike just can't be unpleasant. It just drives him up the wall to be unpleasant to somebody. So he led the Senate by letting the Senate do what it wanted to do, and the senators found that fun. It was, for a change, I suppose you might say. But there was no one possible that they could have put in that could have come close to doing what Lyndon did except one who died. That was Bob Kerr. Bob would have carried forward in that tradition and probably done just as well because he was at least as able as Lyndon. [He was] the only man around [who was], and Lyndon had started using Bob because of that.

G: In the late fifties I get the impression that a great deal of the power in the Senate resided not so much in the deep South but in the Southwest and West.

H: Well, maybe so.

G: Did you feel that this was a factor? Or that the locus of power had shifted from the South to the West?

H: I don't know that I ever knew that. I should have, if it's true, because I was steeped in it at the time. The truth of the matter was, of course, that the power was so immensely personalized in Lyndon. He could

go over and get Margaret Chase Smith's vote out of Maine, a Republican. He could do that, and that was without regard to regionalism. It was Lyndon and his great ability to charm, to threaten, to seduce, induce, wheedle, get somebody to do what he wanted to do. He worked at it indefatigably, day and night, and wouldn't let up. So he had them all indebted to him one way or another and had them all scared of him.

G: Did he do this with Republicans as well as Democrats though?

H: Oh sure. Yes. Why did Ev Dirksen like to play games with him all the time? It was rewarding. Ask and it shall be given unto thee, provided you give back. So scratch and scratch. And it was a game of scratch. That was Lyndon's game. Like old Bob Kerr used to say, "I'm against any deal I ain't in on."

(Laughter)

It worked very pragmatically. I honestly feel like you could probably work out the power quotients like that. But there is such a heavy overlay of the truly remarkable thing throughout the Johnson period--his personal leadership.

G: Was he able to influence President Eisenhower directly through the force of his personality, or did he rely on people like Anderson or Dirksen to do it?

H: No, he'd use whatever he thought would work best.

G: What did work best as far as he was concerned?

H: Oh, it depended upon what it was. He used Ev Dirksen to kill that filibuster. If he had gone to the President on that--Eisenhower--it probably wouldn't have worked. So he went through Bob Anderson and over

to Dirksen. See now, Ev Dirksen cheated on that deal. After I went to him on the filibuster, he went straight to Lyndon and told him and he shouldn't have done that. That was disloyal to the White House, to the President, to me. He said, "You know those people"--I can just hear old Ev--"they're trying to work out this big deal here on this thing. Now we don't want to have a big filibuster fight around here. We've got to figure out a way to stop it. Why don't you come talk to Bob Anderson." [?] I can just hear those two old hawks doing that. Sure enough. Ev never knew, to the day of his death--he and I were very close--that I knew exactly what he did. But you see, that was a peculiar attribute of Johnson, that he would be such a guy that they would be willing to do that and risk his own relationships with the President and everybody by going to Lyndon. But he knew Lyndon would protect him, because Lyndon played the game.

G: You've described all of these various avenues into the Executive that Johnson had: Macomber, Gates.

H: Harlow.

G: Dirksen.

H: Dirksen. They were very close, you know.

G: What other ones did he have and how did he use them?

H: Gerry Morgan, Bryce Harlow, Jack Martin, Eisenhower personally, Anderson, Gates. For a while we had the other [Dillon] Anderson, from the NSC staff, a real fine guy, close to Lyndon, too. [He was from] Texas. Most of the cabinet. Washington is a city of power. Power beckons more than party. So cabinet officers would tuck their tails and run

to Lyndon every chance they could, because it was a never ending fountain that might sprinkle on them. If you've got a lot of power in Washington, you won't have any problem with avenues. The problem is to keep them from coming to you. The avenues open up all the time all around you to use your power, because it helps other people. And Lyndon had all kinds of avenues all over the place because of his exceptional power. The White House proper, you know, had all those big ones. If your phone rang and someone said, "Senator Johnson is on the phone," the people come to the phone.

G: Did this enable him to get more things for his state than he might have otherwise?

H: Sure.

G: Did he have a privileged status as far as the White House was concerned?

H: Oh, sure. Everybody with stature on the Hill had more White House stroke than those without stature. It's axiomatic. In the entire executive branch, it's a city of power. Tip O'Neill calls downtown today, things happen. But if Congressman Blah from Houston calls down to the White House, nothing much happens. They're too busy working on Tip's problem. (Laughter)

G; Sure.

Tape 2 of 2

G: As we get on into 1960, did you have a feeling whether Lyndon Johnson really wanted to run for president or not, in your own mind?

H: Oh, I thought he did. Sure. [He was an] insatiable man for power. Insatiable. He hadn't, even as majority leader or anything else, ever been stretched out completely. He still had reserve power. It was an instinct with the man to try to get his power all in play, and then all his life he had been trying to get to use it all. Only the presidency could do that. Melvin Laird was something of the same kind. That's the reason why I was so eager to get him out of the House of Representatives and over in the Defense Department, to pull on his enormous ability. He was idling at a speed faster than almost all the other members of the House, like Lyndon. You know, those people are extraordinary. There's just a handful of them at a time. So I always thought that Lyndon had to do something like that, either the White House or its equivalent, to stretch him out. He never felt the job was too burdensome that I could see.

G: There were accusations that LBJ was running the Senate, and Sam Rayburn was running the House, to promote LBJ's political ambitions in 1960.

H: Oh, that couldn't possibly be so, could it? (Laughter) Of course they did.

G: Do you think that one of the reasons he didn't enter the early primaries and held back was so that these accusations wouldn't have as much weight as they did?

H: Well, I wouldn't know that. I had no way to know it. I'm sure that he and Sam exhaustively weighed how he should best proceed with their political advisers, and I don't know the answer to that at all. I would not know. I wouldn't be involved. But they couldn't believe that

Kennedy would get it. I think the West Virginia primary was an absolute shock.

G: Anything on LBJ's role in the Berlin crisis?

H: No.

G: The steel strike?

H: No, sir.

G: Also, in 1959 the Senate failed twice to override President Eisenhower's veto of the Omnibus Housing Act.

H: Well, we had a thing going there for a while. I think Ike was overriden only twice, wasn't he?

G: That's right.

H: We had quite a thing going there of Republican loyalty to him. There was kind of a shibboleth set in of one third plus one. We got to talking about that in Washington. That's all the President needed was one third plus one, and he could control the Congress. It took on as kind of a war cry of the shattered minority, and it worked quite well on lots of bills. Furthermore, the Democratic Party for so long has had such a disproportionate majority that it does its business sloppily, [or] has tended to. Counting votes, getting the people there to vote, using the whip system, enforcing discipline, when you have a large majority that tends to shatter. It becomes very hard.

When I was succeeded by Larry O'Brien in 1961 I told Larry, "I just don't know who's got the harder job, because I've spent eight years here trying to build a majority out of minority. It ain't easy. But you've got a job of taking a huge majority and holding it together. You

may find that even harder, Larry, than my job was." Well, by 1963 Kennedy couldn't pass a mother-love resolution. He was in the worst shape of any time I've ever been in Washington on inability to legislate. Well, that came to pieces up there on the Hill in some of that time, on overriding vetoes, because there were just so many Democrats around that a lot of them would vote their districts and wouldn't put it through.

The Republican side normally oscillates, in the last twenty years or more, between a hundred and forty and a hundred and seventy-five votes in the House. The Republican side of the House is really rich and fat if it gets up to a hundred and ninety. That is unusual. It's in its leanest years when it's a hundred and forty, and it just runs back and forth in there. So we have a de facto one-party system. People don't like to talk about it. People don't like to say it. They don't want it. They've got it. They don't want to admit it. The Republican side has had therefore to do its black magic by using presidential vetoes when it has a president, by and large, to achieve its purposes. So here's what this was. The Democrats had passed these bills knowing that they would be vetoed and maybe sustained, maybe not. We expected them to pass them. It was plain politics, playing games across the constitutional gulf.

G: Did LBJ ever count wrong on these things?

H: Well, it was the House mainly that was counting wrong. [The House was] much worse; the system over there was looser. Lyndon knew better. For example, when they threw out straws, he knew right down to the last

niche where that was. That kind of thing. He was good on that. But in the House, the House was sloppy.

G: What was Bobby Baker's role in the head-counting?

H: I never did know. He was head of the Policy Committee staff. He was kind of a go-for for Lyndon. Who was whip under Lyndon? I don't remember.

G: Well, [Earle] Clements was at first. Then the later one was Mansfield.

H: Mike, yes. It was his job to do that. But Lyndon probably didn't do that. He knew personally where those bodies were. It's a smaller body. It's easier than the House. But the Republican side of the House has traditionally had a very good whip system, and a very tight count. I remember going to a big Chamber of Commerce dinner at their annual meeting in Washington in one of these three years. Carl Albert was at my table, the Oklahoma group. There was a big issue up on the floor of the House, a big political bill, and Carl said, "Well, we're going to beat you on that, Bryce." I said, "Oh no, you're not. No, you're not." It was overriding the veto, you know. I said, "You won't do it, Carl. We got you beat." He said, "All right. You'll find out you're going to be wrong." In about ten minutes Carl was called to the phone, or I was, I don't remember which. I was in the White House. We beat them by one vote, and I knew we were going to beat them by one vote and Carl didn't. Carl knew they were going to win. Well, you see, he just didn't count right. He should have known I was right. That created a lot of grief on bills like this for the Democrats.

G: Was that the Public Works Bill?

H: I don't remember what the bill was. My recollection is it was a bill that had to do with agriculture.

They had that problem all through the sixties, too. Hale Boggs was very ineffectual as a whip. They may be doing better now, I don't know. It doesn't look like it. President Carter has got his problems.

G: Anything on the Civil Rights Bill in 1960?

H: No, I'd have to reread that history. I wasn't mixed into it in a way that I remember. I don't recall anything about it particularly. All of these things were just more struggles.

G: You had an aid-to-education bill, where an amendment was proposed by Senator Clark to raise the bill to 1.1 billion and extend it indefinitely, and Vice President Nixon broke the tie vote to kill the amendment. Do you remember that?

H: No, not really. Nixon voted a few times that way, I mean on ties. I don't particularly recall that.

G: Do you want to look over this list again and see if there's anything there in 1960?

H: [Reading a document] The Sugar Act. U-2. Oh, incidentally, I didn't finish up the U-2 story. There is a sequel to that. After that meeting in which only Bill Fulbright, in the entire Congress of the United States and its leaders, Democrats and Republicans, thought that Eisenhower should do differently from what he did, Bill Fulbright opened hearings to skin Eisenhower for doing it, and did it. He was successful in doing that. He scarred Eisenhower up really badly with it. To this very day President Eisenhower has kind of a black mark on U-2. That's all from

Bill Fulbright and he was the only person in Congress that thought that should be done. It's interesting how those things work out. But it shows the steel in Fulbright. He was not to be tampered with. He was a tough guy, tougher than people think.

G: Anything on the bill to cut Cuba's sugar quota?

H: Well, the only thing that triggers is one of my many chats with Mr. Sam about that committee and the chairman, who we thought was utterly corrupt. He said, "I can't do anything with him." That is, Mr. Sam told me about it.

G: Because of sugar interests in his state?

H: Yes, sugar interests, though not necessarily of his state. That came to my memory, that conversation with Mr. Sam about that, about what could be done on the sugar bill and he says he can't do a thing about it.

It must have been in 1960 was that occasion that I almost made this sale of the new farm bill. That's what this was. Because we ended up with no legislation for the farmers, and they badly needed it. Everybody knew that, and we just almost got it done.

Now, I guess this was overriden, wasn't it? Yes, this is the federal pay raise. Yes.

G: That was the one I think you had reference to with regard to the postal unions lobbying.

H: Eisenhower was absolutely shocked by that, what happened on that bill.

This may have been the night that I talked to Lyndon so long about the foreign aid bill.

G: Do you recall the conversation?

H: I told you about that before, about telling Lyndon to take that provision out of the bill. [See Interview I]

G: Oh, yes.

H: I think it must have been this case here, probably, in July. It was an all-night session, you see. They didn't adjourn.

This was the Kennedy bill. This was the great Kennedy effort, this minimum wage effort, for political goodies for Kennedy. I wouldn't mind talking about this. It didn't pass, did it? That's right. Yes, the House boys killed it, minimum wage. It was a very bad show by Kennedy. He looked bad. That's the one that you and I were talking about, I think.

I don't know the story on this in the campaign, but our impression was that Lyndon and Kennedy had a deal; Lyndon would do the religious talking while Kennedy kept his mouth shut about it. Every place Lyndon went he talked about that, passed out tracts and every darn thing. Kennedy didn't, because he was so much of a religious problem and symbol and so forth. Nixon wouldn't discuss it at all. He completely said it was off limits, no discussion of religion. Every place I was turning around, LBJ was kicking religion all over the place.

So finally at Hartford, Connecticut, I think it was, about one o'clock in the morning, Nixon wanted me to write something for him and have it ready by seven or seven-thirty in the morning. He called me into his suite and I went in there and he told me to do this. I told him I wouldn't do it unless he flatly ordered me to because it was so

wrong. What it was, he wanted me to write a statement for him to issue, criticizing organized labor for something they distributed in Detroit, some tract. It was a very vicious thing of some kind. This was to call upon Kennedy to repudiate it. I told him he was just playing into Kennedy's hands and calling attention to the tract. I thought it was politically so wrong that I wouldn't do it unless he just flatly ordered me to. I wanted to be certain he knew that it was on him and not me, because I wanted to avoid that.

Well, he dropped it. "Okay, all right, Bryce. If you feel so strongly about it, we won't do it." I said, "Well, now then, Mr. Vice President, before I get out of here I'm going to say something to you. You are being religioned right out of this campaign, and you won't do a thing about it. You've got your back up about it. You're not going to talk religion. You're not going to introduce it in the campaign, aren't going to say anything at all about it, because you've got this Catholic hang-up. You're scared to mention it, or you won't mention it, however you feel about it. I don't know what it is. Meanwhile, Lyndon is talking religion at every stop, all over the country, and he is issuing statements and passing things out to the audiences and everything. Big stuff. And you're just flat losing the campaign on religion, and that's wrong. You should attack it, the hypocrisy of it. You're going to speak at the Al Smith Dinner next week. So is Kennedy. What better place?" He looked at me and said, "Do you believe that?" I said, "I know it's so. What do you mean, do I believe it? I know it. It's calculated,

Mr. Vice President. It's a calculated stance. Kennedy can't talk it. Lyndon can and Lyndon's talking it. So there you are."

Well, he issued orders to Fred Seaton, who was his honcho on the plane, to get hold of Bill Rogers immediately in Washington and get a suitable statement prepared. Bill Rogers, Len Hall and Fred Seaton all went through the ceiling and said that he mustn't do it, no indeed, no, no, no, no, and then they dropped it, never did do it. And I think that if he had done so he might have won.

G: It was close enough.

H: I mean, anything could have changed it. But Lyndon saved it himself. Lyndon won the election, no question about that. They'd had no chance at all if it hadn't been for that. Nixon kept Eisenhower out of it too long. Eisenhower was desperately eager to get in.

G: Oh, was he?

H: Yes. He was climbing the walls. But he felt profoundly that it was not his campaign, and that he mustn't do anything to intrude himself into it, that he had to stand away and just respond to requests from the candidate. Ike had those kinds of inhibitions in him of proprieties. They were very sharp inside of him, and he would not violate that kind of a canon. So when I was sent back to do his coming-out speech--I was working on Nixon's speeches and traveling on the plane and so forth, and I was sent back to do Ike's speech. The President requested I be sent back for that. I found him just wild, just so frustrated he couldn't stand it. He said, "What's the matter with Dick? What's going on here?

He's losing this election." Old non-political Ike, you know. He wasn't non-political. He was very sensitive politically.

Well, we did this coming-out speech and he did it in Philadelphia. It was a hot speech; what a hot one! He came out swinging hard and made a hot speech. It wasn't to a political rally. It was to a bunch of fat cats sitting there with tuxes, looking like a bunch of rich monkeys. Real bad for television but none the less he came out and did his thing.

Then they were loathe to use him too much, because it made Nixon look like Eisenhower's little boy and that's what they were trying to avoid, until it became apparent even to Nixon and Bill Rogers and so forth that they were losing and not doing as well as they should. Then they tried to use him at the last minute, and it of course narrowed his effectiveness. That's the story of that.

G: Anything on the transition involving LBJ that is of consequence?

H: LBJ and the transition?

G: The transition from Eisenhower to Kennedy.

H: No, I don't recall his being involved at all. He must have been. Oh yes, indeed. Sure. That's right. He did a very good open job of transiting to--you're talking about Eisenhower to Kennedy?

G: Right. You've seen two of them, I'm sure.

H: I was mixing [it] up [with the transition from] Johnson to Nixon.

G: My next question was going to be a comparison of the two.

H: Well now, Eisenhower to Kennedy. Eisenhower issued orders that it be done absolutely according to Hoyle, flat out. Absolutely. No

reservation of any kind. Everybody was ordered to do that, and everybody did that. The Kennedy people just got every damn thing.

G: Does this have to do with memos and. . . ?

H: Well, and sit down with the incoming people as soon as they were named and brief them, as long as they were willing to be briefed, on what the agency is and how it works, and what's going on, and what problems you will encounter, and who's who, and what's what, and all about it. It really was a show and a wide-open job, as you would expect from a career president, a career public servant.

In my case, I had to call Larry O'Brien in myself; he wasn't going to come in. He sent in this nice girl, Phyllis [Maddock Nason], a real nice girl, his secretary, to see me. [She] called and asked if I would talk to her. I said of course, and she came over and wanted to talk to my people about how the place worked, congressional work, and so forth, how we were organized and what happened and all. So I told all my people to tell her anything she wanted to know and tell her what we did and how we did it and everything, which they all did.

Then she came in to say goodbye to me and thank me. She said, "Mr. O'Brien will be doing this differently. He intends to." I said, "Of course he will. But what's he going to do that's so different, because the problems are not going to be all that different?" "Well, the President-elect made a point in the campaign that the White House staff is too large. He's going to reduce it." I said, "Oh, I know, all candidates say that. What's that got to do with this?" "Well, he's going to just do it all himself. He's not going to have a large staff here." I said, "Do all what himself?" "Handle the Congress and appointments."

I said, "Presidential appointments, you mean, and the Congress' relations for Kennedy? You and him?" She said, "Yes, sir." I said, "Miss Nason," or whatever it was, "would you please when you go back tell Mr. O'Brien I want to see him personally in my office? He needs to be talked to." (Laughter)

So I brought him in and I sat him down there and I said, "Mr. O'Brien, I'm in favor of political fighting, just like you are. I'm a good, honest, determined, enjoy-being partisan like you are, like political fights, believe in them for our system. I want us to have good political fights after you get in here, and we'll just kick each other all around some way on issues for our country, and that's the way it should be. But I don't want us to waste our time on mechanics. That's empty. And for us to work up a great political battle over just mechanics is empty and it's no good. You're about to ruin your president. I'm not discounting your ability. But you'll ruin your president by what you're about to do in this chair, I'm told by your secretary-to-be."

"Let me explain to you why. Even now, at the end of the administration--this is our last few days here--even now I average a hundred and twenty-five incoming telephone calls a day. Average. And I'm not mentioning mail. I'm not mentioning visits by people coming in. I'm not mentioning trips I have to make to the Hill. I'm not mentioning my trips down to see the President or other people in the White House, or meetings. I'm not taking out time to go to the john, have breakfast, have lunch, have dinner. That's just me working on Congress. We have a large staff supporting me.

Now then, if you go around the corner over here, there's a man named Bob Hampton. He handles the congressional appointments and presidential appointments. That office handles four hundred incoming calls a day, even now. Now then, when you first come to work in this building, and it's January 20 and it is 12:01, you won't be able to hang up this phone. For your first two years you won't be able to hang it up without it ringing, no matter how many lines you put on it. Now, if you think you can handle all that stuff by yourself and this little girl Phyllis, I'm just telling you, you're going to destroy yourself and destroy your president. I felt I owed it to you. The President told us to be good to you guys in transition. I'm just telling you that's absolutely mad, stark raving mad."

Well, I think I scared the hell out of him. At least I persuaded--I'll put it that way--Larry O'Brien. So he came in here, and he set up the same system I had. That system has survived ever since in all administrations. It's about the only part of the White House--oh, I guess press secretary, appointments secretary--that hasn't changed. It still works like that today.

But now, by contrast, you have Clarence Randall who was head of the international economic policy council created by Eisenhower by administrative action in order to put together international economic policy development. That's always a mess in every administration. Well, Clarence Randall, who had been president of Inland Steel and a very distinguished business leader, had created a fine activity, very high quality organization and system, and so forth. He sat over there with all of his files in apple-pie order that you'd expect a

business leader to have. A tremendous amount of effort went into it to turn it over to his successor and explain to him about all this international economic policy for America. He was not a partisan, this guy. He was a business leader. And the Kennedy people never sent anyone; they never set it up. They let it go down the tubes. They just dropped it, and I remember how broken-hearted poor old Clarence Randall was. He sat over there and waited and waited, and they never sent anybody. He finally just trickled out of the White House and left his stuff. I don't know whatever happened to that material. The council was ultimately recreated later on under Nixon.

Now, when you come to the other transition, from Lyndon to Nixon, again as far as I recollect, it went very nicely, comfortably, easily. I don't recollect any bumps in the road, any hesitancies, holdbackisms. They weren't in my area. I, of course, was experienced in my area. I was the only one in the White House that was. At the time I went back into the White House, I went back in to what was Joe Califano's old office. I don't recall who was doing my job for LBJ late in the game, after Larry O'Brien. The whole thing had gotten kind of spread-out and spread-eagled by that time. His congressional unit had gotten extremely large, because he had such trouble with the Hill in the latter part. He kept expanding that staff. I don't know who was running it. Well, I guess Larry O'Brien still was.

G: Wasn't it Henry Hall Wilson?

H: Well, Henry was in there, yes. Yes, Hank Wilson. He was a good friend of mine, too. And Mike Manatos. Mike, of course, was my number-two at Proctor and Gamble. I brought him over there. Those two guys and Larry

were very close friends of mine, good friends of mine, still are. Poor Hank Wilson tried so hard to get into this Carter crowd and they kicked him out. I don't know what happened. It didn't work.

But that transition was a good one, I think. I think Lyndon did it like he was supposed to. We weren't in Washington except for part of December. We were up there at the Pierre Hotel in New York City, for reasons I've never understood. But Lyndon called me a number of times up there.

Did I tell you the time I had all three of the presidents on the phone at the same time? It was funny. I was sitting there, and Lyndon called me about something. He was still president, of course. This would have been late November or early December. I get on the phone to the President of the United States. He wants me to tell the President-elect something. Well, while I'm listening to Lyndon, because you didn't talk too much--you know, you always listened to Lyndon; he was going telling me what to do--why, the little gal in the office runs over. Her eyes are big and round, and she said President Eisenhower was calling me from Walter Reed and would like to talk to me. I said, "Honey chile"--putting my hand over the phone for Lyndon--"you tell him that I'm on the phone to President Johnson, and if he would like to hold on, put him on hold or I'll call him back, whichever he prefers. I have to stay on with the President. I can't get off with the President, which he will understand." So she put Eisenhower on hold. This is a good relationship to have with people.

So I'm going on with Lyndon, I've got Ike on hold, and in comes Larry Higby running into my office from down the hall. He was Bob Haldeman's striker. He runs up to my desk--he didn't know who I was talking to--"Mr. Harlow, Mr. Harlow," he said, "President-[elect] Nixon wants you in his office immediately." I said, "Larry, you tell the President-elect he's got to wait in line. I am with the President of the United States on the phone, former President Eisenhower is on hold. I will get to the President-elect just as soon as I can." (Laughter) I think that's a darn good story. I'm sure that's the only time in history that could have happened.

G: Anything during the campaign on the relations between LBJ and Mr. Nixon in 1968?

H: Yes, there is one. One incident comes to mind. I don't know of any others that I might recollect. But there was one incident when we were out in California. There was another incident, too, somewhere along the way. But when we were out in California at the Century Plaza Hotel, LBJ called up Ev Dirksen with the charge that Nixon and/or his troops were in direct dealings with the South Vietnamese government, and were telling them to not go along with the Johnson peace deal for political reasons, and that if you didn't cease and desist instantly or do something, that he was going to dump all over him. Something like that. He was mad as all get-out.

This was telephoned to me by Ev Dirksen. Johnson wanted to know immediately whether or not that was true. That seemed to be it. I'm not so sure about that. That seemed to be what he wanted to know. Was that true, that charge. That he understood it was. So I skinned

upstairs to the next floor, Nixon was upstairs, and Bob Haldeman had the room outside there, standing guard over entrance to his quarters. I said, "I've got to talk to the boss." He said, "He's in bed and he's asleep. You can't talk to him." I said, "Oh, yes I can, and I'm a gonna. I've got to talk to the boss. You'll have to get him up." He said, "I'm not going to do it." He and I had a contretemps, and we got him up.

G: You woke him up?

H: I told him, "You've got to talk to LBJ. Someone has told him that you're dumping all over the South Vietnamese to keep them from doing something about peace and he's just about to believe it. If you don't let him know quickly that it's not so, then he's going to dump. At least he says so. He tells Ev Dirksen that and Ev called me. Ev is just beside himself. He says that Lyndon is simply enraged and we ought to do something. Mr. President, Dick, Mr. Vice President"--I don't know that I called him that--"you've got to do it." And so he did. He called him. He got him on the phone and said there was absolutely no truth in it, as far as he knew.

G: Where do you think Johnson had gotten that information?

H: I don't have any idea. I was just on the receiving end of Ev's call.

G: Are you convinced that it was not true?

H: No, I'm not convinced that it was not true. It was too tempting a target. I wouldn't be a bit surprised if there were some shenanigans going on. But I don't know who would have done it. I don't know how it would have been done, I might put it that way.

G: You mean, the shenanigans being--

H: Of telling the Vietnamese to hold loose.

G: Yes.

H: As I say, it was too tempting a target as I remember it.

G: Did you have any knowledge firsthand at all?

H: No, but I remember it. I wouldn't have been surprised. As a matter of fact, I wasn't sure what Nixon was going to say to Johnson. I thought, well, hell, he won't mind my knowing something about that. (Laughter) But I didn't know.

G: The name that is often mentioned with that is Madame [Anna] Chennault.

H: Chennault and John Mitchell is what they talked about at the time in the press. But at any rate, Nixon told him no and Johnson put down his pistol, except probably Johnson didn't believe it. But he probably couldn't prove it, I suppose.

Anyhow, there was one thing that I remember. There was something else. The development of that peace pitch was an interesting thing. Johnson had promised to keep politics totally out of foreign policy in the campaign. If Nixon would not talk it and Humphrey would not, he would keep the thing absolutely non-political. And Nixon tried to play it that way. I say he did because I know damn well he was insistent upon it, and it wasn't all because he was a puritan. It was because he had so much to lose if he triggered it, because Johnson had the White House, and the power is there on that kind of issue. So he had self-interest involved in respecting that. But he was respecting it.

Well, then they started putting together this big statement about a bombing halt. That was getting right in there, I tell you. Well, I knew all about that. I had a double agent working in the White House. I knew about every meeting they held. I knew who attended the meetings. I knew what their next move was going to be. I kept Nixon informed about the development of that, about my agent. He'd call me and tell me, "George Ball, de de de de de . . . " and this and that and the other. I traced it right along and I said, "Boss"--Nixon--"he's going to dump on you." He said, "He promised me he would not. He has sworn he would not." I said, "He's going to dump on you. It's in preparation. They're going to do it to you just like they did in 1962 in the Cuban Missile Crisis. Identical. It's just a question of timing."

He said, "I don't believe it." I said, "Here it is. Here are the meetings. Here is what they are talking about doing. They're having a hell of a time with the Joint Chiefs. Lyndon is bringing them around. He's twisting and turning it so that they'll go with it. He's forcing them to go with it. He can't have them repudiate it. That's where it is right now, the Chiefs. As soon as he gets them over, and the time is right, he's going to dump. That's the plan." Nixon said, "I don't believe it." I said, "Well, that's it. Don't be surprised; it's going to happen." He said, "Suppose this happens, what do we do?" I said, "I don't know. At this point I don't know what to say because I don't know what can be done, just like you couldn't do anything in 1962 either. I don't know what you can do about it, and I don't know what the effect

of it will be. It could be disaster, total. But at any rate, be prepared. It's going to come."

So then I went and did something. I went out, and, you see, I had talked with Merriman Smith of the AP, dean of the White House press corps, about fifty times all during the campaign actually, he to me and I to him. He and I were old buddies from the Eisenhower days. Smitty kept saying that Johnson was going to keep foreign policy out of there. I said, "I don't believe it, not Lyndon. Lyndon plays for keeps. Lyndon likes to win. He likes to win more than anything in the world, and he'll go political on foreign policy if he has to. You wait and see." He said, "Nope, he won't. He promised. He's told me. I know he's told Nixon. He's told me there are not going to be any shenanigans about it. That's straight."

Well, I went back to Smitty sitting back here in the plane and sat down beside him. I said, "Smitty, what would you think if I told you that LBJ is going to dump on RMN in foreign policy at the time it would hurt the worst, similar to what was done by JFK to RMN in 1962? What would you say?" He would say, "I would say that's a damn lie. You're trying to plant a story. Is that what you're doing? I said, "Yes. That's what I'm trying to do. But I'm not trying to plant a lie. I'm trying to plant a story that's true, because that's what's going to happen. This will have to do with our relations with South Vietnam and North Vietnam, and it will be a blockbuster, and it will come from the President at a critical time in the campaign." He said, "And when is that?" He was just filled with scorn. I said, "I don't know. I ain't that smart." He said, "Well, I don't believe it, and that's that." I

said, "Okay. You wait and see. But Smitty, you're going to be off of the next leg of this trip, I understand. So you'll be back over to the White House. Why don't you just do a little prowling and see what you find? You might find something."

So I lost my double agent; my double agent suddenly lost his intelligence source. He called and he said, "It's disappeared. They prepared a draft speech for the President. They have it all prepared. They have a script ready. It's all done. They turned it over to him, and I can't find it. I don't know what's happening next. [?] I don't know where it is or where it's gone." What we didn't know was that they had recorded it. LBJ had put it on tape to be released at exactly the right time, and we didn't know that. We couldn't find the damn thing. We couldn't get a handle on when it was going to be done. I just knew the script was in the Oval Office; the President had been over it. It was that far. It was just on edge, but I couldn't get a handle on what would happen next, or when. I dutifully reported this to Nixon. He said, "Well, where is it?" I said, "I don't know." He said, "I still don't believe you. You've got a cock-and-bull story." I said, "Okay. Okay. Maybe you're right."

Well, Smitty came back aboard the plane. He found occasion to ask me to come back to see him in the press section, so I went back there. He said, "Just for your information, I meddled around in staff and asked questions around the staff, and there's nothing, just like I told you. So forget it." Then he sort of tried to put me down for bothering him with it, trying to mislead him.

Then came the great speech on the bombing halt. About two o'clock that morning I had a telephone call in my hotel room. I was up writing another speech. Here was Smitty, drunk as a hoot owl. He had that problem. He said, "I just want to apologize. The son of a bitch lied to me; he lied to you; he lied to Nixon. He did exactly what you said, and I apologize from the bottom of my heart." And he hung up and went away. And it almost worked. If Lyndon had dropped it three days earlier it could have beat him. The tuning was too fine.

G: When this was discussed in the White House, doing this, the discussion of the bombing halt was tied to announcing it when it would have the maximum political effect, is that right?

H: I don't know that. I know that's what we expected them to do with it, because it was going to have a monumental impact when it came, politically. Therefore they would drop it at the time it would be most helpful to Humphrey. I mean, that was just logic, no way to go around that.

G: But your source in conveying the information--

H: Well, the thing was that my source was reporting that this was a political exercise.

G: That they were doing it for political reasons?

H: It was heavily in it. It wasn't exclusively that. It wasn't that there was no national interest involved, obviously. But there was a whole lot of politics in it, and that they expected it to have a wallop. George Ball expected it to have a tremendous wallop politically.

G: Do you think that these were decisions that were largely made in the Tuesday cabinet?

H: I don't know that. I think that this was worked up probably by the George Ball-types. I don't remember who was involved. I used to have the list of the people at the meetings. These were your triple-domers in foreign policy. I think that that's the crowd that probably did it.

G: Were there many people in the White House who were sympathetic with the Nixon campaign rather than the Humphrey campaign? A number later became identified with President Nixon.

H: I don't think so. I can't imagine it.

G: I'm just wondering if having a source was an extraordinary thing or if there were [others].

H: Well, it was extraordinary, this gumshoe I had there, and I don't know how it worked exactly. My contact had a contact and I don't know who that was. He started to tell me and I told him, "I don't want to know." And I don't want to know. But he had another guy. He was not in the White House, this guy. No, I won't get caught like that. But he had a guy. The fellow I was working with was an extraordinarily able man, very trustworthy, straight, sharp. So I knew that what he was telling me was as straight as you could get information, and as reliable as information could be of that kind. But he had a double agent somewhere.

G: But his source in the White House may well have been a Humphrey supporter who simply didn't realize that the information was going to the Nixon camp.

H: Oh, yes. Sure, that may be. Well, I don't know. I don't have any idea. I rather doubt that his source in the White House was aware that he was

keeping the Nixon forces up to date on what they were doing. I doubt it. Probably not. I never did know who that was, and I've got to ask that guy--he's still around--who the devil that guy was that he worked through. I never did know.

G: Do you want to add the name of your source?

H: No. No, I don't want to do that. It has never been known. It wasn't known by the Nixon people either. I wouldn't tell them. The President said, "Who are you dealing with?" I said, "Dick, let's don't do that. This is too delicate." He said, "All right. Okay." It's the only way you can do this kind of stuff.

G: Shall we take a break at this point? We covered a lot of ground today.

[End of Tape 2 of 2 and Interview II]

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Legal Agreement pertaining to the Oral History Interviews of Bryce N. Harlow

In accordance with the provisions of Chapter 21 of Title 44, United States Code and subject to the terms and conditions hereinafter set forth, I, Bryce N. Harlow of Harpers Ferry, West Virginia do hereby give, donate and convey to the United States of America all my rights, title and interest in the tape recordings and transcripts of the personal interviews conducted on February 28, 1979 at Arlington, Virginia and May 6, 1979 at Harpers Ferry, West Virginia, and prepared for deposit in the Lyndon Baines Johnson Library.

This assignment is subject to the following terms and conditions:

(1) The transcripts shall be available for use by researchers as soon as they have been deposited in the Lyndon Baines Johnson Library, except that pages 19 and 20 and 24 through 27 of Interview I shall not be made available until the year 2000, after which time these pages may be made available as part of the transcripts.

(2) The tape recordings shall be available to those researchers who have access to the transcripts, except that those passages corresponding to pages 19 and 20 and 24 through 27 of Interview I shall not be made available until the year 2000, after which time these pages may be made available as part of the tape recordings.

(3) During my lifetime, I retain all copyright in the material given to the United States by terms of this instrument. Thereafter, the copyright in both the transcripts and tape recordings shall pass to the United States Government, limited by the restrictions outlined in paragraphs (1) and (2). During my lifetime, researchers may publish brief "fair use" quotations from the transcripts and tape recordings without my express consent in each case, limited by the restrictions outlined in paragraphs (1) and (2).

(4) Copies of the transcripts and tape recordings may be provided by the Library to researchers upon request, except that pages 19 and 20 and 24 through 27 of Interview I shall not be made available until the year 2000, after which time these pages may be provided to researchers as part of the transcripts and tape recordings.

(5) Copies of the transcripts and tape recordings may be deposited in or loaned to institutions other than the Lyndon Baines Johnson Library, except that pages 19 and 20 and 24 through 27 of Interview I shall not be made available until the year 2000, after which time these pages may be deposited in or loaned to other institutions as part of the transcripts and tape recordings.

Bryce N. Harlow
Donor

November 20, 1979
Date

Acting Walter W. Stender
Archivist of the United States

December 14, 1979
Date