INTERVIEWEE: Eugene M. Locke

INTERVIEWER: David G. McComb

DATE: May 16, 1969

M: This is an interview with Mr. Eugene M. Locke. I am in his offices on the thirty-six floor of the Republic National Bank Tower in Dallas, Texas. The date is May 16, 1969, and my name is David McComb.

First of all, Mr. Locke, for the record, I'd like to know a little bit about your background, where you were born, when, and where did you get your education?

L: I was born in Dallas, Texas on January 6, 1918. I went to the public schools in Dallas, graduated from North Dallas High School, then took a B.A. degree from the University of Texas and an LL.B. degree from Yale Law School.

M: From what I've read in the newspaper clippings, you made some friends at the Yale Law School that later had some political connection, such as Sarge Shriver, is that right?

L: Yes, I was one of that group that was really a part of what they call Corby Court, which was sort of a law fraternity, a private fraternity at the law school. It was publicized in Life Magazine, and that included Sarge Shriver. It also included Gerry Ford, the minority leader; it included Peter Dominick, who is a Senator; it included Justice Potter Stewart and Justice Whizzer [Byron] White. It included the present Secretary of the Army, and the President's special representative to the Viet Nam war conference, Deputy Secretary of National Defense. It included a man who was formerly, I believe, head of the Federal Aeronautics Administration, a fellow named Jeeb (Najeeb) Halaby. It included -- well, that's quite a few.

M: Did you maintain contact with these people all the time?

L: Some of them. I've seen Gerry Ford several times. As a matter of fact, I sat next to his wife at a Yale alumni law banquet in New Haven a few years ago. I was at that time vice-president of the alumni association, nation-wide, and he was the principal speaker. I've seen Peter Dominick from time to time. Our law firm has had some relations with their law firm in Denver--Holand and Hart. Also, Peter visited me in Viet Nam--he didn't visit me really, he was coming to see Viet Nam as Senator, but he happened to stay at my house when I was over there. I ran into Sarge Shriver twice in Washington--once, I just happened to run into him and then the second time, we were present together to say goodbye to Dean Rusk when they gave him a little party as Secretary of State. Sarge Shriver, at the time, was Ambassador to France and I had already resigned and was back here. Well, I've seen, of course, both of the Justices of the Supreme Court. I don't see any of these people on a very regular or continuous basis, but through the years I guess I've seen Cy Vance, I've seen Stan Resor of the military-- I guess I've seen them all at one time or another.

M: After graduation from Yale, then you went to work, according to the information I have, for OPA briefly.

L: Yes, before the war.

M: And then into the Navy?

L: I was in Washington and then I went into the Navy. That's right.

M: And I assume you were in the Navy until '45 or '46?

L: I was mustered out of the Navy, oh, I forget whether it was October 1 or November 1. It was the fall of 1945 in Philadelphia.

M: And then what did you do? Come back to Dallas and begin work as a lawyer?

L: Yes.

M: And shortly went into the firm which is now Locke, Purnell, Boren, Laney & Neely.

L: That's right.

M: And then, I assume, that you have had some connection with Locke-Purnell ever since?

L: Yes.

M: With brief leaves of absence, and so forth?

L: Yes.

M: Well, now, I need to know when you got interested in politics. When did that come in?

L: Well, I knew John Connally quite well when we were at the University of Texas, and I had kept up with John to some extent through the years. I saw him in Washington--we were up there at the same time when I was at the OPA, and I think he had just joined the Navy. After the war I was at one time president of the Texas Independent Producers and Royalty Owners Association, and John was the right-hand man of Sid Richardson. We had some business relations together. We were in Washington together and other places. Also, I had seen him, not on any regular basis, but just very occasionally over the years.

I had known the President, I guess, when I was doing work in Washington, oh, back in the 50's. And John and I were both up there--John Connally. And he's the one who really introduced me to President Johnson. I had a number of conferences with him from time to time, not only with President Johnson, but with other Senators and Representatives and people in various government departments in my capacity as president of the Texas Independent Producers and Royalty Owners Association primarily. That was a non-paid job, it's just an elective like any other of these associations.

And then I remember when the President (he was Majority Leader at that time) had people for cocktails in the evening over in his special room over there. He had some of the Senators over there; had Senator Bible and Senator Russell, very small-- Well, I would see the President from time to time on things of that kind. Then in 1960 when--

M: Let me ask this. Do you have any impression in your mind about him at that time? What kind of man he was?

L: Well, he was a very able, hard-driving, practical sort of fellow. For one thing, busy as he was, he would give you more time than other people who were less busy. And he was the kind of fellow that you'd go in to talk to him on something and his secretary would come in with a number of letters. So you'd just sit there while he would say, "Tell so-and-so this," dictate this, and throw them out. He'd dispose of a whole stack of mail, maybe, in ten minutes. And, of course, you didn't mind waiting until he was through.

And so, my impression of him was very favorable and I don't know of anybody--and as I say, I had dealings with a number of people in Washington in high offices, both Republican and Democrat--this was in the Eisenhower years, and I don't think there's a single person that I ever met there that impressed me as a man of greater capacity, dedication, and ability to work all day and all night too, I guess, as Lyndon Johnson.

M: So you were impressed by his energy at that time?

L: Yes. Right.

M: Well, then to pursue this questioning--

L: In '60, I gave a couple of small parties in my house.

M: In Dallas?

L: Yes. He was at this time Senate Majority Leader-- for a number of business people, mainly to acquaint the President better with the Dallas business community and then them with him, and he made little talks in the living room-- very small, no more than say fifty people.

M: Johnson is supposed to be very effective with a small group.

L: Very good, very good. And then I was helpful in securing--well, attempting to secure for him the nomination of President in 1960, and I played a minor part in the Presidential race on behalf of the Kennedy-Johnson ticket that year. Of course, I knew Connally and saw him as Secretary of the Navy on several occasions, and when he determined to run for governor, he wanted me to run his campaign. As a matter of fact, I was present at Fort Worth along with his brother and one or two other people when he announced over there that he was resigning from the Navy and running for governor.

M: To go back a little bit, in 1960-- were you surprised when Johnson took the vice-presidential position?

L: Well, yes, I'd say I was surprised. I hadn't anticipated it, but after thinking about it, I thought that he did the right thing and I wasn't surprised on thinking about it. After all, you're invited to be on a ticket as Vice President of the United States. It's hard to actually turn it down. He'd have been accused of deserting the party and leaving them in the lurch. If they'd have won, I suppose Kennedy would have been unhappy at his having turned him down, and if they'd lost, they'd have probably blamed him for not being on the ticket. So you couldn't quite equate his position as Senate Majority Leader and his ability to serve and all, and the same way as if he had never been asked. Once he was asked, he was put on the spot.

M: Right.

L: And also patriotism is getting to be, I guess, a word people don't use much any more, but the President does have a very keen sense of it. I think that, in a position of that sort, the country called, not just the party, but the country. All these things weighed in on the thing. I imagine the offer was as much a surprise to the President as to anybody else. I've never discussed that matter with him so I can only assume.

M: Did you happen to go to the Los Angeles convention? Were you there?

L: I was there.

M: Were you in the Texas delegation?

L: Yes, I was, at that time, an alternate in the Texas delegation and in 1964, I was a delegate.

M: This must have been somewhat of a surprise to the whole delegation.

L: Yes, and I was working with the Johnson forces at the convention. I was actually sort of one of his floor leaders and had several states on the convention floor. Connally was running the show as his campaign manager, you see. Again, it was sort of the way I got into that picture.

M: One brief question about that kind of work. When you're canvassing the floor, what do you do--just go to another delegation and talk to people and try to ask them what they're going to do?

L: Well, you have particular states, and you try to find out what they're going to do and how the ballots in those states lie and keep people informed that are running the show back there.

M: And then you would inform Connally--

L: And then if there's a matter of trying to persuade some delegate, yes, I'd inform Connally. I was fairly familiar with most of the states, and everybody worked a certain number of states. I had several states that I was working during the convention, during the period before we actually got to the floor,

and talking to delegates; and we had friends within a delegation and we also had people for all the other candidates.

M: Which states did you work with? Do you remember?

L: I worked mostly the middle western states, like Ohio and Indiana, Illinois. For example, Indiana at that time was ready to go for Johnson on the second ballot, but on the first ballot they were pretty much-- they had to, they'd had a primary, you know, so by law they were committed, although there were some of them that wanted to break away from that. So you have a situation of holding them in mind for the second one. Ohio--they were pretty solid because of DiSalle, and they wanted to show a solid force. We could have broken some of them away on that first ballot, and we decided not to because there wouldn't have been enough to do much good, and that would have alienated the rest, so we thought we could break more away on the second ballot. So the whole heart of it at that time was really whether Kennedy was going to get enough to go over on the first ballot. It was pretty close, because you know it was Wyoming, the very last state, that put him over. So you have to make judgments. You had Kansas, for example, which was split right down the middle. The governor was a favorite son, and this was part of the whole thing. Favorite sons held the balance of power. Anyway, this was kind of what you were doing--working with delegates and working with people that could give you information about the delegations.

M: And then did you come back and work in Texas for the ticket?

L: I went from there, right after the thing, to Hawaii. I took my family out there, and saw Governor Burns, incidentally. Went to the Jefferson Jackson dinner, at which Gene McCarthy happened to be the speaker. We all went over to the Democratic chairman's house and had coffee and all afterwards. I was

gone about a month. So I got back--I raised a little money for it, really, with Sam Rayburn, who I also knew. Well, I'll tell you another thing I did. When George Smathers and Frank Ikard came down they gave some kind of a talk, public talk in an office some place, I had a little party for them similar to the ones I had given for the President, and brought together a number of the business leaders in Dallas to hear them, the purpose of which was to get the Democratic ticket some support within the business group in Dallas. So I did specific things like that. I had no title as a part of the official organization. So I wouldn't say that I was just working day and night for the ticket, but I did do certain things that they, in any event, thought that I was peculiarly equipped to do.

M: Then did you have any connection with Lyndon Johnson when he was Vice President?

L: Yes, but not a great deal. Let me think. I was Democratic State Chairman when Connally went in in '62. That would be in the latter part of '62 and the first part of '63. I guess I resigned in '64. Well, during that time I went to Washington on two or three occasions, I think. Although the chairman is not a member of the Democratic National Committee, there are times when the committee invites all the chairmen up and you fill in for somebody that can't be there, something of that sort. And there are reasons to go to Washington occasionally. And you have these dinners, you know, these $100 a plate deals. Occasionally you have to go to those. Not always, but sometimes. I remember after one of those-- I guess this was after the inauguration I saw the Vice President. And, as a matter of fact, I was supposed to have been in the Vice President's box at the symphony. And there was a terrible snow, as you'll recall. I had to walk part of the way there, get a taxi-- and I got there just as he left. So it was quite a deal.

When they had this party that was given -- Bedford Wynne had something to do with it here--$100 a plate, or maybe it was $1,000, I was there, and the Vice President gave a relatively small party afterwards. President Kennedy was there and his wife, O'Brien and O'Donnell and all that group. And I was there at that and, of course, saw him. When I would be up there and see the President, when he was Vice President, I never had any arrangements to see him, or something planned in advance. I had no business meetings with him, but if you happened to be where he was and he knew you were around there, when he just happened to have free time, then you might see him.

I remember one time in Austin, he found I was in Austin, and he happened to be there, and he has a place on top of his television station there, so I got the word he wanted me over there. So I came over there and we sat around and talked, he had some members of his staff. We had a few drinks and I guess about 11 o'clock or such, they decided they'd go eat. And so, where? Well, they decided they'd go eat at El Matamoros Mexican Restaurant; so here comes the Vice President with his party and all the Secret Service men and all land in front of El Matamoros. The people at El Matamoros didn't know he was coming. And so they had to scurry around to get a table. Well, I spent the evening with him there. So there were occasions like that when he was Vice President when I would see him. You know, be with him for an evening, let's say, with other people. But it was never a planned sort of thing. It would always just sort of come up.

For example, they tell a story on the President which I believe and which illustrates what I'm talking about. They say there's a -- I don't know her name -- a lady down in Johnson City, I guess, or Stonewall. She and her

husband run this place where they made deer meat sausage. You know the President does a lot of hunting on his ranch-- he likes deer meat sausage, and he used to get his deer meat sausage there. Well, I believe this was at the time of his Inauguration as Vice President, or maybe it was as President, in '64. He ran into her. He happened to be in Johnson City just before he was going to go up. So he says, "Why don't you come up to the Inauguration?" , just out of the blue. He said, "We're leaving in thirty minutes," or some such thing. She went in the plane up there and stayed at the White House, I understand. If she hadn't happened to run into the President, she wouldn't have been up there. So this is what I mean when I say he's a very warm fellow, and he sees a friend of his and it just occurs to him to invite the other.

M: Well, then, your next major role in politics was what? The 1962 Connally campaign?

L: Yes.

M: And you were what--his campaign manager?

L: Yes, statewide.

M: In that campaign, did Johnson lend you support?

L: No, we had no contact with Johnson whatsoever.

M: It was strictly a Connally--

L: Strictly, yes, sir.

Now, we had some Johnson people in the organization, but the truth is, it was not a Johnson organization. We didn't take over a Johnson organization. For example, the people responsible for the campaign in Dallas, in Houston, in Fort Worth, in most of the sizeable areas were not Johnson leaders.

M: Does this mean that there was some animosity then between Connally and Johnson?

L: No, no animosity at all. It's just that Connally ran on his own. And I would say that most of the Johnson leaders were for Connally, and some of them were helpful, more behind the scenes in helping us select other people than anything else, but we didn't just take over a Johnson organization. And it wasn't a matter of animosity, it was a matter of getting new blood in. It was also a matter that Johnson didn't really have an organization like people think he did. He had people in various areas, but remember he hadn't had to really run in a tight campaign for a long time. So he didn't have, let's say, a Johnson leader in every county. We might be in a particular place and the man that had sort of been a Johnson man we thought was the best man down there and he was for Connally, he might be the Connally man, but generally speaking, it was a completely new, fresh organization. Another reason is people were all accusing Connally of being Johnson's man, and so forth. So in no sense of the word was that true.

M: You indicate, then, that Connally was really independent.

L: Oh, yes, no question about it.

M: Even though there were amicable relations between Johnson and Connally?

L: Oh yes, there were amicable relations. You know, he was very friendly with Connally, no question about that, but he had nothing to do with the campaign whatsoever.

M: During the time of the fateful Kennedy trip to Texas, there was some rumor--you may be able to give some insight into it--there is some rumor and the story and conjecture that Kennedy came to Texas to heal a breach among Texas politicians.

L: Oh, that's a lot of baloney. Absolutely untrue. Absolutely untrue. Not a word of truth in it.

M: And so it wasn't to heal any split in the Texas party? It was, then, what? A political swing by Kennedy to get general support?

L: To help build up support for the next election. That's exactly what it was.

M: Did you have any contact with Johnson immediately after the assassination?

L: Well, I was state chairman at the time of the assassination.

M: Where were you, incidentally?

L: I was in Dallas. I was at the Trade Mart where Kennedy was to speak.

M: Waiting for the--

L: I greeted Kennedy. I was in the receiving line when he came here. Well, some went on his motorcade with him, and others went over there to the Trade Mart to see that everything was going to be in order when he got there. Well, I was one of those that went to the Trade Mart. I didn't have direct responsibility for running the Trade Mart show, but as state chairman, I had some responsibility in seeing that things were moving along. I was suppose to have introduced Kennedy and Johnson at the dinner that night, and Connally. I was going to be the toastmaster in Austin. And so I didn't actually see the Vice President after the assassination there when he became President. I didn't go out to the plane or get involved in that. There were plenty other people running around. There wasn't any reason for me to be involved. I kept in touch by telephone about what was going on.

Then-- I was trying to think when I next saw the President. I didn't see him very much. I saw him more as Vice President, really, until I became Ambassador. I didn't have any planned visits with him, but when I would happen to bump into him, his situation was such that he might happen to have evenings free, you know.

When he was President, I think, I would some time go by the White House when I was in Washington just to say hello. I knew most of the people that were his people up there; and there might have been one or two times when I went in and shook hands with the President and spent five minutes with him, but that was more or less just, you know, saying hello to a friend. I had no business with him as President and never discussed any-- well, that's not completely true. I was a member of the Dallas delegation that went up to talk to him about-- there's the picture of it right over there, they took a picture of us, about the civic center, about the federal building here.

M: This is the picture with you--

L: And John Connally went up there too, you know. Those are all Dallas people. I was up there in that group. I didn't have any particular part, except to be a member of the group and advise with them some. Connally presented the case of Dallas. I think the Budget Director came over to tell us their situation, as far as the Budget was concerned, and that sort of thing. I did go up on that. And I wasn't running the show and had nothing to do with talking to the various people involved that made the decision, although I'm sure that the president of the Chamber of Commerce and others involved did from time to time. But I believe that's the only business I actually had, in that sense, with the President from the time he became President until the time I was appointed.

M: Incidentally, going back a little bit, what was the scene like at the Trade Mart when the news of the assassination came through?

L: Well, everybody was shocked. Eric Jonsson, he was the president of the Citizen's Council, which was more or less co-sponsoring this deal down there. And he's the one that got up and his voice was broken and--

But during the time the first rumors started coming out, and there was a good bit of confusion-- we would get stories-- first we heard that he was hit and it was almost unbelievable, and then "well, he's doing all right." It was very difficult to get information, and everybody was wondering; the people just stayed around the Trade Mart. They didn't just suddenly leave. And finally I got the information about as early as anybody else, I guess Eric did, and then he made the announcement.

M: And then did people break up and go home?

L: Yes, I guess they did.

M: Well, then, to jump forward in time again, you went to the Democratic national convention in '64. You were a member of the Texas delegation.

L: Right.

M: And from what I recall about that election, there was no great difficulty.

L: My wife was national committeewoman at that time too.

M: Yes.

L: I had resigned as state chairman, but then at a subsequent date, she was elected national committeewoman.

M: But there was no great difficulty in Johnson gaining the nomination?

L: No, there wasn't anything for any delegates to do from a political point of view. I didn't even talk to delegates from any other state. Oh, I may have met some of them, but I mean, there wasn't any organization to do anything. At least I wasn't a part of any, because it was all pretty well cut and dried.

M: And then in '66, did you help Connally campaign again?

L: Yes, but I did not run his campaign then. His brother Merrill did. Indirectly I was asked what kind of a part I wanted to have in it. It was pretty well

cut and dried, and I didn't see any particular point and I wasn't in a position just to take off and do down to Austin and run a campaign. It was a pretty full-time job. I did work in the thing. I did some work in trying to see that the precincts carried for Connally and also carried for Johnson's resolution, you see; that was in '64.

M: Did you raise money for--

L: No, I raised money for Connally when I first-- as a matter of fact, I was not only campaign chairman, I guess I was finance chairman. When he first ran, as a matter of fact, John and I were the only ones that handled any money, I guess, which was just a pretty tough job doing the whole thing. I did that throughout the primary, then when it came to the general election, I told Connally that he needed to get another finance chairman. I didn't think I ought to do both jobs. And so we finally agreed on who that ought to be, and he got Tom Sealy out at Midland to chair that. And we had pretty well set up people in these various cities that I had been working with, so from that time forward, I never did any money-raising for Connally.

M: Did you happen to do any in 1964 for the Johnson ticket?

L: I don't think so. I don't think there was any money raising--oh, we might have. I did some money raising for the Democratic committee when I was chairman of it, obviously, which mostly consisted of dinners and that sort of thing, not a whole lot of them. We had the rally when Connally was elected, and we had to sell tickets. But I never did, again, raise money directly for Connally for an election, and I don't think I had anything to do with raising any money in 1964. I'm trying to think back. That may not be so. I may have with the Johnson-Humphrey ticket. Of course, you see, there you have got the Democratic National Committee handling the thing. There was no money raising for the job of being nominated, because that was

pretty well cut and dried. I guess, when you talk about the national committee, my wife helped raise some money for the Texas quota. I may have made a call or two to help her out or something, but I didn't chair any finance committees and I didn't do certainly any major money-raising.

M: Was the next major step your appointment to the Ambassadorship in Pakistan?

L: Yes.

M: This is in 1966?

L: 1966.

M: Now, how did that come about? How were you selected for that?

L: Well, I got a call on the telephone from Marvin Watson. He said that they had decided exactly that they were thinking about me and wanted to know if I'd take it. Apparently, they had this fellow who was formerly with the Civil Service Commission and put everybody's name in the computer, you know.

M: John Macy?

L: John Macy. Apparently mine was in the computer with everybody else's. I told Marvin that it was absolutely impossible for me to leave my business and run off to Pakistan. So the next time I got a call from him, he said they wanted me to do that. There was no doubt about it. So, I told him I still didn't see how I could do it. So, he said, "Well, now, don't tell me 'no'; think about it and see what you can do." So, the next time he even put it on the basis that, "You know, we're not asking you to do something for yourself, we're asking you to do it for your country. We consider this--and I want to tell you about this country and why it's important" and so forth. Well, at that, I said, "Well, it's hard to turn that one down, but let me see what I can do."

I talked to a friend of mine here named Trammell Crow, and was able to get him to agree to handle certain of my investments in my absence. I had a medical building out here that I was trying to get filled up that I owed some money on. At that time I was one of the largest stockholders of Lomas & Nettleton Financial Corporation. I guess I am now the largest. The company had had some management problems with the president, and I'd been instrumental, I suppose, in getting him replaced. And we had a man in there that I had confidence in, I'd bought out some stockholders that weren't happy and it has all turned out very well. I made quite a bit of money out of it, but at that time my first approach was to try to find some friend to buy it, and when I couldn't find any, I bought it myself. So I had a lot of very important business problems. And when you're half-way around the world, it's not quite like being there. The law firm was not a particular problem, because we had people to handle everything and I could throw off most of what I was doing on different people and Maurice Purnell could run the firm. But these other things, although they didn't take all my time, they were important and sometimes I had to be there. Well, Trammell Crow said he could take over and I gave him my complete power of attorney to do anything he wanted to, sign notes and everything else. And so then I told them that with that done I would accept it. This was on a Friday, I think, that Marvin called me again the last time, and I said I would do this. He said, "All right, get a plane this afternoon and bring Adele, and come up to Washington. The President wants to see you tomorrow."

So, we went up there and talked to the President. This was very closely held, you know, all such things are. Nobody knew about it except a few within the White House itself. Dean Rusk came over there. I had never

met Dean Rusk before. I talked to one or two of his aides, Moyers was up there, and, of course, Marvin Watson was up there. That's where I met Bob Comer. He had been handling Pakistan and he was now handling Viet Nam. So they said, "Well, the next step is to get an agrément. We have to send off a message to the country. It's just a matter of mechanics. We know they're going to accept you, but it might take two weeks. We're going to push it in and ask that it be expedited," and so forth. "Maybe it'll be less than two weeks." Well, it was less than two weeks. Let me see, I was here on Thursday, or maybe this was Saturday that I was up there, and I left Sunday and came back. The next Thursday they called me. Watson called, and he said, "Well, your agrément is in." And this was late Thursday evening. He said, "You can get a plane up here tomorrow, and you can go over there to the State Department, and they'll give you your briefings Friday evening and Saturday. If you can just get right up here, the Senate Foreign Relations Committee is willing to hear you on Monday."

So I went up there and worked with the State Department over the weekend and then went before Fulbright and the Senate Foreign Relations Committee on Monday. Then I left and came back to get my own affairs in shape. My schedule was to spend a month, at least, getting my own affairs in shape, and then maybe another couple of weeks or such a matter in Washington getting briefed and then to go over there.

Well, I got back-- I guess I got back, let's say, Tuesday, and I was down at the governor's ranch in Floresville. And I got a call on a Saturday--this was this next Saturday, you see, after I had been up there, it was the same week--from the LBJ Ranch. And it was Jake Jacobsen who is also a friend of mine. And he said, "Well, they've got a particular job over there in

Pakistan; it's a special mission, very important, and it has got to be done right away, and the President has decided that you ought to do it. So," he said--this was a Saturday, "if you could fly up to Washington tomorrow, that's Sunday, we can give you all your shots and get all your papers in shape and give you your briefing on this on Monday. There's a plane leaving for Pakistan at 4 o'clock Monday afternoon."

So, I said, "Fine," and I'm probably the only Ambassador that ever went on an important mission without briefings on the country to which he had been assigned. But I did and I spent eight days over there and talked to the President of Pakistan a couple of times, and--

M: Can you tell me what this mission was?

L: Yes. We had put, we'll say, a moratorium on aid, U.S. aid to Pakistan. This grew out of the Pakistan-India war. And the President had determined that we were going to start that aid again, and there were a lot of other things involved. It wasn't that we were just going to give aid, there were certain negotiations and we wanted to know what they were going to do, whether they were going to be peaceful, one thing and another. So it wasn't to--

M: The main matter was to maintain the peace?

L: Yes, the main mission-- We were going to renew aid again, but we wanted no-- It wasn't the sort of thing that "You do this and we do that," I don't mean that; but we wanted to inquire into what their intentions were on various things, primarily the war and peace, before actually doing that. And so I went over to do that job.

M: And you were successful in calming the waters then?

L: Well, I won't say I calmed the waters, but I would say that the mission was successful.

M: Then you went over as Ambassador?

L: Then I cam back after those eight days. And then I came back to Texas, tried to get my own affairs in shape, and then I did go back to Washington and spent some time in the usual briefings at State and all these various places, USIS, and then I went back with my family--my wife and all my children. My daughter came back to go to school when the summer was over, my boy stayed over there in Pakistan and went to school over there.

M: And the peace was maintained?

L: Yes, it was maintained. There were, you know, and will continue to be a lot of problems. India and Pakistan don't like each other very much. Kashmire is still a problem, but war didn't break out and it was calmer than it had been. There's no question that the American presence and the attitude toward the Americans and the relations and all were substantially improved.

M: You were able to maintain good relations then with Ayub Khan?

L: Very good.

M: Then how did it come about that you went as Deputy Ambassador to Viet Nam? I might mention, which I didn't before, this tape can be classified if you wish to do so.

L: Well, I definitely want it classified. I'll tell you what I would like to do, very frankly, would be, when I get this tape--I don't want anybody to see it. I'll go down and talk to the President. I think it ought to be classified. These things were all highly classified at the time and I guess, technically, they're classified for a long period of time. I don't think there's anything

that I'm saying that would in any way hurt the United States government, but I want them classified, because I'd rather somebody else would pass judgment, and I guess that any statements I make, certainly about our relations with these countries, ought to be classified.

M: And if you wish, a part of it can be classified or restricted as you want to. So you have full flexibility in that respect. But I wanted you to know about that before we got into these foreign relations.

All right, now, how did you get appointed Deputy Ambassador to Viet Nam?

L: Well, I got a long wire from the President, which was really top secret. And it went into the reasons he wanted me to be Deputy Ambassador to Viet Nam and he wanted to know if I'd accept. He said, "If you will, you should leave (I think, the following day) for Guam." That was the time they had the Guam Conference, if you recall it.

M: And you would go to Guam for the conference and then to Viet Nam without ever coming back?

L: No, no. I came back to Pakistan. But he wanted me to be in Guam because he had his new team, you see. Bunker was going to be there, and McNamara was there. Thieu and Ky were both there. And so, anyway, I sent back a wire that said-- I think all it said was, "I accept. I'll see you in Guam." And then I went to Guam.

M: Can you tell me the reasons for this change of personnel in Viet Nam?

L: There was a very important job.

M: Again, this all fits into his struggle with Viet Nam which, of course, was having increasing consequences and trouble for him. And the team in Viet Nam was changed, and you came over as Deputy Ambassador. Now, what was your task

as Deputy Ambassador? What does a Deputy Ambassador do?

L: I guess he does about what he decides he ought to do. I, of course, did whatever the Ambassador wanted me to do; but basically, I talked to a lot of people who had been over there a long time and knew something about the war situation, how to handle classification and military, one thing or another in different areas.

M: Did you serve as a liaison between the Embassy and the military?

L: No, I wouldn't say that. I mean, the Ambassador and Westmoreland talked. I talked to Westmoreland and we had a mission council meeting once a week, in which everybody was there. I tried to make judgments on what ought to be done in a lot of fields and talked to the Ambassador about it, and see that they were done. I tried to make some determination of things that needed to be done. We wrote a report, for example, which went over the whole spectrum of classification and aid and military and everything else. So, I was involved (some people were brought over from Pakistan) trying to put in a system throughout the country where we would train the Vietnamese to more or less help themselves, take over local government functions, more or less patterned after the way this had been done in Pakistan, very successfully by the government. Building for themselves rather than having the government build everything for them. A lot of it was working with the government. I was involved in manpower mobilization--how we were going to work with the government to see that they had enough people in the military in these capacities and how they were going to be trained, and to see what were the important civilian functions and how could they set up a situation where they could determine what they were to handle then. We had the mission council meeting Mondays, and then I had a group that met every Wednesday. It

was basically the same people without Ambassador Bunker and without Westmoreland. He had a representative there, and we'd go down the list of problems and try to decide what was going to be done and things that the mission council dwelled on. See who was going to do them and try to see that they were executed and hold people responsible for them.

Then, of course, you have functions. The Ambassador was needed back, in Washington. There was so much to be done in Viet Nam, and it was such a big thing that basically I just tried to operate. My function was not a normal, technical function of the Deputy Chief of Missions. We had a guy called the mission coordinator who would do most of that. He was in a sense a liaison man when something needed to be done by somebody and getting them to do it and keeping minutes, seeing that they were done. He had assistants too. You know, the normal Deputy Chief of Missions worries a lot about classification and running the details of communications and all that. I didn't get into any of that. The mission coordinator did most of what that would normally require. My job was really decision-making primarily, and there were a lot of decisions that in other embassies would have been made by the Ambassador that I made, because the job was so big and he had to deal with Thieu and Ky. Of course, I dealt with them too, but when he was there he'd normally go over. And, of course, he and I together called on all the various diplomats over there--government officials.

M: And, of course, you had to meet visitors coming in too, wouldn't you?

L: Yes. We'd do a lot of that together. I was in on most of those. He had a few maybe that I wasn't, and I'd have a few that he wasn't, mainly because of time, but we tried to pretty much operate it as a team in seeing these people.

M: Given the complexity of that situation, did you ever become frustrated,

discouraged, about accomplishing anything?

L: No, not really. I was more discouraged about attitudes in the United States than I was about any in Viet Nam.

M: The lack of support and --?

L: I never had any doubt that in time we could be successful in Viet Nam. We were able to continue to move along and I thought that it was extremely important to shut off infiltration and so forth. There were a lot of political problems that I won't go into, but I was more frustrated by Washington than I was by Viet Nam.

M: And when you say by Washington, you mean Congress or--?

L: I'm not talking about-- Well, I'm talking about the general situation. I'm talking about the political atmosphere, really, more than anything else, which is something that is worried about more over here. It wasn't as if you said, "All right, our job is to win this thing-- to do this, you do it." We had to worry with these attitudes.

M: Did you have faith that the pacification might work?

L: Yes, I thought it would work. I didn't think it would work quickly. It's a very difficult thing. The single most important thing in pacification is military security. It is very difficult for people to do as much as you'd like to see them do and to be pacified, if they're going to have the village elders killed if somebody comes in. Well, the Viet Cong operated with the North Vietnamese, from the mountains and the woods and bases and so forth. You can't draw a military ring around every town. You couldn't do it in the United States. So, I was somewhat frustrated by the fact that in some instances I didn't think the Vietnamese military

had enough night patrols. There were certain things obviously that should have been done that maybe weren't done as well as you thought ought to be, but this again was a matter of time and training. There's no question but that they improved all along and they got confidence. What a lot of people don't realize about Viet Nam is that we went down to the bottom after Diem's death. There was a succession of governments; people lost confidence in any government and those people over there, you know, they want to be on the winning side. And Diem had his police. Well, they were completely disbanded when he was killed. I wasn't there, so I won't pass any judgment on the rights and wrongs of that situation, but I think it's a matter of historical record that things deteriorated from that point forward.

Well, it was only when Thieu and Ky got in that it finally began to stabilize, and Westmoreland was a top-flight man. So was Abrams. And we were gaining, militarily we were gaining, and we were gaining in every count you could make and in pacification. It wasn't running as fast as you might like to see it, but there were a lot of problems. The Koreans weren't any good in Korea, they tell me--that's what the papers all say. And we had people there that would say the Koreans would cover on either side of them, and our fighting men had problems. Well, the Koreans in Viet Nam are as good as any fighting men in the world. But you don't build an army overnight. So this was part of it, and part of it is really the infiltration in from Laos, from Cambodia. You can't by air alone completely wipe that out. If you're 25 percent successful with what you knock out, that's pretty successful, and that's if equipment people come in. You might destroy a division, and then it will take them a few months to do anything again,

but they'd be able to build up. And, see, we were successful in Greece only when the Yugoslavs closed that border to the Greeks. And Malasia there was no place for them to infiltrate-- and to go back-- so,

M: And the key--

L: The enemy was bleeding hard, but as long as he thought he might win in the United States politically, and as long as the Russians and Chinese were willing to keep equipping them, they were--the Russians, I think, more as a counterbalance to the Chinese than anything else, because I think the Russians would like to see that war end. But the situation was such that it gave the North Vietnamese staying power. As long as they think they have a chance to win politically, then I suppose they had that staying power. This was the big problem, and I guess you'd say there were frustrations, but there was no question that there was progress. I didn't think then and don't think now that we were then or ever have been in this so-called stalemate that's so popular in this country to talk about.

M: Can you give me any insight into the promotion of Westmoreland out of Viet Nam? You know, the papers made a lot out of this.

L: Well, I seriously doubt that the papers were right. Westmoreland had very good relations with the President, and Westmoreland had been there over four years. That's an extraordinary long time for anybody to be in that job. You know, they have a one-year rotation system. Of course, it doesn't apply to people like Westmoreland, but it applies to even top leaders under them. Now, they may stay there two years. I think Mo Myer had had his term extended--he was the head of the Air Force, but the generals

under him in charge of these poor areas and so forth, they were rotated back. So Westmoreland sort of stood alone as a man that had been there for over four years. Abrams, when he first went over, spent nearly all his time--I'd say 75 percent of it--building up the Vietnamese armed forces. Of course, I think the Vietnamese armed forces could handle the Viet Cong today, if there weren't any North Vietnamese in there. The Viet Cong has had a hard time recruiting. Eighty percent of the soldiers over there are North Vietnamese today. Most certainly, north of Saigon, practically entirely when I was there, was Viet Cong. South of Saigon, they tell me, there had been North Vietnamese in the Delta recently. So this is really your problem.

M: Do you have any insight in Clark Clifford's role in influencing Lyndon Johnson?

L: No. This was all after I left. Clark Clifford was over there once while I was there. Clifford and General Maxwell Taylor came over there when I was there once. It was the only time I ever knew Clifford. Of course, I had more contact with Max Taylor. And they had a specific role, primarily, I think, just to find out what was going on. Take back to the President the feelings of the South Vietnamese leaders. The change from McNamara to Clifford occurred after I was out of Vietnam, and I really haven't been privy to anything on Viet Nam since I got out of it other than what I read in the papers.

M: In consulting with the President, did he ever express to you his feelings about Viet Nam and the war and the influence of this on his Administration? Any incidents that you recall?

L: No, not really. Of course, I talked to him about the war, about what we were doing, what ought to be done.

M: Was he always receptive to your suggestions?

L: Oh, yes.

M: Not necessarily that he'd act on them, but he would listen to you?

L: Oh, yes. This was a big problem for him. There was none any bigger, and so it was extremely important to him. But so far as talking about Viet Nam in his political context, anything of that sort, no, our discussions of Viet Nam were the purely objective points of things to do.

M: It would seem significant, given Lyndon Johnson's background, that you are a Texan and that you were in Viet Nam and that Lyndon Johnson is a Texan and seems to trust his Texas political friends more than anybody else. Is there any significance in that?

L: Well, I think that Johnson trusts my judgment.

M: Is it important that you're a Texan, do you think?

L: Well, I think it's important that he knew me over a period of time. I think it's also important that they appraised my job in Pakistan-- pretty fair. And I think the people in the State Department-- when I say the people, I guess I'm talking about Rusk and those that knew what I had done-- thought that I did a reasonably creditable job over there, but Johnson, having been a Texan and having his whole political history tied to Texas, I suppose most of the people that he knew and trusted over a period of time happened to be from Texas. Now, he trusted others--Clark Clifford, obviously--some that he had known in Washington through his Washington associations back in the days of the New Deal and the days of Truman and so forth. There might be somebody in Indiana, say, that would come with great recommendations and he might pick him, but I would guess that if he looked at the people that he knew from his own personal association

or felt were people of balance and judgment and that he could trust, he'd find a lot of them were Texans. I don't think the fact that they were Texans is why he'd bring them in. I think having his background that type of person was a Texan and he might take somebody from some place else on some of these recommendations. But after all, he didn't know them closely, and he would be relying wholly on the opinions of other people, whereas there were Texans that he had his own opinions of from his own association. That's the way I would describe it. For the same reason that in 1960 when he was running--when people were urging him to take the nomination-- try for the nomination of President, most of the people who were engaged in helping him in that thing were Texans, even though the place they may be helping was in North Dakota. He didn't know anybody in North Dakota well that he trusted. You know what I mean?

M: Well, then you resigned from your position as Deputy Ambassador in early '68 is that right?

L: That's correct.

M: And came back to run for the governorship of Texas?

L: That's correct.

M: Is it fair to assume that you resigned so that you could run for the governorship?

L: That's correct.

M: Did Lyndon Johnson aid you at all, give you support, give you encouragement?

L: No.

M: In your governor's race?

L: No.

M: Did he accept your resignation readily?

L: Oh, yes, I wouldn't have resigned if I'd felt in any way that I was letting

the President down.

M: But he accepted this without hard feelings or anything of that nature?

L: Oh, yes.

M: Were you surprised, even in the midst of your own struggle, that the President decided not to run again?

L: Yes, I was very surprised.

M: Why?

L: Well, I thought I knew the President pretty well, and it surprised me that he resigned.

M: You'd think that he would wish to run again then?

L: I would have thought so.

M: Well, to ask you a few judgments about Johnson, a few comments about him; Johnson has a reputation of having a hot temper. Have you ever experienced anything of that nature in your consultation with him?

L: Well, I'm sure that it's true, but I would say Johnson is of an impatient turn of mind.

M: Good way to put it.

L: Johnson is a guy that likes to get things done, and he likes to get them done yesterday, and he's a doer; he likes people that are doers; he's not an ideologist by nature. He likes to look at a problem and think of it not in terms of what is the liberal solution or what is the conservative solution or "are all my friends that are liberals or conservatives going to think that I'm letting them down," you've seen too much of this. He likes to think now, here's a problem--now, how do you solve it for the benefit of the country? And that really is the way he looks at things, and he likes people around him to look at them the same way. He likes to

get something done; he drives his people hard, there's no question about that. And I'm sure that when he has a lot of things preying on his mind and something doesn't come out just the way he does, he can be very impatient. But he never was with me, so I've never experienced his tongue, so to speak, at all. But I'm sure that that's true, because I know the way people work that he expects them to be on tap all the time but they are loyal to him. So I wouldn't describe him as being a man with an explosive temper as much as I would as a man who's impatient to get things done and wants everybody to work just like he does.

M: He also has a reputation of being rather earthy in his language, except in formal speeches and so on. Is that reputation true?

L: Well, I would say Johnson talks with his friends just like most Texas ranchers and business people would talk to other Texas ranchers and business people. In other words, he doesn't take great efforts to stand on his dignity and to be certain that he never uses profanity and at the same time, he doesn't just get right down and make a special effort to be earthy. I think what you'd say is that Johnson is natural with his friends and if it seems natural to say something pungent that makes a point, why, he'll say it. He never says it just to be pungent or to have some sort of effect. I can name scores of leading people in the business community around the state who, I'd say, talk much the same way.

It may be that Johnson has maybe gone beyond the intercircle in saying some of the things that come naturally more than some people might have done, but that's really all it is. He's not earthy in the sense that he's different, that he's unusually so. It's just that he's natural and sometimes says what comes naturally with him.

M: Johnson, as President, has also been criticized as neglecting the state political structure--the Democratic party. Do you agree with this?

L: No, I wouldn't agree with this.

M: You've had some experience with the state political structure.

L: Well, I don't know what anybody expects Johnson to do with the state. Johnson is oriented to the federal government problems. Certainly, as President and Vice President, I think it would have been inappropriate for him to try to run the state political structure. He has had no particular need to build up a great organization of his own and if he had, then he would have been criticized for that. Texas doesn't have a great Democratic political structure, as such, and never has, and no man has ever built one up. It has nothing to do with the people involved, it's that Texas has traditionally, at least in state government, been a one-party state basically. So you have people with all varying beliefs that are engaged in it, and although maybe some people think, well, maybe he ought to bring the segments of the party together. Well, I don't know why he, more than anybody else, but I'd say that it's impossible to completely bring the segments of the party together; and I think that Texas isn't wholly unique on that. I understand that in New York state there are quite a few segments.

I think that, as President and as Vice-President before, Johnson felt that it wasn't appropriate for him to get down into the nitty-gritty political situation in Texas or anywhere else, and I'm inclined to agree with him, and I don't know what he could have done anyhow. If you start to saying that all Democrats have to get together, what are they going to believe in? Some of them diametrically oppose the others and if you try

to say this is what they believe in, then you run half of them out. So this isn't the same kind of a political situation that you find in a lot of states, so I would not say that he has neglected it. In elections, he has done what he could to see that the Democrats won; and I would say that he has been more successful in Texas than anybody I can think of in any other state. But he hasn't been down working in the details of party politics, for instance, and I don't think he should.

M: One point that's often ignored in discussing politics, are the women in politics, and I'd like to know if you have any impressions about Mrs. Johnson and her role in politics?

L: A delightful lady! I think she has been one of the great First Ladies of all times. I think most people would agree with this.

M: Do youknow her personally?

L: Oh, sure.

M: And in visiting the ranch and places like that?

L: I've visited the ranch many times. As a matter of fact, I was at the ranch when Johnson was Vice President, when Ayub Khan was his principal guest-- 'way back.

M: So you had known Ayub Khan then before you went to Pakistan?

L: Well, I knew him, I doubt that he knew me at that time. I was there and met him.

M: But Mrs. Johnson has been then a supporting person for her husband?

L: I think she has done a terrific job in every way.

M: Fine. Now, this exhausts the questions that I have for you. Is there anything that I should have asked you that I didn't, or any comment that you wish to make?

L: No.

M: Well, I thank you for your time.

L: I guess I should add this. I think President Johnson is basically a very able and a very dedicated man with a real feeling of patriotism for his country. People have talked about Johnson as being a political animal, you know; and, of course, my opinion is that a successful President of the United States has to know something about politics because politics is the science of government. Politics is also the science of the possible because it doesn't really do much good to stand up and holler about something that you say you believe in when the result is going to be to completely crucify what you do believe in. So, Johnson in making judgments and appraising problems, has to take the political aspect into consideration in determining what the end result, or in determining what the means are, to achieve the best end result. But in my opinion, the best end result on these important problems is always what he conceives to be in the best interest of the United States.

M: So then his basic motive is one of patriotism?

L: That's right. It sure is. And this is a matter that I have absolutely no doubt about personally, and I think I know the man and know his decisions and know how he operates well enough to have a firm, in my opinion, a correct opinion on that score.

M: Well, on that note, maybe I should call the interview at an end.

L: Okay.

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By Eugene M. Locke

to the

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