INTERVIEWEE: PATRICIA ROBERTS HARRIS

INTERVIEWER: STEVE GOODELL

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S: This is an interview with Patricia Roberts Harris, presently with the law school at Howard University. Today's date is May 19, 1969. I'd just like to begin this interview by asking you to state for the record your background, your appointments, your service in government, and whatever else you wish to put onto this tape.

H: I'm a native of the middle west, born in Mattoon, Illinois. I attended public elementary and junior high school there; attended secondary school in Chicago, Illinois; was graduated from Howard University with an A.B. degree and from George Washington University School of Law with a J.D. degree.

S: What was your A.B. in?

H: Government and economics. I'm a member of the bar of the District of Columbia, of the Supreme Court. I'm currently professor of law at Howard University, having served a rather brief tenure as Dean of the Law School, resigning after the students boycotted. The President of the University, without notifying me, took the negotiations and dealing with the students from my hands and began to deal on the issues directly with the students.

I have served as a presidential appointee in three different positions. In 1963, in a kind of informal organization called the National Women's Committee for Civil Rights, at the request of President Kennedy I served as the co-chairman with Mildred McAfee Horton in this effort to secure

support for President Kennedy's civil rights legislative activity.

S: Excuse me. Was this with regard to his proposed legislation in 1963?

H: That is correct. As you may know, he appointed a number of committees: the Lawyers' Committee, which still exists as the Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights under Law; a committee of businessmen which I think still has connections with an existing businessman's committee; and the Women's Committee. We continued after the assassination of President Kennedy, working for the passage of the Civil Rights Act that became the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the Public Accommodations Act.

Subsequent to this, I was appointed by President Johnson as a public member of the United States-Puerto Rico Commission on the status of Puerto Rico, a commission that was chaired by James M. Rowe. This commission met from 1964 until 1966 when it filed a report with the President, the major recommendation of the commission being that there be a referendum or plebiscite in Puerto Rico to determine the commonwealth status preferences.

In 1965 I was appointed by President Johnson as the United States Ambassador to Luxembourg and served in that position through 1965 until 1967. In 1966 I served concurrently as alternate delegate to the 21st General Assembly of the United Nations where I carried responsibility for the Third Committee as the United States delegate there in the consideration of human rights and cultural matters at the UN. I was again appointed alternate delegate in 1967 to the 22nd Generaly Assembly where I served in the same capacity.

In June of 1968, the day after the assassination of Senator Robert Kennedy, the President asked me to serve as a member of the President's Commission on the Causes and Prevention of Violence.

S: And, to this moment, today, you are still sitting on that commission?

H: Yes, the commission has continued and has received a six-month extension from President Nixon, to complete its task no later than December 6th or 10th or something of the sort. I think it's necessary because the scope of the commission's work exceeds anything, I think, that even President Johnson had in mind at the time he commissioned us.

S: I'd like to review your career.

H: That's only part of it. That's only since 1963.

S: Surely. But for the purposes of this oral history project I think we can confine ourselves from 1963 to 1968. We can follow this chronologically if you wish. But to begin with a topical question, what were the circumstances of your first contact with Lyndon Johnson?

H: I really can't remember because I've been in Washington since 1949. I had met the former President in many capacities--on the Hill and at cocktail parties. I'm sure he did not remember me, but I remember him best as Majority Leader of the Senate during those years. I'd also met Mrs. Johnson on a number of occasions. So it's not easy to say when I first met the President, because very frankly he was so much a part of Washington one tended to assume, if one had met him, that one had always known him.

S: Primarily your contact was of a social nature?

H: And very remote. Being introduced and being absolutely certain that he had no notion to whom he had been introduced. So I would say it was at that level, the way people know public figures in Washington.

S: By repute and by various brief contacts.

H: And by very brief contacts and small, small conversations. I'm sure he wouldn't remember any.

S: Let me put it this way then. When was that kind of contact consolidated,

or when was it that you became more familiar with the President or that you knew him better? Or how did he come to know you?

H: That you will have to ask the President because, very frankly, the association was always of this public nature. As I said, I've had conversations with both President and Mrs. Johnson, probably longer conversations with Mrs. Johnson. I suppose I've been on and off television from time to time, and comments in letters and newspapers and that sort of thing. But how or why I particularly came to his attention, I do not know.

Incidentally, in this chronology I failed to note one of the more interesting experiences of my association with the President. I seconded his nomination at the Atlantic City convention in 1964.

S: We'll get to the convention in due course.

You're suggesting that because of your reputation he took an interest in you and from that kind of interest your appointments arose.

H: I am not saying that it did. I cannot get into the mind of the President and do not know the basis on which he made any decision, including those affecting me.

S: What were your impressions, let's say before 1960, of Lyndon Johnson?

H: Why do you say before 1960?

S: Before he became Vice President.

H: The reason I was asking was because I made a basic personal commitment in 1960 that predated the Los Angeles convention. Had I thought anybody would listen to me, I would have supported the then-Majority Leader for President of the United States in 1960. I decided most people would not believe that my perceptions were valid and that it would not be useful for me to do so, so I never so much as volunteered. But it is well-known among my friends that I felt that Lyndon Johnson would make probably a

better President than most of the candidates at that time.

S: This is kind of what I'm getting at--to 1960 and Kennedy's selection of Johnson as President--

H: As Vice President.

S: I'm sorry, as Vice President.

H: Before that selection, long before that selection, after it was clear that Senator Humphrey would not be able to secure the nomination, because Senator Humphrey was my first choice for President in 1960. I did not know Senator Kennedy. In fact I don't think I'd ever met him. In terms of what I knew about Senator Humphrey and what I knew about Senator Johnson, they were my two candidates.

S: Why Senator Johnson?

H: Senator Johnson had a conception of the basic thrust of the American mind in terms of the potentials for domestic politics that I think were unequaled by almost any other candidate. Although he is a Texan, he's in many ways a middle-western populist, and as a middle westerner I understand this kind of mind very well. He had a perception of the potentials for civil rights change that I think he demonstrated after he became President, but that I had seen in his activity in the '59 civil rights activity. Although he had not done what I would have wanted him to do and what I did want him to do, his consistent expressions of understanding of what needed to be done convinced me that, given leadership of both the Democratic party and the country, that he would be able to induce a greater understanding of the need for civil rights advance.

He had none of the condescending attitude toward the need to solve the race problem that one so often finds in other people. He was very much like the very best of the southerners one knows who, once they admit

portions of the Negro community for reorientation of community policy toward Negroes. W. E. B. DuBois(?) probably did the best job of articulating what has come to be the accepted American position, vis-a-vis Negro citizens. It has certainly accelerated over the last few years and in many ways I suppose gotten somewhat raucous and somewhat thoughtless. But I think that's what the white community deserves whether the black community deserves it or not. It is to be expected that at some point the frustrations would lead to less than the superb judgment that I think the civil rights movement has exhibited up until the black separatists and pro-violence people. And I think Johnson understood most of the movement until the separatists and the violent side. I think that very few people are able to understand, who don't understand the deeper frustrations, but he understood the other.

S: So you say that you were unique among your friends, and I take it also unique among people in Washington who, if I recall correctly in 1960 with the Michigan delegation, almost went through open rebellion at the convention against Johnson.

H: That was Joe Rauh. Joe Rauh is not Washington, D.C. I sometimes think that's bad and I sometimes think that's good. But Joe Rauh is <u>not</u> the District. Dean Acheson was <u>for</u> Lyndon Johnson. That association is not one that I necessarily boast about, but I'm just saying that there were elements in the District of Columbia who, knowing the activity and the competence of this man, were as enthusiastic about him then as Walter Lippmann was later, whatever they may have said later.

S: Okay. We can take these topics up, as I'm sure they will arise later, but we can go through your appointments chronologically. Just to by-pass your Kennedy appointment, I'd like to begin by asking you the circumstances

of your 1964 appointment to the Committee on Puerto Rican--

H: I'm not sure what the term "circumstances" means. How was I appointed?

S: How were you appointed? How were you contacted?

H: I was called one Saturday afternoon from the White House, and I can't remember whether it was Ralph Dungan or Ken O'Donnell or Jack Valenti--you know, they just sort of all merge--and I suppose I should remember that.

S: When in 1964?

H: This was in January, I think, '64, at the time the President was completing his list of fifty women appointees. He appointed five or six women as the final thrust of this, including Margaret Tibbetts and a couple of women ambassadors. I think I sort of brought up the end of the list as a member of the Puerto Rican Commission.

I was called one Saturday afternoon and asked if I would be interested and told that the President would then announce it at the ranch that evening, which he did. So there we were, five or six women.

S: Bang, just like that.

H: Bang, just like that.

S: What was your understanding of what the commission was going to do?

H: Pretty much what the commission did do. It didn't seem to me that it was difficult to comprehend the reason why we would want to examine the nature and validity of the association between Puerto Rico and the United States. It was a bipartisan--well, I don't want to say bipartisan--

S: Neutral?

H: No, it wasn't neutral at all, quite the contrary. There were public representatives from the United States and representatives of the three status possibilities from Puerto Rico. There were three-five-six Puerto Ricans and I guess there must have been six Americans. There were three

public members--Jim Rowe, Brewster Denny of the University of Washington School of Public Administration, Senator Javits and Senator Jackson from the Senate side and Congressman O'Brien--who was the other congressman?

S: Well, it's on the record.

H: It was a Republican. We spent close to two years examining the status alternatives, and came up with a rather large volume of reports.

S: Why do you say this committee was not neutral?

H: The commission was not neutral because built into the commission itself was the requirement that there be on the Puerto Rican side representatives of the three status possibilities--statehood, independence, and free associated state, or commonwealth, as we call it. On the American side there were three public members who theoretically had no opinions or, if they did, had no way of implementing them. But from the congressional side, there were members who ultimately might be called upon to vote on statehood, so it could not be called a neutral commission. It was a commission that I think did remarkably well interms of its constituency. The "independence" representative left before the completion of the report on principle. He didn't want to be there and he didn't want to participate in the final report.

S: This commission lasted for two years.

H: Yes.

S: And a final report was submitted--

H: In 1966.

S: 1966. So the commission existed at the same time that the Dominican affair occurred.

H: Yes, it did, and we didn't have much fallout. As a matter of fact I think we were in Puerto Rico at a time when the Dominican Republic was still a

hot issue. And as a matter of fact--who was the President?--he was in San Juan at the time we had a commission meeting. I did not meet him, but Muñoz, the former governor, had been in touch with him and I believe that Teddy Moscoso, the former Alliance for Progress head, had been in touch with him. What's his name? I can't remember it.

S: Who?

H: The liberal President of the Dominican Republic. [Juan Bosch?]

S: The Dominican Republic?

H: It has escaped me. I can see his face very clearly.

S: You said that there was no fallout toward the commission.

H: Not toward the commission. We didn't have any fallout.

S: From within?

H: No. Not from within at all, and not from without.

S: This didn't affect the posture on the part of the Puerto Rican representatives?

H: Not at all.

S: None whatsoever.

H: None whatsoever.

S: I'm trying to recall in my mind, there were elections in Puerto Rico on this question.

H: There was a plebiscite, it has to have been in 1967.

S: I think it was '67.

H: And in '67 commonwealth received the plurality of votes, statehood the next number, and very, very few for independence. Then last year there was a gubernatorial election in which a division on the part of the Commonwealth party between the former governor, Sanchez Vilella, who incidentally was originally a member of the status commission until he became governor, when he was replaced on the commission by Muñoz who later broke with him even though he had been

Muñoz's candidate for governor. Vilella ran against Negrón, who was Muñoz's candidate in the 1968 election. Negrón was a member of the commission from the beginning. Negrón was defeated by Luis Ferré who was the statehood candidate for governor, after having established his own party. He had established his own party because his brother-in-law, the original chairman of the Statehood Republican party did not want the Statehood party to participate in the plebiscite recommended by the status commission. Ferré wanted them to participate so he broke with his brother-in-law and formed a new party for the purpose of the plebiscite, and then ran again as governor on the ticket of his new party, and he won. Ferré also was a member of the status commission so we had running in the last election three of the Puerto Rican members of the status commission.

S: So it helped. How did the commission operate?

H: It's hard to say how it operated. We operated like all commissions operate, I'm sure. We had a staff. Ben Stephansky was the executive of the staff and a superb executive. We had a very good staff. Jim Rowe was an excellent chairman, not authoritarian but not permissive either.

S: That's a difficult balance to maintain.

H: It is a very difficult balance, but I think Jim did it very well. We had hearings which were sometimes very good and very often deadly. We also had consultations with people like law school deans and experts on government constitution questions. And then we just sat down and wrote up the report ourselves.

S: Do you know how the report itself was received?

H: I gather without hysteria or excitement, but I think it was well received and taken quite seriously, certainly in Puerto Rico. And I think that it is a small event in the life of the mainland, as the Puerto Ricans like to

call the United States. It will be a document of some significance when in later years the question of Puerto Rico relationship arises again, as it must until the Puerto Rican question is foreclosed either by independence or statehood. In fact, I think the only thing that can foreclose it is statehood. Once they're a state, there's no question of what it will be in the future. As long as it is commonwealth or if it were independent, there is always the potential for association with the United States some organic character and I think this is the only kind of viability for Puerto Rico.

S: Statehood.

H: No, no. Association with the United States. And as long as it is less than statehood, there will be some disequilibrium because an ultimate association is always possible.

I've never said this for a public record before, but I personally am in favor of statehood because I think statehood is the kind of relationship that cannot be rejected by either side. I think the Puerto Ricans have much more to gain from statehood than we have in the sense of permanent support and association, permanent protection from the United States. And I for one do not believe--

S: You mean protection <u>of</u> the United States?

H: Protection from the United States--I'm sorry. Puerto Rico will be protected <u>by</u> the United States. These prepositions are tricky things.

S: I think on that one it was critical.

H: I would have said <u>against</u> had I meant that. But protection by the United States in every sense of the word. The people who were a little worried about statehood, or <u>very</u> worried about statehood are afraid of a diminution of the cultural integrity of Puerto Rico. It has been my experience that

things that are culturally valid just don't get themselves eliminated. They're taken over and nobody realizes where they came from but they then become a part of everybody's culture, like jazz. Jazz is a Negro idiom but nobody really thinks about it as a Negro idiom. It belongs to Negroes, it belongs to everybody. And blues are a Negro idiom, but they are very much a part of rock and roll and everything else that we do today. I think that's going to happen with Puerto Ricans; that no society, whether it be American or otherwise, is culturally pure any more. The poor Russians have to worry about the miniskirts and about the jazz incursions, just as much as the Puerto Ricans do when they're not a state.

S: Do you feel that Americans would accept this, other than jingoistic--I don't want to say jingoistic--those who are calling all Caribbean countries a part of the American prerogative, I guess, but do you feel that Puerto Rican statehood, this is a speculative thing, but--

H: Is it possible?

S: Yes.

H: I think all things are possible and we got over the hurdle of non-contiguous island states with Hawaii. And also we got over the hurdle of multiracial states with Hawaii. In view of what we've done in New York in permitting people who are literate in Spanish to vote in New York, we no longer have a language barrier. So I see no impediments to Puerto Rican statehood. The biggest problem is the economy of Puerto Rico, which is an extremely dependent economy; and though it has the highest per capita income in the Latin American area, it, at last notice I had, still was below Mississippi. Oh, we're going to think quite awhile before we take in a territory that has per capita income below Mississippi. Mississippi's bad enough.

S: Yes. Okay, I'd like to turn to 1964, again following this chronologically,

the Democratic national convention. You said that you seconded the nomination. What are your impressions of the convention? It has been described as a fairly tightly controlled convention. Is this the way you viewed it? If so, what does that mean?

H: This was not my first convention. I had attended the 1956 convention in Chicago so I wasn't totally unfamiliar. The convention is not the small social club,and it's not a legislative session. It's a kind of mystical communion of members of the party who need some basis for gearing themselves up to get to the business of going back home and persuading other people that a presidential election is worth getting excited about. I had planned before I became a lawyer to be a specialist in political activity, political theory, so the convention and its nature is something that is not strange to me and not shocking to me. I didn't expect anything other than what I saw. I think there was a degree of control in Atlantic City that was remarkable because of its demonstration of the enormous span of attention of the President and his staff.

S: Attention to details, you mean?

H: Attention to details. But a span of attention in terms of administrative potential is an interesting thing to look at, the ability to be concerned about a number of things. The White House chose the seconders, for example. This was not done outside the White House. The White House announced the seconders. And since this is for the Johnson Library, I think that it would be useful to note that when I got to Atlantic City, having deposited a copy of the speech at the White House before I went up, I was informed that a speech had been written for me. I said, "Well, I never read other people's speeches." This was pre-United Nations, but it was then absolutely true. So I saw a young Jim Reston and Doug Cater

at the Atlantic City White House and took a look at the speech. I think it was Dick Neustadt who had written the speech and very frankly, I did not like it. It was a poverty speech. I must say, it was not a woman's speech, and it was not a Negro's speech. It was a poverty speech.

S: Would those have been the two areas that you would have liked to have focused on?

H: No. Had there been less perception that is the area I would have expected the speech to deal with, but the speech was a poverty speech.

S: Of course, the poverty bill was before the Congress.

H: That's right. I did not make that speech. I preferred to make my own, the one that I had written before I left Washington, and I did in fact make that speech.

S: With their concurrence?

H: Well, Doug Cater and I had some moments of disagreement about the length of sentences. I suggested to him that I did not speak sentences of four words in normal conversation, and I'd never found it necessary in writing a speech to write a speech that was any different from the way my normal conversation went. When I suggested to him that phrasing is frequently more useful in spoken communication than periods--because I guess I was as stubborn as he was--I prevailed, and the speech was my speech. There were no changes, as I recall, made in it although we did have a few moments of strong disagreement about the length of one or two of the sentences.

S: Did you detect any--for lack of a better cliché--undercurrents of resistance or dissatisfaction with the way in which this was, I won't say controlled, but administered?

H: Not from the normal convention attenders, because the normal kind of political

types assumed it would take place. The only difference between this convention and any convention which is going to nominate a sitting President is that the control of the White House was immediately apparent at every level. Now, sometimes the White House isn't that efficient and the control is not that apparent. But every sitting President who wants the nomination, as Harry Truman demonstrated in 1948, is going to get it, unless he has murdered his wife or stolen Fort Knox. So I didn't hear any of the politicians complaining. As you know, 1964 was the first year of the concurrent political demonstration outside the political convention.

S: Right.

H: Although '60 had a little of it, it was tiny compared with '64, and certainly there was practically none of this in '56 and before. The Freedom Democratic party and the civil rights students were very much in evidence in Atlantic City. There the tension was palpable.

I must say I always thought that the guards in Atlantic City overreacted. There was a point at which I went in to rehearse my speech with a teleprompter and was unable to get in, even though the appointment had been made that morning, because the guards weren't letting anybody in. They were afraid of a rush on the convention. I was taken in ultimately by Liz Carpenter who had to show her White House pass, not her convention credentials, but her White House pass, to get in, so there was tension from this source. But this was a source tangential to the convention and not within it. Although I can't claim to have been close to any of the people who normally run the convention or the traditional political types, because that's not where my acquaintances are, I still didn't have any sense of backwash from this.

There was at this convention, too, something that was not unique but

probably had more significance--there was some attempt to organize all the black delegates at this convention. It was not, so far as I know, successful. There may have been a meeting, but I did not attend. I had heard that there was to be one. I was not specifically invited although it was known that I was there and it was suspected what I was to do, although the President didn't announce who was going to second his nomination until the day before.

S: Who was undertaking this organization?

H: Again, I do not know. I am told that it was Senator Leroy Johnson of Georgia. Now I am told that but, as I say, I do not know that the meetings were held.

S: Did you have anything at all to do with the way in which the Mississippi Freedom Democratic party was handled?

H: No, I had nothing to do with that. Joe Rauh handled that entirely.

S: And Walter Reuther I think was called in.

H: And Walter Reuther was in on that too. But very frankly, except for Stokeley Carmichael, I did not know any of the Freedom Democratic party people, with one exception. I knew Bill Higgs, and that was the subject of one of the things that happened at the convention that annoyed me particularly. I had met Bill because he'd been recruiting law students for something called Law Students Research Committee or something. I had talked to him when he first came to Washington from Mississippi. He came to me and asked me to lend him my credentials because a friend of his had left his at home, and he wanted to get his friend in. Had I not been seconding the President's nomination, I might very well have lent my credentials under that representation. Well, as you know, it later developed that these credentials were being used to replace the Mississippi

delegation by having people from the Freedom party slip into the convention. Now obviously, I'm old-fashioned. I think that's rather dirty pool. It's one thing to tell me what you are going to use the credentials for and let me make the decision whether I wish to use them for this purpose. So I had a rather jaundiced eye.

S: How did you view the Mississippi challenge? Were you sympathetic to this?

H: I was sympathetic to it. I thought that the Mississippi Freedom Democratic party didn't know when it had won its victory, because I think it did win a significant victory, and there was a good deal of ill feeling even afterwards.

S: Are you referring to the two delegates-at-large and equal seating?

H: That's right. You must remember this was 1964, before the vehemence of the civil rights movement had been manifested, a time when regularity of politics was a virtue, not a vice. And an admission that the party was a party, not properly constituted, with a command to regularize all delegations by the succeeding convention, was a signficant victory. It was much more important that the next delegation be selected properly and that Mississippi be put on notice four years in advance--with the result that in fact it did take place in Chicago--than it was that these particular people whose bona fide quality as representatives of Mississippi was as open to question as was that of the regular delegation. What was important for them was to open the democratic process so that people in Mississippi could vote for their delegates. And, as I say, neither the regular party nor the Mississippi Freedom Democratic party had been elected in such a way that guaranteed that either one really represented anybody. So the reason I'm convinced this was a substantial victory is that it made it possible for people in Mississippi for 1968 to elect their representatives.

They did not know how significant their victory was, and tended to be a little "sorehead" about it.

S: I can make a parenthetical comment and you can react to it. I think in 1964 this may have been one of the very high points. This was the summer of the Co-Fo(?) and there was a good deal of cooperation between both black and white elements in the South at that time. I'm not sure of my chronology, I'm not sure whether the three murders had occurred prior to the convention or not. But there was a good deal, as you point out, of going outside the political processes and trying to reform society from outside, and then redirecting that energy toward the political processes at the Democratic convention. This is apparently the kind of thing that is continuing, and in fact perhaps was most highlighted in the 1968 convention.

H: I think there was cooperation. I think that it's not enough that it take place at the convention or that it take place in the bayous in Mississippi and Louisiana. What was frustrating was that out of the hope of '64, with the Civil Rights Act, it took so much to get voting rights acts, and it took so much to get housing acts passed. It just seemed the political process was terribly slow in dealing with the manifest needs of the minority that had been terribly mistreated for three hundred years. And it is this, rather than the lack of cooperation at the Democratic convention or the lack of some white students who cared, that led to a kind of rejection of the normal political process, because it responded too slowly, and I don't think there's any doubt about it.

S: No, I can think of my own feelings, as a matter of fact, that this was a terribly idealistic period. There were many who did view the eventual compromise, the seating of the two delegates-at-large, as not a victory

but a typical reaction on the part of the establishment to absorb, to palliate, to mollify and so forth, rather than to act on a moral basis which I think was perhaps the real--.

H: But the morality was not clear when one looked without emotion at the way both delegations were selected. The white delegation--I'm trying to remember--didn't it have a Negro?

S: You mean the Mississippi Regular delegation?

H: The regular Mississippi delegation. Didn't they have a Negro?

S: I think so, yes.

H: At least the Mississippi Regulars had the fact of regularity on its side. They were selected in a way that had been accepted before. The Mississippi Freedom Democratic party was an insurgent party whose relationship to the voters was equally open to doubt. And if they had not been utopian--that is suggesting the most charitable point--if they had not been utopian, but had been in fact genuinely reformist, they would have seen that this was the most significant victory because you opened up the whole process in a state that had been closed since Reconstruction. That's what counted.

So, I say I'm not interested in whether Fanny Lou Hamer sat in that delegation, because Fanny Lou Hamer is of no more interest to me than anybody else if she does not in fact represent the people of Mississippi. What I was interested in, and what I would assume civil rights people ought to be interested in, is whether the people who come to the convention genuinely represent those who say they are Democrats, including black Democrats. And I can't be sure Fanny Lou Hamer represents them either because she hasn't gone through a genuine democratic process in which she is put before white and black citizens and each can vote. And it is to make that possible that I would, and did support, the Mississippi Freedom

Democratic party and their demand for an examination of the nature of the delegation. But I don't think fifty-fifty was required, or ousting the old Democrats was required, because they had been misled to believe that they could be as immoral as they liked for as long as they liked and nobody had ever done anything to them before. But they were given notice that you cannot operate this way in the future.

S: What were your impressions of the Johnson technique--the showboating, or the grandstanding and so forth--that did occur at the convention? Were you put off by this or was this just typical?

H: No, I wasn't put off. After all, this is, as I said, a mystical device by which you persuade the loyal and some who are not quite sure whether they want to be loyal that the presidential campaign is worth spending time with. And it was a kind of tour de force of a most interesting kind. When you have a sitting President I don't know what else is possible. You can talk about democracy all you want to, but it is the nature of human beings in the smallest organizations and in a national body that a man who already has been given the position and honor is not--unless he has done something particularly heinous and frequently not even that--going to be denied the office. So everything is just trapping. All of it is showboating.

S: I think some writers have suggested that the only element of suspense was in fact created by Johnson himself, vis-a-vis the election to the vice presidency.

H: On the vice presidency. And I must say, it was the dream ticket for some of us.

S: You were pleased with Humphrey's selection?

H: Oh, sure. Yes, we didn't care which way it was. Some of us had been for

Humphrey in '59 and would have been happy with Johnson as second man, or Johnson as first man and Humphrey as second. It seemed like a great ticket.

S: It's also been suggested that the movie of Kennedy--was it Day of Lightning and something of Drums, I've forgotten exactly the title--was delayed purposely by the President.

H: I only know what I read in the paper.

S: Yes.

H: It was denied by the President.

S: Okay. I'd like to move beyond 1964 and before I ask you about the Commission on Violence and some other topics, I'd like to go back to that 1964 summer of the legislative program, actually the Johnson-Kennedy--. This was the tax reform, the poverty bill--specifically the poverty bill. You said that your speech, the one that had been written for you was poverty-oriented. Could you explain that?

H: I don't remember the speech. I only read it once and rejected it, and therefore it's not deep in my consciousness. But as I recall, it was a kind of explanation of why we must have continuing concern for poverty. I must say that this is one of the major contributions of the President. Whether the historians will perceive it as I do is an open question.

S: Do you mean OEO?

H: Not so much OEO, because OEO was an institution, and I'm talking about a way of thinking. The President made it respectable for government to accept responsibility for the poor in a nondepression period. We moved almost overnight from a concept that people are poor because they are lazy, to a concept that regardless of why people are poor they should not suffer in a society of affluence. And when you think of how painless was

the acceptance of this notion--the reorientation of the national acceptance of the notion that the federal government has a responsibility for the poor--I must say, this is a monumental reorientation of expectation on the part of the general public. Now we still hit the resistance in funding and in acceptance of the institutions but the debate does not go to the obligation anymore as it did prior to this. It goes to the nature of the execution of the obligation. I think that the homely way--and I don't use homely in a pejorative sense at all but in a sense of people's ability to comprehend the imagery and to understand the theory behind it--the homely way in which the President was able to articulate the reason for his program completely nullified the remnants of Calvinistic opposition to doing something for the poor. I think this is a tremendous contribution. In this area and in the acceptance of the potential of individual human beings who are not white to do unusual kinds of jobs, I think the President's position in history is a unique one that nobody will match. I don't know whether you'd like me to talk about this notion of what he did with--

S: Surely, by all means.

H: --the elimination of any notion of a Negro job in government. Now that has its disadvantages. If you have a prejudiced administration there is no job which it is bound to appoint a Negro to, although I suspect that when Thurgood Marshall leaves the Supreme Court, if we leave a Jew and a Catholic on the court, that Thurgood Marshall's spot will be a black spot. And if that has come, that is the best kind of black spot at the highest level. The President, by having the first cabinet member--although he was not unique in the concept since President Kennedy privately made it clear that he intended to make Dr. Weaver a cabinet member--the fact that

President Johnson had a Negro in his cabinet meant that every cabinet will be tested on the basis of the presence or absence of minority or disadvantaged group members.

S: So that the present cabinet has been tested and found wanting?

H: The present cabinet has been tested and found wanting. I must say that I tested the Johnson cabinet and found it wanting because there was no woman on it. And of course this comment has been made with respect to the Nixon Administration. I'm not quite as critical as most people because on this issue nobody has done very well since President Eisenhower with Mrs. Hobby who, if you recall, is one of the two women who has ever served in the cabinet of the United States, Mrs. Perkins being the other during the Roosevelt Administration. Nonetheless, he did articulate a position with respect to women, incidentally, that made everybody very conscious of the fact that something ought to be done to be sure that women were present. Now this administration is just foul on this. Foul isn't a good word, it's very bad on this, but so was the Kennedy Administration. Again, I can't be very angry with this administration because it has so few women because the Kennedy Administration didn't have many either. It was Johnson that dealt with women. But with respect to Negroes or blacks, whatever you want to call them, he managed to put blacks in all manner of positions. So that the Johnson Administration's black cabinet minister, a black Supreme Court Justice, a black member of the Import-Export Bank, five or six black ambassadors, I've forgotten which it is--

S: His White House staff contained--

H: It always had Negroes on the White House staff, Assistant Secretaries of Labor. He never had an Assistant Secretary of State although he did have

a woman who had the rank of Assistant Secretary of State in the Consular Office. Let's see, where else? The independent agencies, regulatory agencies had Negroes--all across the spectrum of government. HEW had assistant secretaries; Labor had an assistant secretary; a member of the Federal Reserve Board, Governor Brimmer; a United Nations deputy representative. I think that under Johnson for the first time there was a Negro on the staff--no, I guess Kennedy had a Negro on the staff of the UN.

When I say Negro on the staff, I mean at the ambassadorial level. There had been, I think, one Negro professional, Carmel Marr, under the Republicans, but it was not with ambassadorial rank. But Frank Williams went to the UN, I guess in the Kennedy Administration, with ambassadorial rank.

S: Do you feel that this response or this opening of the doors by Johnson was something that was received by the various groups that it affected, that it was acknowledged?

H: Oh, there's no question that it was acknowledged very affirmatively and that Johnson would have gotten even more votes, if that's possible, in the black community than Humphrey did. I think the response at the last election is an indication of appreciation.

Now, not enough was done. There are many people who feel that the Voting Rights Act was not prosecuted as affirmatively as it might have been, but there are all kinds of political considerations. How many politicians are going deliberately to kill Democratic support that exists in order to be moral! This was the issue. This is why I was always in favor of strong civil rights pressure on the President. No matter what he did, he had to get strong pressure in order to give him the basis for

moving forward to deal with essentially Democratic misbehavior in the South and in big cities where there was a lack of interest in dealing with legitimate demands of Negroes--in the South, largely voting; and in the North, elimination of segregation, et cetera, in housing.

S: Given this kind of pressure, then you feel that Johnson really was the right man at the right time.

H: I don't think there's any doubt about it. If Viet Nam had not intervened, I think we would have gone even farther. Now this does not mean that the President would have been happy with civil rights groups, because nobody wants to be pressured when he's not ready to be pressured. Nor does it mean that the civil rights people would have been happy with the President. There are times, however, when this kind of tension is essential for progress, and I never urged any civil rights groups not to do what they wanted to do because I thought it was essential to give him the basis on which to move. He couldn't have moved on the Voting Rights Act without Selma.

S: Were you at Howard, I think it was in 1965--well, I see you were Ambassador to Luxembourg in 1965, but I don't know the month that you were appointed or when you left--but I think it was in 1965 that Johnson went to Howard University and gave that speech which incorporated the elements of the Moynihan report.

H: As a matter of fact, I met with the President at the White House earlier that afternoon and drove up to Howard with him. He read the speech to me in the car. He knew what he was reading, he knew it was one of the best speeches he was going to make. So I had heard it, at least five pages of it, in the limousine driving up. So I was with him and on the platform that day. I thought it was a very good speech. I thought it set, in an

excellent way, the tone of the Johnson Administration's concern.

Now, it so happened that the total Moynihan report, like all reports, got to be deified beyond the rather primitive insights that it had into the totality of black experience. Indeed, it was not original with him. These were insights that were derived from E. Franklin Frazier's analysis of the Negro family which predated Moynihan by some twenty-five or thirty years. So for most of us these are far from being unique insights. But what happened was that the press and the pseudosociologists and psychologists made this a definition of the Negro. I think this explains why many civil rights groups came to reject it because it became the explanation, rather than an explanation, of the problems of Negroes.

I was not here when the overt hostility to the Moynihan report--which I must say I've never read--manifested itself. I was invited to the 1966 conference at the White House but I was in Luxembourg and I'd been flying back and forth to Puerto Rican Commission meetings, and I rather felt that it would be a mistake to come back for this conference, having just gotten back to Luxembourg a month before. And then I had talked to Arthur Goldberg and Joe Sisco and had a sneaking suspicion that I would be coming back for three months in the fall, so I did not attend the conference at the White House because I knew I'd be in the States.

S: Part of the criticism, or the vilification of the Moynihan report, seems to state that the report and the subsequent focus of all governmental activity would be on internal Negro problems rather than focusing on white racism.

H: Let's put it this way. Anytime anybody talks about the Negro problem, he's either ignorant or dishonest. There are a whole series of Negro

problems. The primary Negro problem is white discrimination against them, the white assumption of black inferiority. And until one deals with the manifestations of the white attitude, which is undoubtedly what you mean by racism, one cannot deal with the other problems of Negroes. One cannot deal with the lack of the male in the family until one can assure the male of a base of support for his family. This goes to his ability to get a job. He can't get a job frequently because he hasn't been educated because you don't spend enough money on ghetto schools, and the next generation is trained in the same poor ghetto school because of limited resources. And these ghetto schools, poor schools, are due to the discrimination of whites who run out of the community taking their resources with them, so that Negroes do not have the resources to get what they need to cure their own ills. Now this is not to say that the Negro family does not have a problem. It doesn't have a man in it who can support it because he hasn't been given the opportunity to support his family. As I say, it is a problem, but it is not the problem. And insofar as the response to these rather primitive insights on Mr. Moynihan's part--they were good ones--I've been making the same speech in briefing sessions for foreign service officers for two or three years about the nature of the black family, so it didn't startle me. But ignorant people pick up a little thing and this becomes the answer--we'd solve all the Negroes' problems if we could just protect the family.

S: To put this into another kind of context, I think it's been suggested also that with this kind of focus and other aspects of the Johnson Administration, without enumerating them one by one, but to just give a couple to build the case, and I'd like your comment on it. Although there are some who contend that he did not really support the kind of activity in which OEO was

engaged, in maximum feasible participation, of the poor, the building of community action agencies in urban areas. And then it's suggested that it was apparent, the reluctance on the part of the President to endorse and to release the Kerner Commission Report which again refocused attitudes.

H: Each person has to deal with the public in terms of his position in it. If I am not President of the United States and my concern is with focusing attention of the community on the discriminations against Negroes, I want the Kerner Commission Report to come out with the full imprimatur of the President, his approval, et cetera, et cetera. If I'm President of the United States who at the time thinks he's going to run for President again and the bulk of the voters are white and they have been accused of racism to a man, it is understandable that I look at the political potential, the political dynamite the Kerner Commission represented. It is to his credit that he released it.

Now I am not among those who feel that the President should have said "this is a great report." I don't <u>care</u> whether he said that. I understand the political pressures that can never convert a ten percent minority into a majority. And it seems to me that if the report is released it speaks for itself, and it will be a standard for analysis of the relationship of the black minority to the white majority, just as the Myrdal study was twenty-five years earlier.

I think people are utopian in some of their demands. Now on some things I'm as utopian as anybody else. I think not to have released the Kerner report would have been terrible, but having got this before the public, I don't ask the President to say anything--all he has to do is just release it--let it speak for itself. You like it or you don't.

Now, as to maximum feasible participation, I always thought that that

was badly thought through; that it was a romantic's version of the notion that the poor and the ignorant without experience could decide all the things they knew nothing about without guidance and without some notion of the consequences of changing power relationship. Now, I'm all in favor of maximum feasible participation of the poor, but I'm not in favor of making constructs that don't make any sense in terms of their ultimate ability to bring people into the real life of political decision-making. To ask people to sit around and decide where they want to put a new housing project when they don't have the kind of understanding of traffic flow, of school loads, means either that they make decisions without understanding the consequences or you spend a tremendous amount of frustrating time educating them so that they will be able to consider this.

What should have been done was not to ask people to make decisions that they didn't want to make--because what has happened all over the place is you have just built a new set of power seekers who are as exploitative of the poor black as were the old power seekers, except they probably have a little less talent in political manipulation or they would have used the regular channels--what you should do is provide mechanisms for letting people choose among a series of very carefully chosen alternatives, so that you can get some kind of input that tells you where you've made a mistake in terms of the human equation so if you get ready to put something in the middle of 7th and T and people want to keep the Howard Theater and you don't think the Howard Theater is worth anything, you discover there is a great deal of emotional commitment to the Howard Theater; you find that out before you tear the Howard Theater down. Now that doesn't mean that people tell you whether to have a high-rise there or whether it's better to have garden apartments. You find a way for input.

But we created a whole lot of rather peculiar institutions that simply developed a new set of leaders who were strident, and I must confess--and I'm happy this is not going to be published unless I want it published at this moment--who were strident and who frequently were more interested in their ability to manipulate newly found sources of power than they were to solve problems. I think the best example of this is how few real problems have been solved in this fashion. Every situation that I know about, that has involved this kind of decision-making by people who have had no experience at it, has been a long, drawn-out, ineffective, inefficient operation. This doesn't mean I'm opposed to people participating, but I think that the whole draft of the participatory activity of the poor was ill-considered and unthought through. Now I'm told that a very clever man--whom I know but I won't mention because I'm not sure--thought this up overnight!

S: You mean the phrase itself?

H: The phrase itself, and that it really wasn't thought through. Now I haven't read Moynihan on this either, I deliberately want to avoid it. But I think there have been tremendous problems with this.

S: The origin of the phrase--of course it's been bandied about as to who actually made the contribution--but I think it comes out of the Kennedy President's Committee on Juvenile Delinquency and Youth Offenses, as well as the Ford Foundation. As far as I know, the phrase was either contributed by a person named Howard Horowitz or Adam Yarmolinsky or David Hackett, depending on who you read.

H: Well, I've heard a fourth name, somebody over in the Justice department.

S: In the Justice department?

H: Yes, in the Justice department--Ken Norbert or something.

S: Oh, Norbert Schlei.

H: I understand Norbert Schlei wrote it.

S: Well, I think he and Horowitz and Steven Pollak, and maybe another one, were the drafters.

H: Was Steve in it that early?

S: Yes.

H: I didn't know that Steve drafted that part of the statute. But, anyhow, I think it was unthought through, and that anybody who had been a group worker or part of the group process would have flagged it early. It is clear to me that nobody who had any kind of group work experience had anything to do with either drafting the idea, or setting up the initial constructs. So I think it was a mistake, and it's too bad because a very good program floundered on a very badly run and very threatening notion of new power devices.

S: Do you think that the Model Cities Act was a reaction to this?

H: Very frankly, this is a terrible thing to admit, I have not read the statute and I'm not sure.

S: Okay, I think we can take up 1965 until 1967 when you were Ambassador to Luxembourg. How were you appointed? Who did it, and for what reasons, and so forth?

H: Again, you have to go to the appointing source. I did not make huge contributions to the Democratic party, and I never asked to be an ambassador. As a matter of fact, 1965 was not the year I wanted to leave teaching. It had been suggested that I was being considered for two or three things that I was not remotely interested in, coordinating the civil rights program for the Vice President and the White House. I wasn't interested in that. There was something else that I've forgotten, frankly. There was

a third one that somebody else took that turned out to be a kind of nothing.

But the ambassadorship was fascinating. I don't think I would have taken any other post of this size and lack of real diplomatic substance. I took Luxembourg because I was persuaded, and I was properly so persuaded, that it was part of the heart of Europe in the sense that it was tied in to all of the significant European institutions in which we were interested. And I must say that I got a very firm grounding in the Common Market--our interest in it. I was in on all the traffic, all of the significant European traffic. So I had all the advantages of being in France, Germany, Great Britain, Holland, and Belgium with none of the disadvantages, because Luxembourg is a very easy people, a small post without major administrative problems.

S: Were you offered other posts?

H: No, I was not offered other posts. I was offered Luxembourg. Gad, there had been all kinds of debate about, you know, "isn't there a smaller or less significant post we can find for a woman who is also black," but that's only rumor. There had been discussion, I gather, of Switzerland and Malta, along with Luxembourg.

S: At least it isn't Katmandu.

H: Yes. I would not have taken Asia. I would not have taken Africa because there would not have been the learning potential there. There'd never been a Negro in the heart of Europe, and I was interested, partly from that point of view, but more professionally from the point of view of being part of the total European traffic, and it was fascinating in that sense.

S: You say it was a learning experience for you.

H: I'm not a specialist in European affairs, and it was possible to get a very

intensive, high-level education in the realities of European economic unification and in our interest in European security which I had, what I like to think is a well informed citizen's opinion on, but which I quickly got much more informed attitudes about in a way you can only get them when you're dealing with the reality. So I found it a rewarding experience in many ways. I found the Foreign Service, I might say, from the point of view that I had to deal with it, a pain in the neck.

S: The professional Foreign Service?

H: And I had to recommend the withdrawal of a couple of staff members, one of whom has left Foreign Service as a consequence of a rating I gave him, and I've never been forgiven for it by him. But I had perfectly dreadful staff people in some ways, who weren't remotely interested in their jobs, but were more interested in being important Americans abroad.

S: What were the kinds of problems that you faced? Did you function, as ambassador, as spokesman from American policy?

H: Every ambassador does.

S: Did you find that difficult to do?

H: No, not at all. One is always a spokesman for somebody. And when one is spokesman for the United States government, the perimeters of the spokesmanship are rather clearly defined. One, it's true, is talking to Prime Ministers and other members of cabinet but the issues are well defined, having been worked out in Washington. It's a question of one's comprehension of them and the ability to communicate. I never had particular difficulty in communicating so I didn't find it trouble.

S: This was from 1965 to 1967. At what point in 1967 did you leave?

H: I left in September of '67. I was there two years.

S: And you found no difficulty enunciating American points of view?

H: No.

S: What are the kinds of high points that you look back on? Of course, you left Luxembourg and went to the United Nations during that time as well.

H: Yes, I spent the two General Assembly sessions in New York. It was an interesting experience and one that was particularly useful to me professionally, because as a lawyer and as a teacher of law the practical experience of dealing with the formation of United Nations policy as a representative of the United States gives tremendous check on the theory of United Nations participation, most of which I happen to think is wrong. I've always thought the theory was mistaken--the notion that this could ever possibly be a world government. And it's not. It's a multilateral, diplomatic-forum institution. So that was fascinating, as was the second time around when I was more intimately involved even than the first time in the exposition of American policy. Because we operate at the UN, you see, not in terms of what we decide--we're trying to deal with what the other countries decide should be agenda items and we're just one vote, although a very powerful one, and so the position we take is one in which there's a tremendous amount of input from the delegates and the alternates. It was a fascinating experience. I enjoyed it a great deal.

As for Luxembourg itself, I found the people fascinating. They're so much like middle-western Americans. There are large numbers of Luxembourgers, as you may or may not know, settled in the middle west, in Iowa and Illinois. There are more in Illinois and Iowa than there are in Luxembourg, more descendants of Luxembourgers there than there are descendants of Luxembourgers in Luxembourg.

S: This is like New York Irish.

H: That's right. I can understand why they were in the middle west because

they're so much like the middle-westerners. I happen to like middle-westerners, very easy, unassuming, but strong people.

We liked almost everyone we met, from the dowager Grand Duchess through her son and his wife on down to the maid we had in the Embassy. Some people you don't like because they're not your kind of people, but by and large they are people with no side. The Prime Minister was a remarkable man who was extraordinarily competent but easy. He lived around the corner from the Embassy and you could see him walking his dog, and I was very fond of his wife. So it was very easy, dealing with policy problems. We had very good relations with the Defense Minister and the Foreign Minister. It's a small kind of place.

S: To some extent, you have been able to observe some of the inner processes within the State department. You pointed to one particular incident or problem where you didn't feel that you got along as well as perhaps you could have with the Foreign Service. Were there any other occasions along those lines?

H: I must say, the State department was very kind to me. Bill Crockett was the Deputy Under Secretary in charge of Administration, and after him Idar Rimestad. I had no problem with budget, no problem with funding of any items I needed.

There's a story that ambassadors must be wealthy, the State department takes a position you're not there to indulge all your fantasies of entertaining. But if there are unreasonable demands on one--for example, a visit of the Secretary of State when one really must do something significant, or when we had the NATO parliamentarians that we had to entertain--special grants are made for this and, I think, generously. I did spend some of my own money, but it seemed to me that I would spend

some of my own money for entertaining here at home, and it was not something that I minded doing.

I had one protocol experience. I am not a feminist in the old-fashioned sense, but I am a firm believer that one does not permit anyone to take advantage of one because of race or sex. And this perfectly dreadful notion in diplomatic circles throughout the world that men have one role and rank and women have another! The rule with respect to ambassadors is that the ambassador's wife takes the rank of a husband. The reverse rule is fought, and I insisted that my husband take my rank, or that I be seated as the first woman at every banquet at which the Grand Duchess was not present. Well, that was more than anybody could bear! The fact that the wife of the dean might sit below me was not accepted, but I insisted that I could not accept sitting below the wife of an ambassador if my husband then sat below all the ambassadors--that he had to have my place with the men. This was fought in Luxembourg, and I think they got around it very easily by making sure that they never invited anybody who outranked us.

But I made an issue of it. The State department gave an interview to the Associated Press, which I saw, in which they were very cavalier--Jim Symington was Chief of Protocol then--saying that the ambassador's husband counts for nothing. He has no protocol position, no rank. And I hit the ceiling and wrote Jim for an official ruling. It took him just weeks! So I came back--I was in the States, I guess to make a commencement address in June of '67, it had lasted pretty late--and called down and was told that the letter would be sent by hand. When I got it, it was an acceptance of my position, that although the host country must always make the decision--and I think that's true--that as to the United States no

discrimination will be made on the basis of sex and the husband will take the rank of his spouse.

So I saw the Secretary, Secretary Rusk, that afternoon. He said, "Well, you may not have made your mark any other way, but we had to make a decision on this protocol matter." And he said, "I'm afraid we've got the Harris ruling now, that the spouse will take the rank of the wife." And I think it's the only fair thing. That way you don't run into any difficulty at all.

When the Italian Ambassador came to Luxembourg is the time we ran into difficulty. He was a Count. I see the family name in Vogue all the time--an old, old family with a Pope in it, yet. And the first time he was seated below my husband he hit the ceiling, I am told privately--he never did it to me--although when he invited me to dinner with an ambassador who outranked me, he sat me below the ambassador's wife, so I never went to the Italian Embassy again.

That's the kind of thing that one gets into. But I just feel that to accept it would be to denigrate the role of the woman ambassador, and I guess I was a little sticky about it.

S: There has been some comment that within the State department, particularly with reference to embassies, that Parkinson's Laws, in effect, are burgeoning and growing with unnecessary and extraneous offices and so forth. Did you find this true?

H: I certainly didn't find it true in Luxembourg. We had a very small staff, we had scarcely enough to do what had to be done. So I had no direct experience with it. As for me, this to me is hearsay.

S: Do you coordinate with other departments and other capacities within the Embassy, such as intelligence operations?

H: Oh sure. The Kennedy letter of 1960 made the ambassador responsible for all activities that are nonmilitary. So there was intelligence coordination.

S: Is that just sort of standard operational--

H: I don't know what you mean by standard operational.

S: The way in which an ambassador would oversee or superintend the kinds of functions that intelligence officers would be engaged in within an Embassy.

H: I never wanted to know too much. The ambassador can know what he wants to know. I personally did not want to know too much because there are ways in which one knows too much and one may forget what one knows.

But I did want to know what was being done. I did not want any intelligence contacts being made with political offices of government, and I made that clear. One agent sought to see a political figure and I found out about it, and I brought this all the way to Washington. As far as my embassy was concerned, there was to be no confusion of the intelligence role and the political role. We did the political intelligence, any other intelligence was to be cleared with the ambassador before the contact was made. Whenever it was cleared, I disapproved it. Military intelligence, because the military are very smart, was always cleared. Whenever the military was in town--once they came and I didn't know, and I began to raise the question and after that we had no problems. So I suppose it depends on how sticky the ambassador is. I was very sticky.

S: Is there such a thing as interdepartmental rivalry operating at the level, let's say, of an embassy?

H: Oh, I'm sure there is. You know, the Army runs its own empire, and the Navy and the Air Force run their own empires.

S: Such as State and CIA and the military and so forth?

H: I don't think so. In the field there is none but the CIA, or if there is, then you just have to have a test of strength. As I said, I brought my unhappiness with this one particular act back to Washington and made it clear I disapproved of it. And I did it because I didn't want to have to repeat the complaint locally. And I'm not sure it was necessary. I would have asked the dismissal of any intelligence operation that I felt was interfering with the political side of it, and I'm not saying this because it's taped. This was made clear. And if I'd stayed there for one month, one year, or one hundred years, if I was in charge politically, I was in charge politically. But this depends upon the particular ambassador.

S: I'd like to turn to the topic of Viet Nam. This was an issue and Viet Nam is not a terribly popular war. I don't know about Luxembourg but--

H: It was unpopular in Luxembourg. The young people had no appreciation for it. At the beginning I did deal with it in open meetings and question-and-answer sessions with the youth. But after the resumption of bombing in 1966, I ceased to have question-and-answer sessions on this because it was too difficult to define and justify.

S: For you?

H: No. It's a very sophisticated kind of argument. You can't make it with people who do not wish to deal with power blocs and areas of control. We had strong suppoerters in Luxembourg, let me say. When there was a rash of "Peace in Viet Nam" signs painted on buildings, the American-Luxembourg Society had printed without--we really didn't know about it and they were very nice, they didn't tell us until they had them printed so we wouldn't stop them because I think I would have said don't do it--big posters that said, "Nobody wants it more than the United States."

So we had supporters and there was understanding, but it's not a popular war.

S: Did you find it unpopular also among the other members of the diplomatic community in Luxembourgh?

H: The diplomatic community tended to understand. I don't recall anybody in the diplomatic community who directly said to me, "You've got to get out of Viet Nam." In fact, most of them said, "You have to stay there." They said it privately.

S: Any surprises?

H: No. Most of these people are hard-nosed sophisticated types. The government of Luxembourg got more and more skittish about Viet Nam, they really worried about it. They just felt that it was terribly dangerous, and they wished we wouldn't do it. They were very unhappy about resumption of the bombing. But they purported to understand, they never opposed us publicly on it.

S: If you don't have anything to add to that, I'd like to turn to the Commission on Violence.

H: Yes.

S: I hesitate to ask you the circumstances of your appointment to the Commission on Violence, but I will anyway.

H: I had a call from the President himself. I'd been out for the evening. I'd been scheduled to attend a dinner for George Hayes, a long-time faculty member at Howard, but I had not approved of the way the dinner was organized and was afraid it would not go well, so we decided not to go and went for a ride instead. When I got back home I had a call from the Director of Public Relations at Howard, and then a call from the President of the University saying President Johnson wanted me to call him at the

White House.

I called and got right through to the President and he said, "Well, I tried to get you earlier, and I want you to serve on the Commission on Violence that I'm setting up," and gave the purpose of it. He said, "I wasn't able to get you, but I was sure you'd say yes, so I announced that you were going to serve." If we'd had the radio on, we would have heard the announcement.

He was quite right. I would have agreed, and I did agree. I was delighted to be able to do it. It has been an interesting experience.

S: Can you refresh my memory? This was set up on the day after, or it was several days after--.

H: No. The senator was shot about 2 a.m. Washington time--3 a.m. Washington time. The President set up the commission that evening about 8. And, as you know, the senator died the following morning. So the commission was set up before the senator's actual death, although newspaper people told me later on that they were convinced he would die, in terms of what they knew of what was coming out of Los Angeles.

S: Did you know Robert Kennedy?

H: Yes. As a matter of fact, I was on the staff of the Justice department when he became attorney general and saw him many times there.

S: Could you give what your impressions were of him?

H: I thought Senator Robert Kennedy was an extremely effective attorney general, a man of great energy, great passion, of deep concern for a number of problems, including civil rights. The passions sometimes tended to be a little firmer than I like passions to be.

S: What were your views and attitudes toward the division within the Democratic party?

H: We've always had divisions within the Democratic party.

S: This was a pretty serious division.

H: They've always been serious. Good heavens! In 1948 we had the Wallace-Thurmond division in the Democratic party--a three-way split in the Democratic party of the most serious proportions, the left and the right, exactly the kind we had this last time.

S: Let me rephrase that, then. I thought it might have come earlier, but I did not find it surprising.

S: Where were your sympathies in this?

H: I don't think I was unsympathetic with anybody. I was supporting Humphrey. Now I've been a supporter of Humphrey's since 1948, my first opportunity to vote. It's not just sentimental because I remember sitting by the radio in 1948 listening to Hubert Humphrey change the Democratic party, and whatever other people may decide about loyalty, I decided that the man who made the Democratic party the instrument for civil rights change deserved my support. He had done nothing to alienate me, so there was no doubt in my mind. I was one of the original supporters of Hubert Humphrey.

S: So, had it come down to Kennedy versus Humphrey at the convention, you would have supported Humphrey?

H: Kennedy versus Humphrey at the convention, I would have supported Humphrey. After the convention, I would have had no trouble supporting Senator Kennedy. I would have supported Lyndon Johnson against any.

S: If it had come down to Johnson against Kennedy--

H: Oh sure, no question about that. Again, I think that loyalty--if everybody's loyal, you may have a problem; you may have a problem of change. But one has to make certain kinds of choices. With what Lyndon Johnson had done

in terms of reorientation of attitudes toward Negroes in government alone, he merited my continuing support, and I would have supported him--and after that, Hubert Humphrey for the same reasons, although I do not deplore the schism in the Democratic party. But I think if a party is to remain dynamic, there must be those who constantly hold up its shortcomings and make people decide which side they are going to come down on ultimately. And supporting Hubert Humphrey does not mean that I supported a number of things that went on.

S: What is your evaluation of the Johnson Administration response to the kinds of problems that arose in 1965 and even earlier, but that really came to the surface in '67--the riots, the urban problems?

H: It's hard to say. I'm always torn between what I recognize as the need to mobilize the community--I think that the war in Viet Nam so claimed the President's attention that he was unable to mobilize community support for the kind of action that was necessary to deal with domestic problems. Unlike most people, I am not unhappy about the war because it takes money. I'm unhappy because it takes attention. It takes commitment away from this. We would find the money if we were committed, but because we have something to take our attention away from this there is not the commitment. The President did not do the job the President ought to do, and that frankly few Presidents have done since Franklin Roosevelt until Lyndon Johnson, to help mold public opinion in the direction of change. And this is what he didn't do in '67.

S: Perhaps this is what Dr. King was speaking about when he urged black people, particularly poor people, to oppose the war--that not only did it take money but it shifted the focus of priorities.

H: He had everything in mind. He was a pacifist, don't forget that man was

a pacifist and so he was opposed to wars. I am not a pacifist. I'm not even opposed to the war in Viet Nam, but I recognize the reality that this country cannot do two things on a large scale at the same time. It is our tragic flaw that we cannot do both.

S: So you're saying that the response was inhibited primarily because of Viet Nam.

H: I think that this is largely it; that we really did need a kind of continuing statement or continuing commitment of a very high order to dampen down the hysteria of the black separatists and the violence purveyors. And also to say to white people, "Don't get frightened, we're not going to take anything away from you. We're going to do something for Negroes but we're not going to take something away from you." And we needed the calming voice. I think the President had the capacity to do it. I mean, when he wanted to address himself to this, he was very good. But we were so torn with the Viet Nam dissension, so torn with the need to deal with this.

S: Would you like to comment generally on the commission?

H: The commission is still working. We haven't even seen all the reports yet.

S: How many total reports? I mean, how many reports?

H: Oh goodness, I don't know how many we're going to have.

S: Thirty or fifty, or something like that?

H: No. I think we'll probably have about eight reports from the commission. And then there are a whole series of studies, more than I can number. But we're still in process and still going along.

S: Did President Johnson talk to you about this commission at all?

H: He wanted us to take a look at everything that related to the existence of violence in the United States, and that's what we've done.

S: With the intent--?

H: To make recommendations about how to control it and prevent it.

S: Are you at liberty to comment on the progress that it has made?

H: We are in the process of making our report. We aren't anywhere yet.

S: The only one that has been released to date--

H: There is no commission report that has been released.

S: I'm sorry, the report to the commission--

H: That's right, but no report of the commission has been released. We had an interim report, a progress report, to the President in December but that simply told him where we were.

S: And President Nixon is continuing this?

H: That's right.

S: Okay. Well, is there anything that you'd like to add to the tape?

H: Well, I must say that, since this is for the Johnson Library, that I was pleased to be a part, even a small part of the Johnson Administration.

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