INTERVIEWEE: DWIGHT A INK

INTERVIEWER: DAVID G. McCOMB

February 5, 1969

M: To identify this tape first of all, this is the interview with Mr. Dwight A. Ink, who is the Assistant Secretary for Administration for the Department of Housing and Urban Development. The date is February 5; and I am in his offices in the HUD Building in Washington, D.C.; and the time is 2 in the afternoon. My name is David McComb.

First of all, Mr. Ink, I have some information that you were born in Iowa in Des Moines in 1922, and educated at Iowa State--B.S. degree in 1947, is that right?

I: That's right.

M: And then on to the University of Minnesota where you got an M.A. in 1950?

I: That's correct.

M: Then about that time apparently, you worked in Fargo, North Dakota.

I: That's right.

M: Who were you working for then?

I: I went to Fargo as budget and personnel officer and assistant city manager and secretary of the Civil Service Commission for the city.

M: And then you were in the Bureau of Reclamation.

I: I moved from there to the Bureau of Reclamation where I headed a small pilot project to construct small dams and waterways to take water from the large dams on the Missouri River to water-short municipalities--this was an interagency undertaking.

M: Was this Bureau of Reclamation federal or state?

I: I was--I was with the Bureau of Reclamation; we provided the leadership for the project which involved the U.S. Public Health Service, the Corps of Engineers, the States, and the municipalities.

M: This was a federal agency?

I: Yes, I was with the federal agency, but it was an intergovernmental activity.

M: This was your entry then into federal government service?

I: Yes, that's correct.

M: And after that in 1951 you went to work for the Atomic Energy Commission.

I: Yes. The Korean war came and materials were not available for construction of those kinds of facilities, so I went to the Atomic Energy Commission, to Oak Ridge, Tennessee, for the purpose of finding ways to cut down the cost of operating Oak Ridge so that the town which was owned by the federal government could be turned over to the people and incorporated as a regular municipality.

M: And how long were you with the AEC?

I: I moved from there to the Savannah River plant of the Atomic Energy Commission, which was the H-bomb plant--that was the highest priority project we've had since the second World War. We were in a race with the Soviet Union to develop an H-bomb, it was behind schedule, and I was brought down as Report and Control Officer to try to find ways of getting it back on schedule. I remained there until December of 1955 when I came to Washington as assistant to the then-Assistant General Manager of the AEC.

When John McCone, later CIA Director, came in as chairman of the AEC, I became his executive assistant in 1958. And it was then that my first work with Congress and the White House began.

M: Did you have any contact with Lyndon Johnson at that time?

I: Very little. As the Majority Leader, we had some problems, particularly with respect to the Test Ban Treaty and how it might fare up on the Hill. This brought McCone into contact with Lyndon Johnson, and I had, in a couple of instances, participated in those meetings.

M: Do you recall anything significant about those meetings, your impressions of Johnson?

I: None other than the fact that he seemed to be very much in control of the situation. He seemed to have an extremely good feel for what would and what would not pass through the Senate, and I was impressed with this mastery of the sense of how the Senate would react to certain conditions, certain circumstances, to various kinds of proposals.

M: Then how long did you stay with the AEC?

I: I stayed with the AEC in the changeover of Administration, and I was White House liaison under both the Republicans and Democrats. I came to know President Kennedy and Lyndon Johnson, not well, but I was with him from time to time. For example, I was in charge of Kennedy's trip out to New Mexico and Nevada on a defense inspection that he made some time after taking office. Lyndon Johnson was on that trip, so of course we worked with him and talked with him about such things as the Weapons Programs, the Space Program, and particularly the Nuclear Space Program which he was very much interested in, and supported very strongly I might say.

I will recall one instance in Los Alamos in which the President had a group of six or seven of us seated in a semi-circle in front of him, one of whom was Lyndon Johnson; another was Jerry Wiesner;

another was Glenn Seaborg, then Chairman of the Atomic Energy Commission; another was George Bundy. He asked us our views on the moving forward on a large scale with the Nuclear Space Program, which of course is the only way you can move into outer space with manned space vehicles. Someone would make a point, and the President then would turn to someone else in the group who he suspected had entirely opposite views, and he said, "Now, what's your argument to that. What is your answer! What is your response! And Lyndon Johnson was a very active participant in it, a very strong proponent for the program in those discussions.

M: There is, at least in the writings about Johnson, an indication that as Vice President he had to take a definitely subordinate position in meetings of this nature and often remained silent. Your story would seem to indicate otherwise.

I: Yes, but on the trip as a whole, he was quite a bit in the background. And I remembered this incident, in part, because it stood out from the rest of the trip. He had a very strong interest in it, and he participated. But he participated along with the rest of us rather than in a special Vice Presidential role.

M: Do you have any thoughts of contrast between Johnson and Kennedy --impressions about the methods of the two men and the capabilities of them?

I: Of course, I did not work with either one of them as closely as most of the people that I'm sure you're talking with, so my reactions would have to be classed as reactions and impressions rather than firm conclusions. But in the exposure I did have, Kennedy was much more the inquiring individual, asking questions, bouncing one to the

other and asking for an exchange of ideas, and getting confrontations on a particular issue; whereas in my exposure to Lyndon Johnson, he did much more of the talking, he was more interested in the meetings I had [with him] in laying out his thinking, philosophy, what he wanted accomplished. He always seemed to want to accomplish everything, wanted everything to go at once. And it was more a kind of a pep talk motivating us, trying to get things moving.

M: Was he successful in these as far as you were concerned?

I: Generally, but with some mixed reactions. Some of the people who were exposed to it over a period of time got a little weary of this continual exhortation, a little impatient at less opportunity to present their thinking and to participate in debate on key policy issues. On the other hand, everyone I've talked to in these meetings that I was in, after we walked away, the comment continuously came up, "Here's a man who has such tremendous burdens, he's trying so hard, and things just aren't breaking his way. Isn't it too bad!" And so a great deal of sympathy for the man and the understanding for his burdens and his problems and what he was trying to do, I think, came out of these sessions.

M: Lyndon Johnson is somewhat famous for his temper. Have you ever had occasion to witness any of that?

I: Not any more than with others. It seemed to me not as sharp as Eisenhower's, for example. I would see Eisenhower flash much more quickly and with less provocation than what I saw of Johnson. But I stress--I wasn't around any of the three enough to really establish a pattern. Now he was very short with aides. In front of small groups he could be devastating in how he referred to some of his aides.

Occasionally it was humorous, but very often the humor seemed to be drained out.

M: Lyndon Johnson also had a reputation for being rather crude in his speech. Is this well-founded or not?

I: First of all, I came from a poverty area in southern Iowa. I used to walk barefoot to a little one-room country school longer than anybody else around to save shoe leather, and consequently I suspect that sort of thing didn't make an impact on me. He was very plain in his language, sometimes earthy; I didn't happen to hear any that I thought was really crude.

M: Then you were not particularly offended?

I: To the contrary, I welcomed the kind of language that I was accustomed to. Some of the Kennedy discussions I thought were scintillating, but a little bit too much Harvard-oriented.

M: After the assassination of John F. Kennedy, did you have any immediate contact with Lyndon Johnson?

I: No. I had no contact after the assassination of a personal nature until the earthquake in Alaska when he appointed me Executive Director of the rebuilding of Alaska.

M: This was in 1964?

I: '64, that's correct.

M: Can you tell me the circumstances of that? Your appointment and what Johnson told you to do?

I: The appointment was actually arranged by Senator Anderson who was designated chairman by Johnson. By the way, this is an interesting facet, I think, of Lyndon Johnson. We had this earthquake. It was an unprecedented natural disaster in this country, never before have we had a state hit anything the way Alaska was. Its economy

was ruined overnight, and the basic question was whether to rebuild Alaska. So Johnson turned away from the established procedure, felt he needed something above and beyond, and turned to a cabinet level commission chaired by a Senator, which probably no one from the public administration area would have recommended--I know I would not have. But he sensed the need for bridging the gap between the executive and legislative branches in a time of crisis. Because the Senate then was tied up, or shortly after became tied up, in the civil rights debate, the legislation never would have gotten through had Anderson not been there to break the log jam. It was a stroke of genius, I think.

But he was very much interested in seeing that the rebuilding moved rapidly; the construction season was short, and we had only a few months to design, plan, and get underway and complete the emergency part of a half-a-billion dollar program. So he was interested in action.

M: Senator Anderson recommended your appointment?

I: Yes, that's correct.

M: And did Johnson call you in to talk to you, or did he simply okay this, or what?

I: He okayed it at that time, then later on we met with him on several occasions, and he spoke in a very pleased way about our progress and exhorted us to further steps in the cutting of red tape and schedules. And at the conclusion of our emergency work, which was in October--a pretty short period of time, he called us all in to the White House as a group, and spoke to us for about a half-an-hour on how significant he thought this effort was and how fine it was, and then of course

sent me a letter.

M: Was your work on this commission one of organizing the reconstruction, planning it, or just what?

I: My work was planning it and running it for the commission. And I developed legislative recommendations for the commission, and I laid out the schedules with the participating agencies. I commuted back and forth between Washington and Alaska. I would go to Alaska and sit down with the state and local and federal people around a table, business leaders from the community, and on the spot we would work out the schedules for water, sewers, for building of harbors, rebuilding of docks, airports, highways, railroads, what have you, and decide who was going to do what.

M: And then after your work in Alaska in October of '64, then what did you do?

I: Then he appointed me chairman of a White House task force on education. Here I'm not sure whether he thought of my name or someone else recommended it. All I know is that after the Primary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, he announced that he was setting up a task force which was to revamp the Office of Education in sixty days. When they called me from the White House that night, I had not heard the Announcement--I knew nothing about the sixty days, I agreed to do the job. The next morning I saw in the papers that I had sixty days to finish the job. But that was kind of typical of LBJ.

M: He didn't tell you about this when they asked you to take the job then?

I: No. I knew nothing about the sixty days. I think they assumed I knew about it because this was included in his speech which had been widely reported, but I had been out of town that day. As I had on

Alaska. I had just gotten back, knew nothing about the Alaskan Commission. They called me on both of these, I learned about them after I accepted I guess.

M: Apparently the Office of Education underwent a transformation in these years from being merely a statistical gathering agency and one to disseminate information to an actual regulatory agency of sorts. Is this the reason for this White House task force?

I: Yes. The dollar programs had increased something like ten-fold in three or four years, and as you say, the character had completely changed from statistical gathering operation to several very controversial responsibilities under Title 6 of the Civil Rights Act. And all this was converging at the same time and they did not have the machinery or the organization or the people to carry out these expanded responsibilities, and my job was to revamp the office from a management standpoint, from an organizational standpoint, a personnel standpoint, and to get it moving.

M: And what kind of problems did you run into on this?

I: About every management problem you could think of. It was in bad shape from that standpoint.

M: So you had to shift personnel and get new people?

I: Get a lot of new people. We completely reorganized the place, and we reworked their budget process, their personnel process, their contracting; redirected their project evaluation process, a whole series of things. And we met our objectives. We not only came up with our recommendations in sixty days, but they were all approved and under implementation within sixty days.

M: Then were you given charge of seeing that these changes took place?

I: No. I was on detail from the Atomic Energy Commission. And after having left earlier for Alaska, they wanted me back.

M: Was the organization of the Office of Education carried out to your satisfaction?

I: It was carried out, but not to my satisfaction.

M: Can you tell me what went wrong?

I: Yes. Both Frank Keppel, the head of the office, and his deputy Henry Loomis left the office within three or four months, and so the continuity was gone. By the time they were able to replace that team, the momentum had been lost. That slowed the whole thing down. They of course didn't participate in the study, and so, as I say, the changes were made on paper, but it took quite awhile for the philosophical changes to take place. Some of them still haven't fully.

M: Then you returned to the Atomic Energy Commission. And what was your job then--same as before?

I: Yes. I was Assistant General Manager from 1958 until I came to HUD.

M: Then how did you get involved with HUD?

I: By the way, during that period of time I was involved in a number of international activities. For example, I was cochairman of the delegation to the Soviet Union on desalting in late 1965, I guess it was. I did quite a lot of work on NATO. And I was a member of the negotiating team that negotiated the Nassau Agreement with the U.K. So that was another dimension.

M: What was your capacity in these international negotiations?

I: It varied. I was in the one case a member of the three-man negotiating team--one from State, one Defense, one from the AEC. For the Vienna Atomic Energy Conference in '58, I was one of the U.S. delegates.

McCone was back here with Khrushchev and Eisenhower, and I went over to represent him until he could arrive. And then, as I say, desalting --I was co-chairman of that delegation. Then I was the co-chairman of some of the series of special teams to NATO dealing with the nuclear bases, so it was a variety of things.

M: I can see how desalting would be a subject that would not have too many political implications. Everybody wants fresh water. But atomic--

I: When we were there, I was the political spokesman for the delegation. My co-chairman from Interior was the technical spokesman.

There was one incident that relates to LBJ I might just mention. This occurred about four weeks after Khrushchev was thrown out. And we were the first official people to go over after that, and it was watched with interest to see what the attitude of the Soviets would be. It turned out to be quite friendly. Our schedule took us through a great deal of the Soviet Union very rapidly. And after we'd been there four or five days, we were out in Western Siberia-- near Sverdlovsk. We were driving along a field and they pointed out where Powers had been shot down, by the way, so I can assure you it's 'way in the interior of the Soviet Union.

But after being completely cut off from all communication from the West, newspapers, radio, TV, and what have you, you begin at that point to feel sort of swallowed up by the immensity of the Soviet Union, particularly in Siberia in the wintertime.

We went to a power station and at lunch, there began the usual after-dinner toasts with vodkas and so forth. It's a great problem when you're in the Soviet Union to keep down the consumption of vodka.

And after the sixth or seventh toast, somewhere in there, I led our delegation away from the table. I was desperate to get on with the business. This offended them. They were getting edgy anyway. The Powers thing, I think, had reminded them of some history that was rather unpleasant. And when I began leading the delegation away from the table, this irritated them. And I sensed that it was deep enough that I brought the delegation back for one more toast, and they agreed this would be the final toast. But then the Soviet said, "Our leaders are for peace; the Soviet people are for peace, but your leaders are for war. Lyndon Johnson is, we think, for war." "But," he said "nobody really knows where he stands. He talks peace, but he acts war." And he said, "This is the major concern of the world today--where LBJ stands on war and peace." And he says, "If he doesn't" this is not an exact quote, but in effect, "If he doesn't change his policy, there's serious trouble ahead for the world."

So it was my turn to respond. And I said, and this is just about an exact quote because we retold it many times after we got back, I said: "LBJ has been a very active President for a year now, and in the course of this year, he has many, many times both through words and actions demonstrated where he stands. He stands, for peace in the same way that President Eisenhower and President Kennedy did. Furthermore, he has just emerged from a lengthy political campaign in which day after day around the country he has again reviewed his positions, reviewed his stand on international problems, and reaffirmed his support for peace. What really worries the world is not where President Johnson stands, but where your leaders stand because they have had such a short political campaign nobody knows what their position is

on anything." Well, to my utter relief and surprise, they began laughing. And they took this in a friendly vein and joked about it, and they came back with a final toast in a very friendly, jovial way about how they were one up on the United States because they didn't waste all this money on these long political campaigns.

From there on though, the tone of the trip was different. They were friendly, they worked with us, and all the ugliness went out in just one instant. But I mention that because Johnson got quite a kick out of it when he heard about it.

M: It would seem that negotiations involving nuclear policy would be much more touchy, much more sensitive.

I: Very touchy. It was on that trip that we first began discussing the possible cooperation with the peaceful uses of nuclear explosives.

M: Is that a possibility--nuclear sharing for peaceful uses?

I: Yes, but it's a very difficult thing. We have it now on the reactor side. And the reason I was involved, you see, is because nuclear power is the heat source for large applications of desalting. But where it gets much more sensitive is using nuclear explosives for peaceful purposes because the design between those and nuclear weapons is hard to distinguish. And that requires a great deal of technical finesse in order to work out.

M: But is this possible to work out?

I: Some of us feel that it is. I guess most of us feel that it is although there are still some that are uneasy.

M: What kind of safeguards do you have to erect to protect knowledge of atomic weaponry when you want to use an atomic device for peaceful uses?

I: That really gets into highly technical areas, and some of the information actually is classified. But you can get into tests on yields, on types of devices, and so forth which we think can keep this within a manageable framework. What you want to doiis avoid using this as a cover for the development of nuclear weaponry, and that of course limits you--it keeps you away from some of the more sophisticated things. It also means that you must use devices that are relatively "clean"--there is no such thing as a clean atomic weapon, of course, but you have to greatly minimize that sort of thing.

M: I did not tell you this earlier, but I might add now that these tapes can be classified if you wish. And all of our personnel have White House clearance if that makes any difference.

In negotiations involving atomic devices for peace or otherwise, do you have trouble with arms control personnel?

I: They naturally have a different point of view. They're very much concerned, yes.

M: This is a major point of conflict?

I: Yes. The major activity I was involved in in this whole area was the Test Ban Treaty. And my position from the very beginning back in the middle '50's was in support of a limited Test Ban Treaty. At that time it was very unpopular with the Defense people who felt that this was limiting our capacity to develop weapons and we'd fall behind in the nuclear race. By 1959 the situation was turned around to where it was then unpopular with the people who were interested in peace because they felt it was not going far enough. They thought we ought to go for a complete treaty. And of course our position was that we should go for a complete treaty when we could

enforce it; that we should put in treaty form whatever we can police and whatever we can enforce. We thought we could enforce, an above ground--that's what we mean by limited, as you probably know--we could enforce, we could inspect an above ground treaty, but there was no way of technically detecting a possible underground nuclear development program. And that was the reason for the distinction. But as you know, this is the position that Kennedy ultimately took and negotiated out. So in the end, we came out looking fine.

M: Did you play a role in the negotiations under Kennedy?

I: No. I played a role--not in the negotations--I played an active role in the debates within the administration and some of the discussions up on the Hill.

M: And you maintained your position as you've just outlined?

I: Yes.

M: And this was what was ultimately--with what we came out.

I: And John McCone also, who of course was not chairman of the AEC when it finally developed--in fact, I think that's probably why I went with him as executive assistant when he came in because that was the first issue I raised with him, and he thought that was a good approach and adopted it.

M: Was there any turning point in the argumentation over this that persuaded Kennedy to see it your way?

I: There may have been, but I wasn't close enough to him to know. When you say "my way," in the middle '50's there were only three or four of us that saw it that way. Of course, by the time that happened, there was then a bloc of people taking this position and a bloc of people taking another position. And I was not the chief spokesman--I was

just one of a group at that stage.

M: You said also in your international activities that you were involved with NATO. What was your role there?

I: This was primarily with respect to the protection of nuclear weapons in foreign bases, which is a very sensitive area. And this Pueblo incident, by the way, has brought back many memories, because what we did was comparable in some ways to what should have been done, I think, in the case of the Pueblo. But a group of us from AEC and Defense Department with someone generally along from the State Department would visit bases in different countries in NATO. We would look at how they were set up for handling the nuclear weapons, what the potential vulnerability was to sudden takeover by a dissident group or by a Communist takeover--we were just as much concerned about a colonel's revolt--just as concerned, but not quite--with that as we were with the Communist takeover of the weapons. You can imagine in the Near East, for example, what that would do in terms of the power struggle that they're having.

And so we got into such things as destruct devices and the guard situation. But it was sensitive because these weapons were on foreign bases that were supposed to be manned by foreign nationals such as Germans, Greeks, Italians, and what not. And for them to feel that we didn't trust them or have confidence in them was, as I say, a very sensitive matter; so how to do this in a way that was inoffensive and yet retain effective controls was an interesting project.

M: When was this?

I: This was over a period from 1959 until I came to HUD.

M: So it's an ongoing--?

I: Yes, about six years.

M: There was no particular incident then that encourage this sort of activity?

I: Yes. I happened to be on a trip to Europe with members of the Joint Committee on Atomic Energy. And when they go on a trip, it's a working trip. It's not one of these junkets. They work from dawn to dusk. And they were concerned. And John Graham who was the Commissioner of AEC, was concerned--we were all concerned with what we saw. And so this whole program grew out of that trip in 1959.

(interruption)

M: You said the committee was concerned with what it saw.

I: Yes, they were concerned by a number of things. They were concerned about the potential for loss of our nuclear weapons, both because of the potential loss of highly secret design data which would help the Soviets in the nuclear competition--weapons competition--and secondly, what it would do in the way of giving leverage to a dissident group within a country.

M: This became obvious on this trip?

I: Yes. And the obsolescence and impracticality of some of our weapons systems became obvious too.

M: And so you continued after this to have an interest on that?

I: I provided the focal point within the Atomic Energy Commission for our part of the overall role, which obviously was a three-pronged affair involving State Department, Defense Department, and AEC. But because it had heavy security overtones, most of the inspection work was actually done by us.

M: Is there anything else in this intervening period that occurred between

your work abroad and your entry into HUD?

I: I think nothing that would have any bearing upon what we're talking about. I was involved in various details, but primarily with management of an organizational nature--

M: Were you in on the formation of the Department of Housing and Urban Development?

I: Yes. I was brought over to organize this department, as a matter of fact.

M: Were you brought over before the legislation passed?

I: No, I was brought over after the legislation. I had nothing to do with the legislation.

M: But once the department was through and Lyndon Johnson signed it--?

I: He signed it, but it took him several months before he made up his mind on who was going to be Secretary. And then Weaver began looking around for a staff. And because Weaver was a member of the Reconstruction Commission on Alaska, my guess is--I've never known this--but my guess is that it was because of that that he asked me to come over. I declined. I then had a call from Joe Califano from the White House asking me to come over to talk, which I did; and I told him why I preferred not to come. He said, "Well, if the President insisted, would you come?" I said, "Of course. One does what the President insists upon." He said he thought that just might turn out to be the case. And a few days later I was testifying before the joint committee up on the Hill; I was called out to the phone, and it was Joe Califano. He said he thought I would like to know that the President did insist, and had just announced my appointment.

M: May I ask you what your objections were?

I: By the way when I went back in the hearing room, Chet Holifield also had just been handed a note--the timing was perfect, I don't know how they did it--and he was trying to read my announcement in the hearing.

M: Why did you object to coming in the first place?

I: I was enjoying too much what I was doing. There was no promotion involved, and I just was enjoying the Atomic Energy work, and the extra curricular activities, special details, and White House assignments from time to time.

M: But you took this HUD job at the insistence of the President.

I: That's what they tell me. Again, I didn't see Johnson until after the appointment.

M: Did he have anything to say to you then?

I: He just said how delighted he was that I was willing to come, and at that point, what do you say?

M: What was the first thing you did then when you took on this new task?

I: The first thing I did was to set up fifteen task forces to come up with a series of recommendations in each of the various areas we were concerned with. I gave each of them time schedules of two or four weeks--no, not each of them, there were a couple that were longer, but most of them were very short time schedules. And then we just set about the--

M: Who did you assign to these task forces?

I: I brought people from other agencies, people from within the agency, people from the field, people from headquarters.

M: These are agencies that would make up HUD?

I: No, outside. Agriculture, AEC, HEW.

(interruption)

M: Mr. Ink has just shown me a series of volumes entitled "HUD Organization Task Force Reports, 1966." Can I assume that these records would be placed in the Archives or the Library of Congress or some place of that nature?

I: They haven't been. We sent one set to the White House, and we have two sets here, and one set went to the Bureau. There were four in all.

M: And these then were the reports of your taks forces.

I: That's right. Of course we didn't accept all the recommendations, but that was part of the backdrop for our work. And we set for ourselves a goal of within one year having all the studies completed, the decisions made, and the reorganization in place.

M: It would seem that you would have all kinds of management problems such as personnel.

I: Oh yes.

M: Where did you get your people to staff HUD?

I: We were fortunate in one sense in that we didn't bring a lot of new people in. We brought different kinds of people in. We began drawing people from local government, for example; we began bringing in people with social and economic backbround and concern, whereas previously the old HHFA had been primarily a physically oriented brick and mortar kind of institution except in FHA where people with some banking ground were involved.

However, despite that, and despite the fact that we didn't grow numerically in the way that HEW and most other new departments did, we still could not recruit for our needs under the old machinery.

One of the things I did was replace most of the office heads in the administrative area when I came in.

M: Don't you run afoul of Civil Service regulations when you do that?

I: I didn't.

M: You don't have any trouble shifting people?

I: You have to work each case out very carefully. But a lot more can be done than most people realize, I think.

M: A general complaint about people who are in your realm of work, in administration, is the difficulty in working with Civil Service regulations.

I: The complaint is justified. But when they give up and say it's too much work to do, that's where I part company with them.

M: In other words, your attitude is being persistent and eventually working it out.

I: Yes. One, I think you have to work with these people. If the people aren't measuring up, if they can't do what you want, they need to know it. Too often they're left to themselves and the supervisor mumbles about them and tells everybody else about their deficiencies, but they don't tell the individual himself. If you tell the individual himself, two-thirds of them will either roll up their sleeves and correct themselves, or if they can't or don't want to, they begin looking for another post. Because very few people really want to stay on in a situation in which they are not doing their job or in which there's a bad relationship with their boss.

M: I see. So then one of your management techniques would be to inform these people.

I: Oh, yes, and do it fast.

M: Did you have any difficulties in recruiting?

I: Yes, we had difficulties. But with a new department and the attention that was focusing on the new department, they were not as great as you might think. Our big problem was in antiquated machinery here and the lack of know-how among our previous staff to bring in people rapidly and reach out to a diversity of background.

M: How did you overcome that?

I: In part by bringing in a new personnel officer to head the personnel office. That's the most important step we took.

M: And he had outside contacts then?

I: He just knew how to operate. We also of course--Bob Wood, the under secretary, had a keen interest in this, and a very strong personal interest. And he was pressing as hard as I was to get this machinery functioning. And he had good suggestions and ideas and outreach at the higher levels. That was helpful to us. I drew upon the City Managers Association. I knew them well, and they gave us a lot of good names. We reached out to new groups for names, sources that had never been tapped before.

M: Far outside of government circles.

I: Oh, yes.

M: Are there any major stumbling blocks or hindrances in recriuting of this nature such as wage scale, or salary scale?

I: There was. Now the wage situation in my judgment is no longer a serious factor in the government service except at the very top levels, and it looks as though that's about to be greatly minimized. Although you never will be in a position of course to pay secretaries and under secretaries what are comparable wages. But that problem

which was very serious five years ago in my judgment, some people disagree with me, no longer exists in a substantive way. You will from time to time have special areas in which there's difficulty. The accounting area is one now where we're handicapped. But my judgment is that after this pay raise that's about to come in now, that that is no longer a serious drawback until you get to the Assistant Secretary level.

M: Are there any other areas like that that are particularly difficult?

I: Yes. The red tape of the Civil Service set-up is a deterrent. You can't make commitments in the way that one would in business, the way we did in AEC. We weren't under Civil Service in AEC. We had our own merit system. Here you can't make commitments. People are asked to stay on the hook for a long period of time while you go through all the processing, and in the meantime they get other offers and sometimes they stay with you and sometimes they don't. Sometimes they get just disgusted and if this is the way the federal government operates, they don't want any part of it.

M: Did you have any people forced on you, say, by political pressure?

I: There were a handful that were. Bob Wood could explain that more than I because he was the one that got involved--very, very few.

M: Are these at the high level or low level? Middle level?

I: In between. They tried to push several high level people in, but we wouldn't agree to it so they didn't go. I can tell, you, we did have two serious struggles, one of them at a high level, the regional administrator for Chicago.

By the way, this departmental reorganization was the most extensive that has ever been undertaken, and one of the dimensions of it is that it took

place both in headquarters and the field at the same time, which no one had ever tried to do before. And we brought in some new blood in the field, not as much as we did in headquarters, not as much as I think we should have, as a matter of fact. But in Chicago we replaced the regional administrator, and the one we selected was not very popular with the Democratic National Committee. I heard--I don't know that this is a fact--but I was told that Daley had a candidate, people like that generally do, and I think that that was the only problem with Frank Fisher who we wanted to appoint. He just wasn't the candidate of the mayor in Chicago. But Weaver stuck to his guns, and he said he was the one responsible for carrying out the program, and he had to have the people that he knew could do the job. This went on for months, and fortunately Frank stayed with us, and the political end of the White House finally withdrew and we were able to put him on the job.

We had one in New York, an FHA insuring office, in which the White House had no problem, but the fellow was a Republican and the Democratic Congresswoman from that area was all up in arms, and she raised a horrible fuss over at the White House. And they were hoping we could find some way to work it out, but we thought we had the best man, and we stuck to our guns. John Macy was involved in it. And finally Phil Brownstein, another assistant secretary, and I went up to the Congresswoman and told her we were going ahead, and she said she was going to have us investigated--you know, it was the typical response. But we went ahead and made the appointment, and the investigation never took place.

M: Who was this man in New York?

I: I'll think of it as we go along.

M: Did you indulge in raiding other federal agencies at all?

I: We didn't intend to, but we did more than we should have at one point in time with OEO. Bert Harding called it to our attention, and we sent word down that we weren't going to cut off people from OEO, but we were going to have to ration it out. So we didn't rob them and then we made a couple of people available to them from HUD.

M: Lyndon Johnson had a reputation for encouraging the hiring of minority groups and also women.

I: Yes.

M: Was this reflected in your organization of HUD?

I: He certainly made this well known to all of us. We already had a fairly substantial number of minority people in the department, consequently, we weren't the target that some of the other departments were. However, toward the end of his tenure, we did become the target in the case of the Mexican-Americans because we have very few Mexican-Americans. And in the area offices such as Fort Worth and Los Angeles, San Francisco, we should have more than we have. So we did feel the pressure from Johnson in that particular area.

M: In a situation like that, is it difficult to find qualified personnel?

I: Yes and no. In the Atomic Energy Commission, it was extremely difficult because here we were looking for a technical kind of individual. It is extremely difficult here in the FHA where we're looking for people with a heavy business background. On the other hand, you move over into the socially oriented parts of the department, it's not too difficult. And sometimes it's very useful to have someone who maybe doesn't have much in the way of degrees but has a working knowledge

of the problem of the ghetto.

M: Since Robert Weaver was a Negro, was there any racial tension over that?

I: I'm told there was in the beginning, particularly with respect to his appearances on the Hill, but I'd rather not go into that because it's second-hand. I saw none of it. And in the new department, now I can speak for this, I saw absolutely none of it--absolutely none. It was something I thought a little bit about before I came over, whether this would create some problems within the department, either tension or maybe people trying to over compensate, or some kind of artificial arrangement in relationships. But I saw none of it to my surprise.

M: To phrase this same question in a more personal way, did you have any difficulties over this in your working with Weaver?

I: Oh no, none whatsoever. You don't think in terms of black and white when you're working with people.

M: And this would not influence your organization in the department?

I: Oh, no. None whatsoever. And never once was there any hint dropped from Weaver that you ought to have a black person here or a black person there. In his own office he had some Negro secretaries in his office, for example. And he had a Negro assistant to him. So I think it eas a factor in the staffing of his own immediate office, but in my area, and I had one of the larger elements in the department, there was never a suggestion or a hint of anything.

M: Did you have a problem of office space?

I: Wait a minute, he had a problem, though, because he was a Negro. The

early one, which I don't want to talk about in detail because I wasn't here, in dealing with the Hill, but one I am very familiar with is that the Negro groups around the country put a great deal of pressure on him as Secretary to give a better deal to the Negroes and to the ghetto areas. And this was quite an important issue, as a matter of fact, when the riots got underway, because Weaver took the position that you ought not to reward the rioters. This was Johnson's position. I don't know who persuaded whom, or maybe they worked it out together. But the important thing is Weaver believed it. Regardless of whether he got instructions from Johnson, this is what he believed in. You can imagine the pressure he got from moderate leaders who felt that it was important to do something visible and tangible just for the Negroes, or they'd all go over to the militants. But he would have none of it. He was concerned about all of the disadvantaged.

M: Did you also have a problem of office space when you organized?

I: We occupied from eighteen to twenty-one Washington buildings, depending upon the point in time you're talking about.

M: Does that physical separation create great difficulty?

I: Oh yes, very serious difficulty. Of course now, that's one of the nice things about the department--we built this building and everyone is together in one place.

M: By having everybody in one place, what kind of advantage does it give you?

I: It has a tremendous advantage in terms of time, in terms of communication, in terms of ease and ability of getting people together. You can break through compartmentalization much better if you can get people around the table. If they're spread around in buildings, you're

more likely to talk to one of them over the phone and then talk to another one over the phone and never get around to talking to the other two or three. If they're just down the hall or one floor below, you can get them together, and you can get communications. The mail moves faster.

M: Is there a question of morale also?

I: Yes, but it's a little hard to pin down. Any time you're functioning well and effectively, your morale goes up. Secondly, when you're scattered around, there are some units who feel more left out. And if they feel left out, then they're not going to support things; they're not going to work very hard and [do] all the things that go to support morale.

M: Did you have any difficulty in acquiring the building?

I: The arrangements for the building had been made before the Department came into existence, so I was not a part of that. I did ride herd on the building though to move it, because we had to speed up construction considerably over what the normal construction schedule is.

M: Since HUD was made up to a great extent by various agencies coming together, did you have any trouble with autonomy within the agencies?

I: Yes. We did, but I learned from the Office of Education that the best thing to do in a situation like that is to move fast. And we did. We moved very fast. We told everyone that Lyndon Johnson did not want an evolutionary process--he wanted action. That's one of the Johnson meetings in that picture behind you when the department was first formed. He met on several occasions with us as a group. This is Assistant Secretaries and Secretary.

M: This is a picture in his office--Oval Office?

I: Yes, that's right.

M: Lyndon Johnson and you--

I: Weaver and me and Charlie Haar. And this kind of philosophy, you see, came out of these sessions. So that was our watchword--action, movement! And I think you'll find that in most cases that volume of study and recommendation would probably have been spread out over several years where we did it just in a few weeks because we had to complete all the action in the first year.

M: How could you move so fast?-

I: A lot of it is just driving--setting schedules and making sure everybody works and meets their targets, meets their schedules. And secondly, spending a lot of time talking with people, working with them to get them more receptive to change, and talking over options with them. If they feel a part, if they feel that they have a sense of participation, they're a lot more likely to accept the verdict even though it's not the one they proposed.

M: Was the support of the White House helpful in all of this?

I: Lyndon Johnson's public statements about the importance of the department were extremely helpful. His statement about the urban crisis was helpful [as was] his known personal interest in the department--it was his department. We told everyone it bore his imprint, and therefore it had his support and his interest and his concern.

M: Would you go so far as to say that the succesful formation of the department in a short period of time was brought about only with the help of Lyndon Johnson? Was his support of this necessary for

the rapid formation?

I: It did not result from his support, but it could not have taken place without his support. DOT also had his support, but they weren't able to go so far. But we couldn't have pulled it off if we hadn't had his interest and support.

M: So it's a necessary ingredient, but not the only one?

I: That's right.

M: At this point in time, 1969, are you satisfied with the way HUD has been organized and put together?

I: Not entirely. Let me say what I'm satisfied with and then what I'm not satisfied with. I am satisfied that for the first time here, Weaver, with the support of the President, was able to bring together into a cohesive department a group of semi-antonomous agencies with highly diversified programs. I think this is a major accomplishment. It's not perfection by any means--there are always operating problems --but basically you do have here a cohesive department which is responsive to the Secretary. He can speak for this Department; he can draw upon resources throughout the department. An excellent example of that was what happened when Nixon came in this first week in office. The new Secretary found that he had the machinery which enabled him to pick up a major project here for the District of Columbia in which he combined a number of different elements from different parts of the department. He couldn't have done that under the old HHAA. You couldn't do it today under Interior or DOT on that kind of a time-scale.

Secondly, I'm satisfied that there has been, again for the first time for any cabinet department, set up strong effective field offices.

And Lyndon Johnson set the tone for this. He said he wanted more of the work done out in the field closer to the community, closer to the problems, closer to the people. So that support was extremely helpful to us in getting the degree of decentralization and a degree of strength out in the field that no other cabinet and department has achieved.

So there are some things here that I think are really landmarks in terms of organization.

M: Before you go on, let me ask this. Does HUD make sense to you? Is it a logical organization as far as the other cabinet secretaryships are concerned?

I: Yes. But I think that as time passes, there may be some functions come in and others go out. I would think that its role in the planning area ought to be increased. I can conceive of some of the mortgage type work that perhaps can be spun off to private industry.

M: Is the breakaway of Fannie May symptomatic of this?

I: I think it may be. Not very many people think so, and I'm not sure myself because it hasn't been looked at that closely. But I raise that as a possibility.

Secondly, it may be that there may be some grant progarms that --water and sewer for example--maybe that will be picked up by some other department, I don't know. But the planning I think will come increasingly into this department as the overall focus of strategy in federal government dealing with the city.

M: But the idea of a housing and urban development department makes sense?

I: I think it makes a lot of sense.

M: You were about to say some things that you're unhappy with.

I: We haven't done enough streamlining of the processes; our grant and aid system is much too complex, it's much to fragmented. We need overhauling of these procedures; we need streamlining legislation; and I think in headquarters we ought to take another look at the grouping of functions. Weaver grouped these functions in large part in a way to gain control of the department, to break through the departmentalization. He wanted to change things so that it would be responsive to him and to the White House. And he and the President --President Johnson--had discussions on this point. And he told me that the President had told him in unmistakable terms that he wanted a department for a change that somebody could operate, a department that was responsive to needs. And so that's the way it was organized here in headquarters. Now that that has been accomplished, maybe in another phase people can make some adjustments more on the basis of operations.

M: Is it fair to say that the past two years of HUD's life have been one of getting organized and getting moving? Or has it gone beyond that?

I: It has gone beyond that. You've got some dramatic legislation and programs--Model Cities. I'm one of the more critical people in terms of the management deficiencies I see in Model Cities. But in terms of the promise and the innovation of the program, I think it's unparalleled. The housing area--shifting to the turnkey approach --we doubled last year the housing units that we put out. Now that's quite a thing for an agency like this which has never been production oriented at all. The whole Urban Renewal Program is being shifted

now to the NDP which has much greater flexibility for the cities. You've got the Neighborhood Center Program. It's a different world here in the course of three years--a major change. That's another reason we wanted to move so fast in organization. We didn't want to spend three or four years, even if the President would let us, which he wouldn't, just organizing. People get so sick and tired of organizing--the confusion--that they never get geared up to move; they never get geared up to act.

M: When you said "NDP", what does that mean?

I: That's Neighborhood Development Program. It's a new version of Urban Renewal which goes on a year-by-year basis, and it's very much different and much improved.

M: Beyond the organization of the Department and bringing in personnel and making sure you get the right men in the right spot, organizing the field offices, what else have you been into?

I: I've revamped the audit program which we're using now as a much broader management basis for spotting deficiencies.

M: Is this a part or a derivation of McNamara's cost benefit system?

I: No. This is evaluating our operations from a management and fiscal standpoint. Are our funds being protected; is the organization right; is responsibility clearcut; are cost surveys being made, and so forth. Quite a range of the activities of internal management as well as project management. We audit the LPA's--the Local Public Authorities, Local Housing Authorities--as well as our own operations. We consolidated the automatic data processing, vehicle operation, all that sort of thing is consolidated here in this department. We've done more consolidating than any other department, in the administrative

area particularly.

But Weaver used his assistant secretaries as a kind of cabinet to him. You see, we combined line and staff in the assistant secretaries. Consequently one of their roles, one of their hats, was in this staff capacity. We spent a fair amount of time in that way. We met together in the evening in our homes, and we had regular staff meetings. We had special ad hoc meetings in which we got together to talk about the department problems as a group, and I was a part of that.

M: Then you participated in policy decisions such as Model Cities, and rat control, and things of that nature.

I: Yes. I didn't get in on absolutely everything, because every time an issue comes up, you can't get all the assistant secretaries together as a group, but within reason it was handled on this basis. With the budget, of course, I have quite an operation.

M: You would work with the Bureau of the Budget then too, I suppose?

I: Oh yes, and the Appropriation Committee. In the accounting area, we're revamping our whole accounting set-up. We have an archaic system here. We've made a number of changes the last year-and-a-half, and we're about to award a half-a-million dollar contract to help us redesign a number of areas. That of course ties in with ADP.

I've got an interesting project up in New York that's underway now. By the first of July, we will have for the first time in any department in the domestic area a control system--management control system--covering a wide range of diversified projects. All of our programs will be meshed into this and it will be on automatic data processing. There will be flushed up to the regional administrator

and his assistant regional administrators the status of all the projects in any city in that region, grouped either by type of program or by community. It will be grouped both ways, as a matter of fact. This is a real breakthrough, I think, in terms of management.

M: This would seem to be a useful control device.

I: Control and planning device. It's really a basic management tool.

M: Is this going to be applied to the whole country?

I: Yes. We will then move into all the other regions, and part of our planning for next year. I'm not going to be here, but if I were, I would install this in the other regions.

M: Can I assume, or is correct to say that your main activity in HUD has been on the management of programs, the management of the department, the management of field offices?

I: Organization and management. Now the actual running of the programs of course is done by the other assistant secretaries--the program assistant secretaries. What we have done is work with them on a joint basis, and we've done this very extensively, on improving their systems. I chaired for President Johnson a joint administrative task force, for example, --I'll give you a copy of our final report, by the way. One thing interesting about President Johnson is that when he launches something, he launches it with a bang. And this one, he said, the processing time for grants should be cut in half, and we were able to work this out. This involved HUD, HEW, Labor, and OEO. I chaired the task force, and we're auditing our results now. We find that here in HUD we have in fact over the last eighteen months cut the time at least in half, and in some cases sixty and seventy percent.

M: How were you able to do this?

I: We just went at it harder than anybody else has on a wider basis. We set up a whole series of joint program administrative groups. By the way, I think this is the key to it. Very often, administrative units, off to the side, go in and survey you; they study you; they criticize you; and then they expect you to want to accept their recommendations. That's the last thing in the world they [the group under study] want to do. But if you can make them a part of the operation and wherever possible put a program guy in charge of the particular study with some techinical expertise from the administrative side, then the initiative is there, you give them publicity, you give them credit for the individual improvement. And it's theirs; and they take pride in it and they'll move on it. We get enough credit because the system is improved, you see. The department is improved, and that takes care of my people. They get satisfaction out of having set in motion that kind of a department program. I think this accounts for a lot of the success we've had, but I can tell you, there's an awful lot more to be done.

M: When it comes to, say, a program like Rent Supplements, where do you fit into that?

I: Rent Supplement--I fit in from the standpoint that I participated in the early discussions leading up to the program, although not as much there as I did in Model Cities and some of the other areas. And then [I participated] in the budgeting, and in some elements of the administrative system for carrying it out. It'll vary from program to program, some we've actually designed systems where they didn't have much strength. In the case you're talking about

--FHA--they have more of that kind of strength than elsewhere in the department, so they did the bulk of it within their own resources.

M: Were there any peculiar management problems in regard to Rent Supplement?

I: Well, yes--I don't know if they're peculiar. In that whole multi-family area, one of the big problems is in getting sponsors that know how to manage. This has been a major problem, not peculiar to Rent Supplement, but it's caught up in it. In the beginning, it was hard to gear up, but once it got going, it moved very well, and it has really moved quite smoothly. It has not begun to have the administrative problems that we've had in other programs such as Neighborhood Centers and Model Cities.

M: What kind of problems are you finding in those areas--say Model Cities?

I: Model Cities first of all is staffed by highly dedicated people, but who are socially oriented, and was not balanced out by people with administrative background or management background. None of those people had ever operated a major program, never handled large sums of dollars, never handled large numbers of people. And basically it just wasn't planned out. Yet it was so complex and involved so many organizations and groups at three levels of government, more than any other place there should have been laid out who was responsible for what, on what kind of time scale, and how the dollars were to be allocated. None of this was done.

M: Can that be corrected?

I: Yes. It's late, and these first cities will never fully recover in my judgment, but most of the damage can be repaired, I think, if they move very, very rapidly on it. One of the problems under the Johnson

administration is well known of course. In one of my articles I speak of his looking upon the bill-signing ceremony as the culmination of the process of giving birth to a program. To overstate the case, the press release was self-executing. President Johnson and his immediate staff, you know, worked so hard on things that they just assumed that once it reaches that point, the rest of the action is going to flow, but it doesn't work that way. And I feel that a number of his programs could have and should have moved much better than they did, even with the impact of Viet Nam, had the departments put the kind of management effort that he expected them to put, and they should have put. The President shouldn't have to tell each agency, "Well, now, you manage this, you get it going, and you do this and you do that," They should do this, but they very often don't.

M: What can the White House do to correct that?

I: One of the problems is that there's overlapping as your programs get into different areas. It's not just within the control of the individual department heads or an individual agency. I think the White House ought to, with the help of the Bureau of the Budget, make clearer the division of responsibilities, and should make clearer the allocation of funds when programs are launched.

M: And then I suppose to give some supervision of that to be sure that it's carried out.

I: Yes, you can't do a lot of it, but in terms of seeing that certain major mile posts are met, I think this can be done.

M: You mentioned earlier that you thought that some of the earlier cities involved in the Model Cities Program would not recover. Would you

explain that statement?

I: Yes. I didn't mean that they were going to be failures. I meant that they wouldn't fully recover from that particular problem. As an example, the funding for the social services, the job training area, the education, the health services areas, involving HEW, Labor, and OEO, is very inadequate, very inadequte; and I--

M: In the sense that it's not enough?

I: Yes, nowhere near enough. There's very little of it, as a matter of fact, for Model Cities programs. And we have quite a lot of money on the fiscal side--Urban Renewal, for example, Public Housing. And that's going to recover. But the part of the program that draws upon these social services in other departments is so far behind the needs that I'm not sure it will recover. I think I said, "may not" recover fully--that's what I intended to say.

M: Let me give you a choice here since we're running out of time. I can either make another appointment with you and come back, or I'd like to perhaps wind up with a statement about the transition to Nixon. Do you have time to do that?

I: All right, fine. We can do that very quickly.

M: You're still here, and it's over twenty days since the Inauguration. What have you done to ease the transition?

I: I, of course, spent a great deal of time with Governor Romney in going over where the department stands, where the programs stand, and what our needs are. He asked me to stay on. However, I am moving over to the Bureau of the Budget as head of the Office of Executive Management. The transition has gone very smoothly here.

M: Why?

I: In large part I think because of what we understand to be an understanding between President Johnson and the incoming President Nixon--that there would be a smooth transition. Consequently, there were extensive discussions between Secretary Wood, who was Secretary the last three weeks, and Governor Romney. I had discussions with Romney and his intimate associates. I went to Detroit and spend a day with some of his people in Detroit. He had people down here. And it has gone very, very smoothly.

M: Has there been any slowing down of programs during this transition period?

I: Not until a couple of days ago when there was a very slight slowing down, most of which, however, we're taking care of tonight. There undoubtedly will be some which will be reviewed, and they'll be given different direction. I would assume that the incoming President will probably place different emphases, but the incoming group seems to support very broadly the objectives, the goals, of President Johnson. There is considerable difference of thinking with respect to how to carry some of them out, the execution phase, the administration of them. I think that's where the different focus is likely to be most noticeable.

M: Was there any hesitancy of the Democratic people involved in HUD to help the Republican people?

I: None. None whatsoever.

M: And what's the explanation of that?

I: I think in large part it's because they felt this is what President Johnson and Bob Weaver expected and wanted them to do. And Humphrey, by the way--Hubert Humphrey--also stressed this: that it was important

for the continuity of government. The election was over, the people had made the decision; and like it or not, our responsibility is to the people and not to ourselves and not to a particular party. So I think Johnson set the tone, and I think Humphrey and Weaver picked it up, and this has been the philosophy.

M: I wish to thank you for the time that you've given me.

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By DWIGHT A. INK

to the

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