INTERVIEW I

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INTERVIEWEE: CLARK KERR

INTERVIEWER: Janet Kerr-Tener

PLACE: Dr. Kerr's office, Institute of Industrial Relations, University of California, Berkeley, California

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K: I'd like to start by having you review your biographical highlights. In my own notebook I have about three pages of your biographical highlights alone. Maybe start briefly with your education and your academic posts.

CK: Yes, right. In terms of my education, I started out in what has now almost disappeared, one-room country schoolhouses, and I guess [it was] the best education I almost ever had. I had a very good teacher; one teacher taught five grades, and you're very fortunate if you have a good one. She loved us all as her own children, which was the important thing in those days, when you're very young. The school was at the end of Spook Lane and was then known as the Spook Lane School. Then after having gone to a really very poor high school in the county seat, Reading, Pennsylvania, I went to Swarthmore College and got my A.B. degree there. And then [I received] an M.A. at Stanford, Ph.D., University of California.

Then I returned to the University of California at the end of World War II as a faculty member. I was the founding head of the

Institute of Industrial Relations, which at that time was recently established on the initiative of Governor Earl Warren. Then I became, as a young faculty member, under some very special circumstances, the first chancellor of the Berkeley campus in its history.

K: Was that because the university was getting so very large?

CK: It was getting [large], yes, and the board of regents decided to decentralize it. There were then five campuses, and they decided that the two big ones, Berkeley and UCLA, [were] to have chancellors, and I was the first one. That was the result of something called the oath controversy at the University of California. It was a very bitter controversy. The regents tried to put on a special oath which the faculty opposed. And I became, as a very young faculty member, something of a leader of the faculty in connection with that, out of which they nominated me to be their first chancellor. That led later to becoming president of the university during the period of its greatest expansion in new campuses, one of which was dedicated by President Johnson. Then I had my troubles with a new governor of the state, one Ronald Reagan, in the course of which he won and I lost. Then I became a faculty member again.

K: Maybe a battle, but not the war?

CK: Well, actually, the things that the university did while I was chancellor at Berkeley and president of the university all lasted. I didn't.

K: Well, I think we all have opportunities to go on to other things.

CK: Yes. Well, I did.

K: You also held a number of government advisory posts prior to your involvement in the Johnson Administration. You were on the Regional War Labor Boards during the war and then you were on Eisenhower's Commission on Intergovernmental Relations, Eisenhower's Commission on National Goals. Then under Kennedy you joined the Advisory Committee on Labor-Management Policy.

CK: That's right. The same one then went on under President Johnson.

K: Till 1966, yes. Then also you were on President Kennedy's Railroad Emergency Board. I want to skip over a little bit to your public service before I go into your affiliations with the Johnson Administration specifically. You also were a member of the board of directors of the Center for Advanced Study in Behavioral Sciences, which is--

CK: I was one of the founding directors there.

K: --funded by the Ford Foundation. And the advisory panel for social science research of the National Science Foundation, and first vice chairman of the American Council on Education, is that right? Then you became chairman of the newly-appointed Carnegie Commission on Higher Education when that was first established, and I guess also chaired the organization that succeeded that panel, the Carnegie Council on Policy Studies in Higher Education. And then in between all of these things you did a lot of arbitration service.

CK: Yes, including last December. I was chairman of the arbitration board which arbitrated the biggest dispute in American history in terms of coverage, the postal dispute, covering six hundred thousand employees of the U.S. Postal Service.

K: I didn't realize this.

CK: That's probably not on my list there.

K: No. This is an older list.

Well, I wanted to also mention the publication of The Uses of the University, which was the outcome or the compilation of your Godkin Lectures at Harvard in 1963. That was the book that made a lot of people sit up and take notice, and as I understand--

CK: Well, I might say, you know, that book in many places was misunderstood. I was describing what had happened; I was not defending it. In fact, I made at the end some critical comments about what had gone on. But it was an effort to give a realistic view of what had happened to higher education, some of it good and some of it bad, and not the usual rhetoric of a college or university president about "everything is great and going to get better." It did become controversial. It also became something of a classic.

K: As I say, it has survived the controversy to become a classic. As I understand, it's still required reading for anyone who wants to have anything to do with higher education, in or within.

CK: Yes, probably so. Henry Rosousky, who was a very successful dean for a number of years at Harvard, dean of the college of letters and sciences, or science and arts, whatever they call it there, said as he became dean, about 1970, that Derek Bok, who was president at that time, suggested he read only one thing and that was The Uses of the University, if you wanted to know what the modern university was really like.

K: May I pause here just for a moment?

CK: Yes.

(Interruption)

K: In 1964 there were three appointments by President Johnson. One was I believe in March of 1964 you were appointed to the Public Advisory Committee on Trade Negotiations. Is that right?

CK: I don't know. I never did anything in connection with that one. I could have been. It's possible, but it was purely a paper thing.

K: Then in the summer of 1964 you were asked to join the task force on education which Johnson had established, and in I believe September of 1964 Johnson appointed you to the board of directors of the Communications Satellite Corporation. Then at your invitation Johnson came to California, one, for Charter Day at UCLA, and then, as you mentioned earlier, [for] the dedication of the Irvine campus. I believe at the Charter Day at UCLA he was granted an honorary degree and gave the major address.

CK: That's right. Yes.

K: These dealings in 1964 suggest that you had fairly cordial relations with the President. Is that correct?

CK: I'm trying to think when I first met him. I guess the first time I got to know him, aside from shaking his hand, was right after the assassination of President Kennedy. President Kennedy had this labor-management advisory committee made up mostly of people from labor and management but a couple of public, or so-called public members. We had a meeting just right after the assassination of President Kennedy

already scheduled, and he came into that meeting and made a statement which was rather short but very much to the point. He had these little cards. He would have outlined in longhand what he was going to say, and he had a little bunch of cards. And when he left the room after that was over--he, of course, had a great sense of presence and when he came in he dominated the meeting--Walter Reuther, who was a member of the group, turned to Henry Ford, and Walter said to Henry, loud enough for everybody around the table to hear, "You know, never in American history has anyone been so well prepared to be president of the United States as Lyndon Johnson." And Henry Ford said in return, "I agree." So that's how I really first got to know him.

K: That left a lasting impression.

CK: I think I would have met him a couple of times previously but not in a meeting where we were all participating.

He had been involved--and you don't have that in your letter--in establishing the East-West Center at the University of Hawaii. You're not familiar with that?

K: I know of it, but I didn't know--

CK: He was very, very central to having that established. I forget what year that was, but I think it was when he was vice president that that came along. At one point I think those of us involved did meet him and know what his ideas were in connection with it.

K: Well, I wanted to ask you a little bit about the 1964 task force on education, which was chaired by John Gardner, president of the Carnegie Corporation. This was one of--

CK: Didn't that begin really in the fall, about December of 1963, going in to January? Anyway, it was very early in 1964.

K: Oh, it was appointed earlier than I had indicated?

CK: I think it was quite early, yes.

K: I know during that year there was a lot of gearing up of different task forces.

CK: That's right, yes. Getting ready for the presidential campaign and his program.

K: There were about fifteen of them and certainly this was one of the most celebrated and extensively studied of the Johnson task forces.

CK: Right. Essentially it was put together by John Gardner.

K: Oh, was it?

CK: Yes, at least as I saw the process. He may have had some staff people working on it, but essentially put together by John Gardner, and we all agreed.

K: Are you saying that--?

CK: It was done rather quickly. I don't know, I think it was something like maybe a six-weeks or two-months time schedule, which didn't allow for much more than for John Gardner and his staff to put something together, and for all of us who had ideas to put them in, but then allowing John Gardner to do it. It was essentially Gardner's report.

K: Well, this group met in plenary session, what, four times?

CK: Yes, it was several times, yes.

K: Very, very busy people.

CK: Yes. Right.

K: Were ideas exchanged through correspondence or was this--?

CK: Yes. I didn't get to the--I was running an awfully heavy schedule about that time. But there were no real controversies within the group. It was a group of people that knew each other already and we all had--

K: Were like-minded.

CK: --pretty much the same ideas. And we all had confidence in John Gardner.

K: I think that's interesting, because I'm not aware that Gardner's dominance, both from an administrative point of view and maybe from a policy point of view, figured so heavily.

CK: Yes, because the Carnegie Corporation was the leading foundation in the area of education. John was one of the most respected people in the area, in the country.

K: So you were, as an individual, pretty much--?

CK: Not really. I went along with that. I was not centrally involved.

K: Okay. But you didn't take any stand against the major higher education proposals [inaudible]?

CK: No. As I remember, the whole thing was unanimous and I just can't remember that anybody disagreed about anything.

K: Okay. I wanted to ask you a little bit. Do you feel that, from your vantage point as a leader of higher education, that the task force's major higher education recommendations--I think aid to disadvantaged students, loans and grant, aid to developing colleges, and new community

university extension programs--did those priorities of the task force reflect the priorities of higher education?

CK: Yes, they reflected what higher education wanted. They pretty much reflected what became national policy, too.

K: All of those things were enacted under the 1965 Higher Education Act.

CK: Right. Yes.

K: I wanted to ask you just a little bit about the developing colleges proposal.

CK: Yes.

K: This proposal has been the subject of controversy since it was first implemented--

CK: That's right.

K: --and is up for reauthorization this year. An old issue is being resurrected, and that is was this proposal designed primarily and/or exclusively for traditionally black colleges?

CK: Yes. As I saw that develop, this is what happened. There was the desire to help the traditionally black colleges. They were, as I guess they've always been, in financial difficulty. They also represent very much the effort of the black community. The black community really built on its own its churches and its institutions of higher education. These institutions were threatened. As the United States moved toward integration it meant that a lot of the students who went to the black colleges, the better students and the best athletes would be tempted to go elsewhere. There were people at that time saying this marked the end of the historically black colleges and who worried

about whether they would survive or not. And it was important for many reasons for them to survive. They did take a segment of the black population that probably would not otherwise have gone to college, helped them with the remedial work that they often needed. And they were a legacy that the black community had sacrificed a lot to develop.

Now, the deal as I understand it that was really made was this: that half the money would go to historically black colleges, the other half would go to private white colleges--

K: Smaller.

CK: --usually also struggling, and largely drawn from the Methodist and Baptist churches.

K: Because they were in the South?

CK: See, the historically black colleges were mostly in the South. If there was going to be opposition to this program, it was more likely also to come from the South, and in the South both the Methodist and the Baptist communities had great political strength. Now, it was also important to preserve them, because they are another consequence of American history, represent another segment of American society. But the program was intended for historically black colleges, was politically possible only by taking care of an equivalent number of historically white colleges, and particularly those with religious backgrounds of importance in the South.

K: Very interesting.

CK: That's how I understood the thing factually. I'm sure it was dressed up differently from that.

K: Well, one of the questions that has arisen in the discussion recently is whether historically this was intended, because the legislation itself makes no reference to black colleges.

CK: Well, you couldn't--no, but it was intended that way, yes, clearly.

K: Okay. Now, there is quite a bit of evidence that during the fall of 1964, about the time the Gardner task force was finishing up its report I believe it submitted in November of 1964, you were regarded by the White House as a pretty serious contender for the secretaryship of HEW.

CK: Yes.

K: Were you ever approached?

CK: Yes. There was a meeting of this labor-management advisory committee sometime at the very end of November, more likely early December, of 1964, right after the election. The President met with our group and on the way out he said, "I'd like to talk with you. Somebody will come in and get you in a few minutes." So somebody came in to get me, and I was invited into the Oval Office. Hubert Humphrey was there, whom I had known for many years. The President said that he was going to do more for education than any president had ever done in American history, which he did do, incidentally. And he was going to make money available and programs available and that he'd looked around the country, and the way he talked, you know, "I've looked from the Pacific to the Atlantic and from the Gulf to Canada, and you're the man I want."

Now, as of that time problems had developed here at Berkeley. The then-chancellor, whom we were in the process of getting rid of as of that time, had put out the second most unfortunate ruling in the history of the University of California. The most unfortunate one was done by my predecessor, who put in this oath that gave rise to the oath controversy during the Joe McCarthy days. He thought he could get more money out of the state legislature if he required an oath from the faculty. Anyway, the then-chancellor had done away with what's called the Sather Gate tradition. It was an area where students can meet for any purpose at any time. A stupid thing to do, and it caused trouble, as it should have. And while this was done at the campus level, it quickly got into the press and to the governor's office and the board of regents, and I was in the midst of that, including eliminating this chancellor, which we did later in December.

K: Is this Chancellor [Edward] Strong?

CK: Chancellor Strong, yes. With no single dissent on the board, why, we eliminated him later in December.

I was in the midst of going through that whole process. So I said to the President, "Mr. President, I'll have to think about it, and I'll have to talk at least with the chairman." And he said, "What is there to think about? I've asked you as president of the United States and commander in chief of the armed services." We were all standing; we never sat down. I said, "Mr. President, I'll have to think about it and I'll have to talk with the chairman of my board and I'll have to talk with the governor of the state. There are some

difficulties in the University of California at the present time which I'm trying to straighten out, and I'd feel derelict in my responsibilities if I left the situation as it is now." And the President could be imperious. I've also seen him charming, but he could be imperious. He looked me up and down and he said, "You just go ahead and think." And he said to Hubert, "I've something to talk with you about," took him by the arm and walked out the French doors, and I was left standing there--

K: To think.

CK: --to think, in the middle of the Oval Office.

So I came back to California very troubled, because I was devoted to the University of California and I didn't want to leave it in a tough situation. Part of the background was that the year previously--by that time I had been six years chancellor at Berkeley and I was in my sixth year as president of the university and I felt that twelve years was enough. And a lot of things I had wanted to accomplish--well, Berkeley had come to be rated ahead of Harvard as the leading research institution, graduate training institution, in the nation. I got the new campuses under way; President Johnson had dedicated one in the spring of 1964, I think it was. I got them under way and I thought I'd want to go on and do some other things.

So the board had appointed a very special committee to meet with me and say they had stood behind me in some very difficult situations, which they really had. I had to come in and was involved as chancellor in trying to clean up some of the oath controversy problems and

had to take some stands they didn't like, and many, many other things. I'd gone through a process of opening up the campus so anybody could speak, including communists, which had caused major problems in the state. Nixon, who was running for governor, had attacked the university and had attacked me for having done that. And they'd stayed with me all the way through. They said to me that a lot of things were under way and that they wanted to have me stay on for several more years and see them through to completion. All the new campuses were under way. They were just really getting opened, and there were some other things.

So I had that very much in mind, that I had made a commitment to them to stay on for a while and that things at the moment were in bad shape. I talked with the chairman of the board and he thought it would be very, very difficult. I did talk with the Governor and he thought it would be very difficult. Now, unfortunately the Governor made some comment that led to some speculation in one of the Sacramento papers, the Sacramento Union, and I got a call from Valenti--

K: Jack Valenti.

CK: --Jack Valenti asking me to return the call. I knew how sensitive the White House was on stories of this sort, so I called back the number I was given. I thought it was Jack on the phone, and I said, "Jack, I'm returning your call." The reply I got was "this is the President speaking." I said, "Well, I wanted to call up. I assume you're calling about the report in the Sacramento Union." He said, "Yeah, I'm very disturbed about that." He said, "How did it get out? Whom

did you talk to?" And I said, "I only talked to two people, and one was Governor [Edmund 'Pat'] Brown." He said, "Well, you ought to know that he is the biggest blabbermouth in the state of California. You shouldn't have done it," and he hung up on me.

Anyway, by that time I didn't have a chance to tell him that in good conscience I couldn't take the job. He'd told me, you know, "You'll have more money to work with than anybody else has had in American history," et cetera. So, yes, it was offered to me, and then--it was awkward, I might say, for him because [Anthony] Celebrezze was still in and he didn't know he was being removed. And some of this speculation was embarrassing to Celebrezze. Anyway, the President then went on to John Gardner, who was an excellent appointment, in my judgment, and who did not have the same problems I had in moving myself out of the University of California. He was at Carnegie Foundation. Alan Piker was there and could easily take over. It was a quite different situation. I'm sure that made no difference to the President. But any job I've ever had I've tried to do it well and be responsible toward it.

K: So you were tempted?

CK: I might say I might have been somewhat myopic, the fact that I had lived so hard in the University of California and [was] so involved in it that I would think getting the University of California back into shape again, as we did for a while, until Reagan came along, was the most important thing I could do. I might say I did think once before that there was nobody else who was in a situation to do what I could

do at the University of California, straightening out this mess, and there are a lot of other good people who can be head of HEW.

I might say also that the way things finally turned out and the battles that I had then with Ronald Reagan, from my own point of view it would have been a lot better to have taken HEW and then seen what happened after that. Also I was under some attack from of course the left wing of the students and the right wing in California, and if I had wanted an easy way out, to take a job that everybody would say, "Well, that's a promotion," it would have been HEW.

K: But Johnson himself didn't seem concerned about the rumblings down here at Berkeley over--?

CK: No, not at all. Not at all, no. So at any rate, that's that story.

K: It's a very interesting one. I was not aware in my own research that you had been considered as seriously as you were.

CK: Yes, I was considered and offered. And I might say, it was on my mind very much that you're not supposed to say "no" to the president of the United States, although I might say that Kennedy had asked me to be secretary of labor when he first came in. Sarge Shriver came out to see me, to my home in the El Cerrito hills. I was then working on the master plan for higher education and I was working on new campuses, et cetera, and I recommended to him a combination, and the one which was taken, of [Arthur] Goldberg as secretary and [Willard] Wirtz as under secretary, which they did take. Arthur and Bill are both extremely able guys and I felt they could do a better job than I could. So I had gone through that process of having turned down a cabinet position

once before with Kennedy when he was new. Kennedy was asking [Glenn] Seaborg at the same time to be head of the Atomic Energy Commission. Seaborg was chancellor at Berkeley.

K: Yes, that's right.

CK: And in talking with the regents, the Seaborg offer was more important in those days and seemed much more important to the regents than secretary of labor.

K: Because of the federal research that was pending?

CK: Because, after all, Berkeley was terribly important in atomic energy, and Los Alamos and Livermore also. And to them also atomic energy was much more important than labor, because they didn't like the Department of Labor anyway, and they thought it was a little too much to take the president of the university and the chancellor of Berkeley. Seaborg wanted to go, and it was clearly more important for him to go to Washington and for me to stay at the University of California than the other way around, or for both of us to go. So I have on my record unfortunately that twice I've turned down presidents of the United States for cabinet positions.

K: I don't know whether you'll have another offer after that.

CK: Not from Ronald Reagan.

(Laughter)

K: Well, how was John Gardner's appointment viewed, received by higher education?

CK: Excellent. I think excellent. Everybody accepted that.

K: What about Harold Howe as commissioner of education?

CK: Excellent also. They were excellent appointments, both of them.

K: I wanted to ask you also about a proposal that wound its way through the University of California at San Francisco to you to the White House that was a proposal to establish a continuing education center in Bangkok for medical personnel, physicians and paramedics. What was your role in that? That was in 1965--

CK: It was really almost zero on that one. I was much more heavily involved in the one on Indonesia.

K: This I'm not aware of.

CK: You're not familiar with that?

K: No.

CK: That was actually establishing a medical school over there. That was a much bigger project and I was heavily involved in that one.

K: In Indonesia?

CK: Yes, right. I guess this was sort of before Johnson's time. And also in Indonesia we trained all I guess of the young economists who later came in to run the country when Sukarno was pushed out and Suharto came in. In the left wing press I was condemned as the devil behind the scenes who had trained these young economists. See, Sukarno had been going more in the communist direction, and when Suharto came in, a lot of the communists were Chinese. There were these terrible massacres, actually, of Chinese, some of whom may have been communists. And this young group of technocrats came in and really ran the country for a while, out of the University of California. So I was personally attacked. I was heavily involved in establishing that

program. [I was] personally attacked for having been involved in an anti-communist plot. It wasn't intended that way, but that's the way it turned out. But that was a much more important thing than the--

K: Than the Bangkok initiative.

CK: Yes. At about the same time I was marginally involved in establishing a program in Kanpur, an engineering school--Kanpur is west of Calcutta--there. We were involved in establishing a program in Chile. We had different programs like that around the world. None of them were as big as these two programs in Indonesia, which I did get heavily involved in.

K: Did the Bangkok initiative ever get off the ground? I know it got tied up in State Department for a while.

CK: I don't really know what happened to it. I don't know what happened to it.

K: Okay. At the time you left the presidency of the University of California in January of 1967--

CK: It left me, I didn't leave it.

K: --there were news stories or rumors circulating that you were going to be heading up the soon-to-be-announced Carnegie Commission on Higher Education. But at the same time there was also talk at the White House of finding you a government position. Would you have considered one at this point, a federal government position?

CK: Well, on the Carnegie thing I had been asked to be chairman of the commission, which I had informally said I would do. Then when I got fired by Reagan--see, I had already talked with George Shultz about

being the director, and George was somewhat interested. He was a good friend of mine; we'd worked together on various things. And George hadn't said yes or no; he was on the fence about it. So the Carnegie people said to me, "Well, in addition to just being chairman of it, why don't you also take on the directorship?" which I then did.

K: Which pretty much became a full-time thing.

CK: Now, in the White House there was some talk about making me an ambassador here, there or the other place, and I'd seen ambassadors all over the world in my travels, and I figured--I knew the Carnegie people well and respected them--that I'd rather do the Carnegie studies, which became quite important and had big impact on federal policy, than I would to be an ambassador one place or another. Several places were mentioned.

K: So you really weren't too tempted at that point in time?

CK: No, as compared with the Carnegie offer.

K: Now, the Carnegie Commission on Higher Education sponsored and published dozens--

CK: Several, yes.

K: --of studies on higher education, and [was] at that time and still is regarded as one of the most influential and authoritative sources of commentary on higher education. It was created by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching. What brought about the decision to create this special commission on higher education?

CK: Well, two things. One, Jim Conant, a former president of Harvard, had undertaken a series of studies on the American high school over a

period of years. They had been completed; there were several famous volumes that came out of that. And so they had been talking some about "well, maybe we ought to make a study of higher education." Then there was a specific proposal which had been drawn up by John Corson, whose name you may have heard, who was a consultant for Carnegie, which called for making a very special study of the financing needs of higher education. See, it was in the process of expanding rapidly, student aid and construction, et cetera. So when I was approached to be chairman, I said, "Well, you know, we really shouldn't study financing all by itself, because you have to talk about what are you financing. It ought to be on higher education generally." They readily agree to that. And this had already been settled when we were talking about my being director. So when I accepted the idea of being director, too, it wasn't just on the financing side. It has to be a general study of where higher education stood and what ought to be done about it.

K: Did you have any hand in selecting the membership of the commission which was [inaudible]?

CK: Well, they checked all the names with me. I never have felt that it was quite right for a chairman to pick the people. That doesn't seem right to me. I made a couple of suggestions. They had done a good job and I thought they had some good names. We did later on add, because they had not put on anybody from the state college system, and we put on Stan Heywood from Montana, and they were low on women, the usual thing, and blacks.

K: Katherine McBride was one of them.

CK: Well, Kathy McBride was on the original list.

K: Right.

CK: But I felt, as others did, that we ought to have at least another woman and we ought to have a couple of blacks. So they put on Ken Tollett, who was a black, and then they put on Pat [Patricia Roberts] Harris, who was black and a woman both. Then they put on Ken Keniston because there was nobody on the commission who sort of was new and represented the younger generation as Ken Keniston did. He had done a couple of studies on American youth and was very much of that generation. I belong to the group of those who reform step by step and he had a more apocalyptic view, something you might call a revelationary view of what happened, a wonderfully bright and wonderful person. But we felt we were missing that; we were all kind of establishment types, either conservative establishment or liberal establishment, where I put myself. So we felt that was missing and Ken Keniston came on. So I had more impact on who got added than I did on the original group. It was a terrific group, incidentally, and developed fantastic esprit de corps internally. We had a record of--I don't know how many meetings we had, maybe fifteen or twenty. We seldom had more than one or two people absent, when they were in Europe or somewhere like that. It was just absolutely fantastic.

K: Now, among the original group was William Friday of the University of North Carolina--?

CK: Yes, Bill Friday, Ted [Theodore] Hesburgh, Nate [Nathan] Pusey, Jim Perkins.

K: James Perkins, yes. David Henry?

CK: David Henry. Yes, it was a great group.

K: What did the Carnegie Commission sort of envision as its objectives?

CK: Well, we were particularly concerned at that stage of history in equality of opportunity. Our first report turned out to be in many ways our most important one. We recommended what--see, at that time all of higher education was organized to get lump sum grants to institutions. And our people were all establishment-type. David Henry had headed every single [organization], you know, American Council of Education, Land Grant Association, Association of Urban Universities and so forth and so on. We talked about it and decided that was the wrong way to go, and so we stood, our group all by itself with one exception I'll come to, against the lump sum grants. We were doubtful the government would do that. We weren't sure how you'd decide what the lump sum grant was going to be. We thought politically it was very, very vulnerable to give three thousand institutions lump sums. Suppose a war came along or something like that and cut it out? We recommended giving to the students. And you know, when the Congress went through this last time, they cut the defense budget of the President of the United States in a drastic way. They didn't cut student aid hardly at all, because it had a constituency.

We also didn't like to see the system federalized. We were worried about giving lump sums to Catholic and Protestant institutions.

We had a whole lot of reasons, but these presidents and their different associations, they wanted the lump sum coming to them, and they said if you could give it to the students, students are going to control the institution, which wasn't true. They control it anyway as a market to some extent, or influence it. So with one exception we stood all by ourselves on that approach, which became federal policy and are now called the Pell grants.

Now, the one other group was a group within the federal government headed up by Alice Rivlin.

K: Rivlin, right.

CK: She was assistant secretary of HEW for research or program or--

K: She became the assistant secretary of HEW. I think at the time she headed up research and evaluation [deputy assistant secretary for program coordination].

CK: For research and evaluation, yes. But Alice headed up a commission within the federal government and quite independently. I mean, this was by the people who hated us for what we did, and that was a lot of people at the time. They claimed there was collusion between Alice's group, representing the administration, and my commission. Actually, we hardly knew each other, as a matter of fact. We were both economists and both had a certain belief in relying on the market where you can rather than upon institutions.

K: I suspect that the source of wondering about possible collusion came as a result of looking and comparing the quality and equality reports of the Carnegie Commission, which came out in December of 1968, and

Alice Rivlin's report, which came out about a year later. The priorities were identical. Levels of funding varied somewhat, but priority on student aid, on graduate education and research funding, and possibly cost of education allowances.

CK: Right. It was very much the same. And we had had one meeting between members of her group and I guess with our whole commission to talk over what we were doing. But they already had their ideas pretty well in mind and we had our ideas pretty well in mind, and they were just absolutely parallel. But to the people who were committed, the ACE was committed, the Association of Jesuit Colleges was committed, every association was committed to the lump sum and they signed in blood that nobody would retract. We were then the [bad guys]. Alice and her group were not so bad; they were in the federal government and they represented an administration that was strong for equality of opportunity. These guys wanted to save their institutions; they weren't interested in equality of opportunity. See, we want so to give the money to low income people. We thought this did more for the country. We weren't trying to save institutions, we were trying to save the country.

Anyway, she could not be charged with treason; she was in an administration committed to equality of opportunity. We were all from higher education and we were accused of treason. Alan Piker was almost backed up in a corner, because he attended all our meetings--as four people did from Carnegie; we invited them to participate--and he agreed with what we were doing, but he was the person who financed it.

He was backed up in a corner, and he thought he was going to be slugged by the head of one of the most prominent institutions of higher education in the United States, that's how strong the feeling was.

K: Well, there was a battle within the Johnson Administration over this same issue in 1966-67. As a result of the fight, William Friday headed up an outside task force [which] recommended these lump sum grants. I guess Lee A. DuBridge, Fred Harrington--

CK: Bill Friday, however, was a member of our group, and the meeting at which we finally came to agreement--there were about eight meetings on this--was at Chapel Hill. He was our host. He has been talking to me on the phone recently. This is his last year before he leaves. He wants a plaque to be put up in the building or on the building where we met, where this historic action was taken to bring greater equality of opportunity for all young Americans through this system of grants based on need. So Bill Friday was on the other side and he came around, as did most of the members of our group. They were all committed through their associations to this other approach, but the more we talked about it the more we became convinced it was bad policy for the nation and for higher education and we were unanimous. As a matter of fact, the fact that we were attacked so hard, all of us, was one of the things that united our group and we've stayed together as each other's best friends ever since.

K: Well, this is so interesting to hear it from the perspective of the Carnegie Commission, because William Friday's task force proposal for

institutional aid grants found a very strong ally in Joseph Califano and James Gaither. In fact, Califano presented the idea in the fall of--

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K: Califano told Johnson that his record of support for education would be unparalleled in human history. And I'm quoting the memo from--

CK: Just let me say it was more unparalleled because of what happened, dealing on our basis--and it tied in with the Johnson Administration point of view, which was equality of opportunity. And the way we did it, equality of opportunity was better for other reasons, but also better for equality of opportunity. How were the institutions going to use that money? They weren't necessarily going to use it to bring poor kids to college.

K: No. I think they, from the evidence that I've looked at, clearly had in mind shoring up faltering sources of operating grants, operating money. But John Gardner, Harold Howe, and the BOB director, Budget director Charles Schultze, and Wilbur Cohen, who was assistant secretary of HEW, opposed Califano and Gaither on this right down to the last--

CK: Really? Well, now, Alice must have also.

K: She did. Her study came a year later, as a result of this fight within the White House.

CK: Oh, you mean on the Friday thing. I see. You know, I never knew that. I knew there was controversy, but I didn't know who was on which side.

K: Well, as a result of the fight between the White House and HEW, Alice Rivlin's panel was created to study the issue, and her report--

CK: That's how she came about. I see.

K: --your report and her report put an end to talk about it in the White House in 1968.

CK: Yes. And then it got picked up by [John] Brademas and [Edward] Kennedy and--

K: And Edith Green.

CK: Well, no, Edith Green never came over.

K: No. She was--

CK: No, she came over at the very end. She shifted at the very end. And I might say Edith had been the one who had been obtained by all organized higher education to put in the Green bill, and then [George] Miller, from Alameda County here, had put in his on science. Hers was in the direction of small colleges. Edith felt that she had been [betrayed]. When ACE and the others saw they couldn't make it their way, they decided to support our proposal rather than nothing. And she felt terribly betrayed by organized higher education when they switched from her to us. As a matter of fact, at the end when she was still trying to save her bill--

K: This was over the 1972 education amendments.

CK: This was again the 1972. She was calling me for information and we supplied her with information that she wanted from us to support her bill. She said she would not take anything any longer from organized higher education. She wouldn't even ask them. And she couldn't get

as fast and as good figures from the federal government as she got from us. So she ended up very disappointed in higher education having made up its mind to do something which was not feasible, you know, getting her out on the limb--

K: Which they did.

CK: --and then abandoning her. And we'd always opposed her bill. I used to go in to see her whenever I was in Washington, to be friendly, because I respected her very, very much.

My one biggest problem, aside from [that], sitting across the desk from her, she had a little dog that would come around and I would be sitting there holding my legs up in the air because of the little dog. I didn't know what its intentions were. (Laughter) So I was twice handicapped talking with Edith, who was our opponent, and then watching for this little dog.

But anyway, Edith had a lot of respect for us because we'd always been frank and open with her, and yet at the same time helpful to her. But I think one of the reasons she left Congress was disappointment at what had happened.

K: Well, I know the higher education associations which favored the lump sum approach did think at the beginning, at the outset of discussion over this in 1972 that they could get it through her. But as it turned out, it didn't work out that way. You were also on--

CK: See, we had [Jacob] Javits. We were very careful. The bill that was put in was put in at the same time in the House and in the Senate, and in both places with bipartisan support. In the Senate it was Kennedy,

Javits, and was it [Robert] Stafford from Vermont at that time? Anyway, somebody from Vermont. And in the House it was [Ogden Rogers] "Brownie" Reid and John Brademas, [those] were the two major sponsors, Republican and Democrat.

K: Did the Carnegie Commission's views on this equal opportunity versus lump sum grants [controversy] reflect--were those views accepted by the Nixon Administration, too?

CK: Yes. It came to be--let me say just one thing about organized higher education. I spent only a little time in Washington talking with people. Jack Morse, who had worked once for Edith Green and who was the major person carrying this, made a comment once. He said, "You know, you end up in Washington two days and you see more important people than I see in a year. It isn't fair!" was his comment. Now, they were working through Edith, you know; well, say, working through the education committees. That isn't where the power is, and I learned that a long time ago in Sacramento. It didn't take long to learn it, that you dealt with the governor and you dealt with the department of finance and you dealt with the appropriation committees and so forth and so on. You were very polite to the education [committee] people but they didn't have that much weight. So there was some truth to that.

Now, when it came to the Nixon Administration--see, by that time there had been a lot of discussion; this had been going on for several years. And had Humphrey been elected--that gets into the Vietnam War, in which I was involved, including with the President and Hubert--he

would have embraced this thing right away. It would have been in 1969 rather than happening in 1972. I dealt with Pat Moynihan in the White House and with George Shultz, George in OMB and Pat as an assistant to the President. I never got the impression that Nixon was interested one way or the other. Higher education was not anything of great importance to him, and he and I had had trouble, as I mentioned before, when he was running for governor. I'd had trouble with him previous to that when I was head of this Institute of Industrial Relations when he was a young congressman and he thought that collective bargaining was the work of the communists. So I had no contact there, but I did know Pat well and I knew George well. They were the ones who saw through it--see, by that time it had gone pretty well through Congress and had been accepted by higher [education]. Higher education deserted Edith along the way and joined in with us. So it was in the process.

K: So the Nixon Administration--

CK: It really was a carryover. This emphasis on equality of opportunity was a carryover from the Johnson Administration, with bipartisan support in the Congress. And then Pat Moynihan was interested and George Shultz was interested, and they were both my good friends, and so I worked with them. And from neither of them did I ever get any impression that the President cared one way or another. He did give a speech, which I presumed Pat had drafted for him, which was a good speech.

K: I believe you're right.

CK: But that's the only time that his name ever came up. It was Pat and George who picked up something which had gone through several years of discussion by that time and in which, by that time, there really wasn't--I don't know what the vote would have been in Congress, but I don't remember that it made any big controversy.

K: No. In fact, I think it was really played out in conference committee.

CK: It was not an issue, really.

K: No. I think in fact there was sort of a coalition of people who opposed Edith Green on any kind of bloc grants and direct aid and managed to--

CK: The bloc grant thing by that time--by 1972 when the amendments were passed--was not an issue.

K: Well, it had been pretty much fought out in the press in 1970. The associations came out with all sorts of things during the election, immediately after the election of Nixon to try to influence him. And then there was a fight in 1970 over proposed amendments, and the amendments were--

CK: Held over.

K: Yes. And then by the time it came around in 1971-72, there was sort of a last minute effort I guess on the part of higher education through Edith Green--

CK: To still get the bloc grants?

K: But it--

CK: When the vote came up I don't remember--

K: No, it wasn't a major issue at that point. It came out before then.

CK: I really thought what organized higher education tried to do was stupid. I really couldn't see Congress deciding forever after they were going to start giving bloc grants to institutions. How were they going to pick those institutions?

K: Well, this was one of the objections of Gardner, et al, during the Johnson Administration. This is going to be another impacted areas program with no end to it.

CK: Yes. Right. That is right. And you're giving [grants to] the institutions, regardless of what they do. Also then to what extent was the federal government, when some institutions started misusing the money, going to start coming in and controlling and nationalizing our system, public and private? What were the states going to do when the federal government started giving those lump sum grants? Anybody in Congress could see the states would start dropping their appropriations and the federal government would just take [to] issuing a blank check ever after. I just thought it was really, really stupid, and I just couldn't imagine any appropriation committee in Congress--and there's some able people on those committees and able staffs--establishing a precedent that they were going to give bloc grants to all private and public institutions that called themselves higher education in the United States. And the states--and what about private donors? Who's going to give money when the federal government is standing there? So anyway. . . . And that's the way it came out.

K: That's very interesting. I want to switch gears just a little bit and

ask you about your role as chairman of the National Committee for Political Settlement in Vietnam, which was established in early 1968.

CK: 1967. 1966 I think it was established; I became involved in 1967. It was called initially Negotiation Now. Then there were no negotiations and our first effort was to get negotiations. Then when the President on March 28 or 30 of 1968 [March 31] said there would be negotiations, we changed our [name to] Committee for a Political Settlement.

I was brought in through Norman Cousins, who was then head of the Saturday Review. I learned later on that he had the practice of establishing something, usually very good things, and then [he would] quietly disappear. All of a sudden I found myself chairman, I didn't know quite how. But it was Norman Cousins who had begun it along with some of his friends. And I had joined it.

K: Pat Moynihan was on it.

CK: Pat was on, yes, Pat Moynihan.

K: And Walter Reuther.

CK: Yes, and Walter Reuther, right. Walter was about the only trade union leader of note that we could get. Pat and Walter were both vice chairmen of it. Then there became this committee for a political settlement as compared with a military settlement. I had an interest in that. A friend of mine, my college roommate at Swarthmore, a fellow member of the Society of Friends, headed up a hospital in a place called Quang Ngai on the north central coast, run by the Quakers, which was putting arms and legs on people and curing napalm burns, asking no questions on whose side they were. As a matter of

fact, when the North Vietnamese came in, the work they were doing was so essential they never lost one minute's work. The North Vietnamese knew about it; it was taken over by the North Vietnamese and the Quakers were forced out later on, but I mean it was so essential what they were doing that there was never one minute lost. Then I had a son who worked with the Quakers out there in the American Friends Service Committee, so I had this background or interest in what was going on. So anyway, I became the chairman.

Most of the peace movements at the time were anti-American. We were a pro-American but antiwar group. Our program depended upon what the issues were. We talked about negotiations before there were negotiations. We wanted to stop the bombing of the North, which turned out to be counterproductive anyway, as the bombing had been in Germany. Anybody who read the reports on the bombing of Germany knew it just made the local population more determined to work hard. We favored elections. It was too bad we didn't hold them. They were sabotaged by [Henry] Kissinger. I was over there once with a group and Big [Duong Van] Minh had said he would run; he told us he would run under certain conditions, which we took back. Kissinger didn't want elections, but we would have been so much better off with Big Minh, who would have worked out some kind of an arrangement with the Viet Cong, not the North Vietnamese.

We wanted elections. We wanted land reform. As a matter of fact, much too late to do any good, one of our members, a man by the name of Roy Prosterman from the University of Washington, drew up

what became the land reform program. The military always supported it. It was the State Department that kept saying, "You can't impose our system on them." Well, what the hell, we were napalming everybody. And the land reform program that was put in at the very last years of the American participation there was so popular the communists have not been able to do away with it. The South feeds itself and exports with the land reform, and the North goes hungry.

So we were on land reform, we were on elections. The last thing I ever wrote and sent to George Shultz turned out to be very prophetic, about how one of these days the North Vietnamese were going to come into the Highlands [and] the Highlands would collapse. They would come down and start breaking the roads--the Highlands, you know, and the coast are just a few miles apart--and there would be panic and that would be the end. It turned out to be exactly that way.

Anyway, during the Johnson time we saw him several times. Walter would go with me, Walter Reuther, because he knew the President very, very well. We were trying to get Johnson to--one of the main things we were saying. . . . See, there was a Christmas cease-fire and there was a Tet cease-fire, and one of the things we always talked to him about each Christmas, whatever two or three Christmases in there, [was to] say we would combine the two, fire only if fired upon. We thought if that lasted long enough it would be harder to start it up again. You would get the momentum of peace. Walter and I were particularly arguing this with him in the fall, in November and December of 1967, because 1968 was an election year. Then if the war started up again

after that period of time, that the other side would have started it. It depended on when Tet [was]. You know, [it] came at different times. It would have been about six weeks in there. And toward the end of that period we would say, "Well, we aren't going to fire, we'd still like to talk." This would have gotten negotiations going during that period, which the President did have to do in the end of March anyway. And then if it were broken, it would be broken by them, you see, and he would have been a person who--

K: Had the upper ground morally at least.

CK: Yes, we would have had a better moral stance for it. Our estimate was that it was best for the United States to get out under the best possible circumstances, which we thought included land reform and an election which Big Minh would have won. He was a potential candidate the whole way through; he was a very popular guy. And that there would be negotiations with the Viet Cong, which obviously had somewhat different interests than the group in the North. In fact, the northern people knocked the Viet Cong out completely and just put their people in to run it. And the South and the North have had historically some difficulty. Well, we wanted to see land reform and democracy and a peaceful settlement, and then we would move on out even if the war kept on going. I think Nixon and Kissinger used the war for their own internal purposes, let me say.

K: What do you mean?

CK: Well, you see, they didn't come out with anything, they saved it for the 1972 election. That's a harsh thing to say, but I was dealing

with Henry a lot during that period of time. George by that time was over in Treasury, although he was in OMB some of the time [inaudible] first, after Labor.

But then when the President decided not to run, we began working with Hubert; Walter and I did in particular. And he accepted our program at an evening meeting--Norman Cousins did attend--in Watergate, where Hubert lived, and he told Norman, "Get me a speech ready on this." Norman was a great speech writer. [Inaudible] came up with it and then the President stopped it.

Then we hit Chicago. The longest phone call in my life was about two hours, with Walter and myself on one end of the line and Hubert still in Washington, and Hubert once again said he'd take our program. Eventually he took our program in Salt Lake City something like October 30, and the program almost came out. It was a little less than we were talking about, but essentially we almost had won. His campaign the last week just boomed like that, and Salt Lake City was the turning point.

And Larry O'Brien, we had a meeting with Larry, who was there, and this fellow [William] Welsh, who was--whatever his first name was--an assistant to Hubert, and some of the other guys including Walter Mondale. And Larry said, "Yes, I was about ready to pack my bags and then you two fellows put this convention together." Then there were two--or three--phone calls from the Ranch and Hubert backed off again. We would say, "But you're running for president of the United States." Hubert was saying, "But I'm the vice president.

Johnson always has been very good to me. I was on the left wing of the Democratic Party and Johnson gave me good advice. When he was Senate leader, he gave me good appointments. He asked me to be his vice president." He was very, very decent about it.

The President by that time had become emotionally involved in Vietnam. On domestic programs I considered him one of the greatest presidents in American history. In terms of domestic programs I'd probably rate Roosevelt number one and Johnson number two. On the Vietnam War, which he inherited, he got emotionally involved. Walter and I were in there a couple of times and we went in to talk about peace, and my God, we went out shaking our heads and thinking the atomic bomb was going to be dropped upon Hanoi. One time he took us over to show us the picture of his son-in-law, who was there in the marines in Danang. One time he played for us a cassette which had been flown in from Danang, you know, what had happened that particular day. And he got all emotionally involved in it, though it was not his war. My interpretation was, although he had said negotiations, he didn't want Hubert to seem to repudiate him.

Anyway, Hubert almost won and I still think if Johnson had been willing to let Hubert move more freely, that Hubert would have been elected and the war would have been over. You see, a lot of people got killed between January 1969 and 1972. The peace thing I think was held in order to say we got peace, you remember, just before the election in 1972. Then the thing of course went on until 1975 before

Saigon fell, because it wasn't kind of a complete settlement even then.

I think that President Johnson just got too emotionally attached to a war which wasn't his. That became such an issue in the United States. I was at the Hilton--the old Stevens--the night when that mass of people all night long were yelling these obscene things about Johnson, all night long, let me tell you, and raiding rooms, even raided Gene McCarthy's rooms once. Just terrible. But his domestic record made him clearly one of the greatest presidents in American history. This war, which most people now consider to have been a mistake and which had begun developing before he came along, ended up on his record, and he just got too personally involved in the daily details of what went on.

K: Did he seem at all to be hearing what you were saying when you met with him?

CK: Well, Johnson was an extremely bright person, extremely bright, very, very sharp, always in command of any situation he was in. He would always listen to us in a friendly way and thank us and seemed to respect both of us, but his mind would seem to be made up.

K: Do you feel that this--?

CK: He was shaken. I might say one thing which seemed absolutely clear to me was that he was really shaken by the Tet offensive, which we really won in a military way because the Tet offensive by the Viet Cong didn't work in 1968. They did get to the Embassy grounds, but they lost an awful lot of people. But it was a tremendous propaganda

victory in the United States because they said, "My God, our Embassy was almost taken in Saigon!" That was the end of American public support.

He several times told us that he had been promised by the Joint Chiefs of Staff and by [William] Westmoreland that we were winning the war, in the courses of our conversations. And so what we were talking with him about did not seem to him to be necessary because we were winning the war. We weren't winning the war. I think he was terribly let down by our military leaders. Now it turns out that the CIA advice was good advice and was much more cautious than the advice that was coming from the military. It was coming also, I might say, from the embassy. I dealt a fair amount with [Ellsworth] Bunker. He was an extremely polite person, but I never got the impression that he took as strong a hand as he might have in giving good advice.

So the CIA reports were correct and the military reports were wrong, and he was taking the military reports. When he saw that the American public--he was very quick and perceptive. See, Tet was in February, and by the end of March he had said he wouldn't run again. That's how quickly he sized up how America was going, very, very shrewd of him to do it. And my sense was he felt he'd been let down by his own military. They had promised him we were winning, particularly Westmoreland, [who] in the late summer and early fall of 1967 came back to the United States, August, September, October somewhere in there, to make this promise. And that he'd been let down by his own people, that he could not recover from having accepted their bad

advice, and he was shrewd enough to know what had happened and decisive enough to make his decision. So his attitude toward us along the way was, look, what you're saying is very nice and interesting, but is it necessary because the military said we're going to win and the United States has never lost a war. But then when he made up his mind he couldn't win, he should have let I think Hubert run his own campaign.

K: That's a fascinating story. There was so much talk and criticism in Congress about the effect, particularly beginning in 1966-67, of the war on funding for domestic programs, including education. Did that hurt those programs?

CK: I think it did, because he tried to have guns and butter, which is exactly what Reagan is trying to have now, too. Now, Johnson did not reduce the taxes the way Reagan did, but he tried to have more butter and more guns. Johnson tried to keep the butter and have more guns, and Reagan has tried to have more butter and more guns at the same time, and from the very beginning almost every economist in the country has said that it's absolutely impossible. We're running these terrible deficits with all the consequences, and some day there's going to be hell to pay from the economic program. But it's a temptation for a president to feel he can fight a hot war or a cold war without hurting anybody, and that's very hard to do. It would have been better if he would have faced up to the domestic costs.

K: Was Johnson able to deliver what he had promised in education in spite of the war?

CK: Yes, I think he delivered. Either he delivered or it was delivered in the next administration, but begun by him, yes.

K: And his legacy still stands for the most part.

CK: Oh, sure. And I think over a period of time the view of him will be more balanced, very positive on the domestic side, except from the point of view of the far right wing. You know, after all, moderate Republicans are not trying to turn back affirmative action and all the rest of it. Some of the right wing reactionaries would like to. No, I think the domestic program will stand. It's made a better America. Some things have been cut back. I was just walking up Telegraph Avenue this morning with people sleeping in the doorways; you could be in Calcutta. But the basic domestic program I think will last really forever. [It] was a major contribution to the United States, the second best domestic program, as I said before, after Franklin Roosevelt, and that's saying quite a lot. And I don't know whom I'd rate as third. I'm talking about domestic economic programs, which isn't to say Lincoln with the emancipation. I'd put that in a somewhat different category.

The Vietnam War went on too long and was too costly. I'm just absolutely sure if Hubert had been elected in 1968 the war would have been over in 1969. In fact, in January 1969, the day after the inauguration, I was in seeing Henry Kissinger, and Henry said, "I'm going to put your program into effect." See, [Nelson] Rockefeller had been one of our endorsers at one point, and Kissinger worked with Rockefeller. And I said, "Suppose the war is still going on six

months from now and you haven't done it. What would you expect our group to do?" He said, "I'd expect you to attack me."

K: Did you agree?

CK: And at some point there was some decision that the war, I think, was a political asset, and I don't think it was made by Kissinger. Save it. If you're going to end it, save it till closer to the election. It was saved for the fall of 1972.

K: Very interesting, and sad.

CK: Sad, really sad. Let me say on this Vietnam thing, I didn't meet any evil people at all. But once a big country is involved in a war, people would say to me, both in the Johnson and the Nixon Administrations--I never talked with Nixon; I was not in a situation to do so--but the people around him [would tell me], "What you say is true. But to make the move that you're talking about, it is not a good time to do it." They didn't want to face up to the reversal of a policy and a big power folding against what was a little country, although becoming a big military power.

K: It's one of the largest armies in the world.

CK: So what started with kind of good reasons--we had this misapprehension of a monolithic communist conspiracy around the world. Anybody who knows history would have known that the Chinese and the Russians have never been great friends. Anybody would also know that Mao was the one who fought the Russian domination of the Chinese Communist Party. He had some terrible battles kicking them out. He wanted to lead the peasants, which was absolutely against what Marx had said; Marx said

it was the workers. But we had the idea of a worldwide communist conspiracy and so we looked upon Vietnam as part of that conspiracy.

Now, Ho Chi Minh at one point did make some gestures toward the United States. He could have been a Tito. Even that early we could have seen that the Chinese, who now hate the Russians in Vietnam, you know, and are fighting Vietnam every now and then on the border, could be split off from the Russians. But we had this idea of a monolith. So what we did to stop the monolith from expanding made sense in a global way, but it was a misperception of the actual situation. First of all, Ho Chi Minh, as I say, could have been Tito. China could have been broken away from Russia. And so it was just one of those historic errors.

But once in it--and, you know, I talked with Westmoreland, I talked with [Creighton] Abrams, all these different people. Well, not Westmoreland, he was kind of a true believer. But other people would acknowledge, "Well, things aren't going quite the way they should and we ought to be thinking of some way [out], but now is not a good time." And so they procrastinated. I think Johnson was somewhat that way and particularly when he was promised by the military he could have a victory. So once you get into those things it's just awfully hard for a great big power to pull out and for a president to say, "Well, I'm going to be the first president who didn't win the war." There were chances not to lose the war; there were no chances to win it. But the President didn't win the war and didn't nail that coon-skin to the wall. That's a very, very tough thing. And my good

friend George Shultz was saying, "You know, I agree with you. From what I hear your analysis is correct," but he would always have some argument, "This is not a good time to make the move." And there would always be some good arguments, somebody had just made a raid on Danang or something like that, public opinion won't stand for it.

Well, let me say one other thing. At one point when--I don't know when this would have been, probably some time in the fall of 1967--Walter Reuther and I were seeing the President and this is when he was trying to make up his mind what to do and when Westmoreland came back. He said to us, "There is a lot to what you say, but I can't get the Joint Chiefs of Staff to agree." And Ralph Bunche, who was doing some work, he was in the United Nations at that time--we were on the Rockefeller Foundation together and I had known him anyway in other ways--told me once that he had been down seeing the President. U Thant had made some proposals, I forget what they were, and he had been working on it. But the President said very much the same thing to Ralph. To us he said something like "the Joint Chiefs of Staff won't agree." Ralph once said, "The most surprising and despairing statement I've ever heard from a president of the United States was"--I'm quoting him now--"'the Joint Chiefs of Staff won't let me do it.'" Which implies that--obviously the president could do it--but you don't want to run up against the Joint Chiefs of Staff with all the influence that they can disseminate out across the nation.

So to what extent that was a factor in his mind along the way [I don't know]. Because in the fall of 1967 he obviously was thinking

about some other approach. The Joint Chiefs were against it and Westmoreland came back here to make him a promise. Then by that time he somehow got himself--he was open, Walter and I both thought, at that time. But he got himself committed to winning it, as Westmoreland promised he could win and then [came] the Tet offensive. So it was a kind of a tragedy, a brilliant man who probably had as good a feel of American politics as anybody in our history, wanted to do good things. And I look upon it as a tragedy.

But if I were looking at a crucial time, I would look at the late summer and early fall of 1967, when the military wanted to go ahead and said they could win, and then getting him committed to a strategy of winning. He, after all, was thinking he was going to be running the next year. What did he run on, did he run on a program to get peace, as we were recommending, or a program of having won the war? He got himself committed to winning.

Then the summer of 1968, by which time he was a person on the way out and kind of bitterly disappointed in what had happened, and he didn't give Hubert the chance to run on his own. Those are two of the things which I think are very important in that whole development and in what's happened [since]. If Hubert had won there wouldn't have been a Nixon and a lot of things wouldn't have happened. So. . . .

How do we stand?

K: Oh, beautiful.

CK: Have we covered [everything]? I've probably given you more detail than you want.

K: All my questions, yes, we've covered them all.

CK: We've answered your questions?

K: Yes. Thank you.

End of Tape 1 of 1 and Interview I

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