INTERVIEWEE: EDWARD RE

INTERVIEWER: PAIGE MULHOLLAN

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M: Let's begin by identifying you, sir. You're Edward Re, and you're currently since January of 1969 a United States Judge in the Customs Court. Prior to that time you served for most of the year 1968 as Assistant Secretary of State for Educational and Cultural Affairs, and came to that job them from the Claims Settlement Commission, where you'd served since--

R: The Foreign Claims Settlement Commission.

M: That is the full title--since 1961?

R: That is correct.

M: So you were in government service throughout the Johnson Administration in one or another of various capacities.

R: Yes, I was.

M: Did you as a member of the Foreign Claims Settlement Commission ever have any occasion to have direct contact with the President, either officially or socially?

R: Socially, yes. As Chairman of the Commission I had no opportunity to discuss Commission matters directly with the President. I was reappointed Chairman of the Commission by President Johnson on October 22, 1966, but I did have several contacts with President Johnson socially at various receptions and various meetings, such as a Columbus Day celebration where I read a message on behalf of President Johnson, at a Dante commemorative stamp ceremony in San Francisco, and related functions.

M: Was it this contact that was the background for your promotion then to

Assistant Secretary of State, or were there other circumstances involved in that appointment?

R: I would say that this contact merely made it possible for President Johnson to know the individual and know the face, as it were. But I'm quite sure that the academic background and the actual biographical data, which was the basis for my appointment to the State department, that came from other sources.

M: Other sources--meaning people in the White House, on the White House staff?

R: I believe that it was perhaps Mr. Macy, because it was Mr. Macy who was familiar with my background. I had worked very closely with Mr. Macy as Chairman of the Foreign Claims Settlement Commission because of my efforts to improve the Commission. I tried to not only streamline the work but make the work of the Commission more that of a quasi-judicial body.

The very first thing that I did when I assumed my office as Chairman of the Commission was to have, for example, the job descriptions of all the personnel rewritten. Through Mr. Macy, we were able to have a very fine, I believe the word is inspector, of the Civil Service Commission, come to the Foreign Claims Settlement Commission and rewrite all the job descriptions. It was through Mr. Macy that I obtained some very fine new personnel.

M: So he was probably the one who kept your name in the top of the pile as far as prospective talent for the various jobs that opened up.

R: I believe that he probably was the one that submitted my name along with others that he considered to be qualified condidates.

M: At the time that that appointment was made were there any unusual events? Sometimes Mr. Johnson was known for springing surprises or appointing people suddenly, at short notice. Did any of this occur in your case?

R: Not to my knowledge. Of course, we all knew that there was a vacancy in the State department. I frankly was not particularly thinking along the lines of my going to the State department. I am a law professor; I'm a lawyer; I've written, as you know, some widely used case books and textbooks that are used in law schools. I regarded myself always as essentially a lawyer who had had some administrative experience but, if anything, I was a candidate for judicial office, having already submitted all of my papers and having filled out the American Bar Association questionnaire.

M: For a judicial--

R: For a judicial post, and I was being considered for a judicial post. The President was fully aware of this, since on at least one occasion he spoke to me about my, shall I say, candidacy, although it's hard to say you're a candidate for a judicial office.

I must say that in dealing with President Johnson I was positively amazed by his depth of appreciation and understanding of facts and his interest in things. For example, he indicated to me that he had read my FBI report.

M: This was at the time you were being appointed--

R: No, this was before. So there was no doubt that the President, as it were, got to know me and knew who Ed Re was. Then when the question arose as to who should go to the State department as Assistant Secretary for the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, I received a call on one occasion by Mr. Califano who said that the President wished to see me. I spent, I believe, well over an hour with the President discussing the work of the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs.

M: Did he give you what you might consider specific instructions or a mission

during this conversation?

R: I can't say that he did exactly that. It is fair to say that it was obvious to me that he knew the job much better than I did. You see, I have known of the President's interest in educational and cultural affairs. I know of his role in the legislation leading to the East-West Center. And I, of course, was familiar with President Johnson's message to the Congress of February 1966 because I had used one or two of the sentences in that speech in many of my speeches. For example, he said, "Education lies at the heart of every nation's hopes and purposes. It must be at the heart of our international relations." This was a phrase that I think beautifully summarized the role of education, not only in domestic advancement, but also in international relations and foreign policy. And I of course was always familiar with the Fulbright Program.

M: Did Mr. Johnson, during this about an hour of conversation, indicate to you anything further in the way of what his philosophy was retarding the foreign policy implications of education and cultural exchange?

R: He surely had a commitment to the program. I would say that if I got any impression, as distinguished from anything he said, he gave the impression that I shared, that Americans going overseas ought to portray America in proper perspective. By that I mean specifically that it seems eminently [un] fair to refer and to mention only things that [are] really short-comings and failures and mention nothing at all of our successes and accomplishments This was something I remembered. In my tenure at the State department, whenever I spoke to international visitors I made it almost a policy--if the opportunity presented itself--to indicate that we should not be judged just from the Washington riots.

I happened to be there when they occurred, and I remembered some

distinguished visitors who were there. They particularly were unhappy by the curfew, by the way. I told them that you have to realize how far we have gone in making the American ideal of equality, of opportunity and equal treatment before the law a reality for all Americans. As a law professor I found it quite simple to delineate the various key points, how we always spoke of America being a land that stood for the wonderful statements so beautifully set forth in our Declaration of Independence. And as a matter of fact we practiced slavery, and I indicated that that was quite recent. Surely the America of today is not the America of the Civil War, nor is it the America of 1932, nor even the America of four years ago. So I found this to be a very effective type of dialogue with international visitors because they quite agree that nations ought to be judged fairly, just as we judge men and that in evaluating a man surely you take into account his sins, but you also have to evaluate his virtues.

I, by the way, enjoyed that post tremendously. It was a wonderful opportunity to, not create an image of America but to let people know what America is. Specifically, I was interested in destroying the stereotyping of Americans and disspelling certain misconceptions about Americans as--for example, every American is interested in money, worships the Almighty Dollar. I tried to show that you just can't speak of Americans quite that way. The notion that we are a pluralistic nation wasn't always fully grasped by so many international visitors.

By the way, our program was unique in that, not only did international visitors have the opportunity of seeing Americans, but we brought international visitors themselves together. So we'd bring the people from 40-50 different countries; and they themselves would meet, not only Americans, but see one another.

M: It becomes multilateral as well as bilateral.

R: It surely was. I think the program has a tremendous role to play in American international policy and goodwill.

M: Does it play that role as an end in itself? Or as a means?

R: There we have a question of philosophy. Often you hear it said that we bring over and send over students, professors, scholars, and all sorts of people of various disciplines for the purpose of giving them enriching experiences. Well, I know we give them enriching experiences. There's no doubt that when you send an American to a foreign country and he stays there for any period of time, attending a University, meeting people, hearing lectures, his life is of course enriched. And we do the same thing for all of the international visitors that we bring to the United States. But frankly, again, as a lawyer--and we are always of course a product of our disciplines--I am a teacher, yes, but essentially I'm a lawyer and a law professor. I read the statute that this Bureau of Education and Cultural Affairs was to administer. That, by the way, is an inspirational experience because the Mutual Educational and Cultural Exchange Act of 1961 sets forth the following as the purpose of the act. It says that "the purpose of this act is to enable the government of the United States to increase mutual understanding between the people of the United States and the people of other countries by means of educational and cultural exchange." This happens to be Section 101 of the Mutual Educational and Cultural Exchange Act. I memorized this section because I always kept in mind that the educational and cultural exchanges were the means to which we attained a perfectly noble and valid foreign policy objective. By the way, the rest of that section, "to strengthen the ties which unite us with other nations by demonstrating the educational and cultural interests,

developments and achievements of the people of the United States and other nations"--it goes on to say, "to promote international cooperation for educational and cultural advancement," and this is the part that I particularly like--"and thus"--it almost sounds like an Aristotlean syllogism. "And thus to assist in the development of friendly, sympathetic and peaceful relations between the united States and the other countries of the world." So you see the mission of this statute was, and it's a foreign policy statute, to establish a bureau within the State department, the purpose of which ultimately was to assist in development of friendly, sympathetic, and peaceful relations.

Now, how do we do that? Well, the means that this particular bureau has available are education and cultural exchanges. So if you were to ask me, "What is the end," I would say that this was to be the means--educational and cultural exchange are the means. For that reason I thought that its placement in the Department of State was proper because it is there that we know and see articulated, and more-or-less established, the foreign policy. Of course, when I say the State department, I know the Secretary of State is of course the means through which the President acts and speaks in foreign affairs.

M: Would you say that your view of this bureau's functions is different than it had been previous to your tenure, or pretty consistent?

R: Let me say this. From time to time there has been a certain amount of vacillation, depending upon the views of the particular Assistant Secretary. And the Assistant Secretary can be just as influential as he is active in the leadership that he brings to bear. Among many educational colleagues of mine, I've heard it expressed that the foreign policy aspect wasn't relevant; we are there to give "enriching experiences," and I would say that

this is one of the areas that there is some philosophical difference as to the commitment. I am firmly and wholeheartedly committed to educational and cultural exchanges. However, I take the view that these are cultural exchanges that are being conducted pursuant to an act of Congress, that has a particular foreign policy objective.

M: Going back to what you stated, the purpose of the act was to accomplish certain things.

R: Yes. Perhaps it's a matter of degree, out of fairness to some of my educational colleagues. Others would feel that it's a matter of degree. They feel, "Well, you give the educational experience; don't worry about foreign policy objectives." You see, I take the view that the foreign policy objective here is not only good for America but it's good for the world. I take the view that we need not be ashamed of saying that we're trying to develop friendly, peaceful, sympathetic relations. You ought to perhaps also know--I believe you do--that in the selection of students and the selection of scholars, that is done by the Board of Foreign Scholarships. So, you see, we are completely immune from what might be termed--[in] the selection of these students and scholars--what might be termed partisan politics. I speak of an American foreign policy goal, I didn't really speak of that which might be termed a partisan political advantage. As a matter of fact, I think that this is one of the misunderstandings in the role of the Bureau on occasion.

M: That it is partisan?

R: Some might believe that it is. But I cannot say that that was so at all. I never heard any one of our top officials in the Bureau ever take the view that this was there to accomplish a partisan purpose. But it was there to accomplish an American foreign policy objective.

M: In regard to that partisanship, how much, if any, participation is there in the appointment to the job by the concerned congressmen--such as Senator Fulbright, for example? Would an appointment of anybody to that position have to be cleared with Senator Fulbright?

R: Not have to be, by no means. I'm sure that the President has the absolute power to appoint any Assistant Secretary of State that he wishes. I think that in view of the great interest of Senator Fulbright and the program that many still regard as the Fulbright Program--you see the Fulbright Program is perhaps the heart of the educational aspect of the work of the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs. They still loosely refer to it as the Fulbright Program. The Mutual Educational and Cultural Exchange Act that that Bureau administers is loosely or popularly referred to as the Fulbright-Hayes Act. So there's no doubt by virtue of the great interest of Senator Fulbright--and I know there's interest, because I discussed it with him on many occasions--

M: Does he pay fairly close attention to what's going on?

R: Yes, indeed. As a matter of fact, Senator Fulbright is, as you know, a member of the so-called Rusk Committee which was designed to ascertain what do we do with the so-called CIA orphans. In that connection I had an occasion to discuss the future of the program. I spoke with Senator Fulbright at the very beginning of my tenure. Senator Fulbright was most gracious at and surrounding the time of my confirmation as Assistant Secretary. So I have absolutely no doubt of the Senator's continuing interest in the program.

M: I noticed the portrait on the wall.

R: That's very interesting. That's a marvelous dedication, isn't it? I think he says "with admiration and affection." Since you refer to some of the

pictures on the wall, I think none of the pictures that you see in these chambers were requested, and that's one reason why I'm particularly proud of them. I went to see Senator Fulbright, had a wonderful chat with him. He knew something about my background; I told him a little more. You see, my prior confirmation by the Senate had been by the Judiciary Committee.

M: On the Claims Commission?

R: On the Claims Commission I appeared before the Judiciary Committee. This was the first time that I appeared before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. So I was very touched by the fact that the day after I had this very nice luncheon engagement with Senator Fulbright I arrived at my office and there was this beautiful picture with this very lovely inscription. And the following day I received a copy of his book in Italian. It apparently had been translated into Italian. I must say that it was a very nice feeling that apparently he was pleased with the things that I had told him about my attempting to keep the program alive and keep all of its parts going during the period of budgetary stringency.

Of course this was, as I well knew, a period of budgetary stringency. Unfortunately we always hit so-called culture areas. This wasn't something new to me, that a program such as educational and cultural activities would have been severely hit. It reminded me a bit of my experiences on law school faculties, particularly on faculty curriculum committees. Whenever a fellow who had a real practical so-called bread-and-butter subject wanted more time for his course, he always said how about getting rid of the course on jurisprudence, legal history--if any course sounded like a culture course, that's the course that took the beating. And I thought I was back in those days when I realized that here I was, once again, about to fight for a budget when the budget was competing with so many other international and national needs.

M: The key man in that budget fight business is Congressman John Rooney, and he's your congressman, I take it. Is that correct?

R: Yes, it developed that by virtue of a reapportionment--my congressman had been Congressman Carey, but I don't know whether this was just before or immediately after I became Assistant Secretary of State--by virtue of reapportionment my congressman became Congressman Rooney. I am a Bay Ridgeite. I always maintained my home in Bay Ridge, Brooklyn. So the congressman for that area now is, and was I think, immediately after I became Assistant Secretary, Congressman John Rooney.

M: Did he play a part in your original appointment?

R: No. My appointment, as I indicated, stemmed from Mr. Macy's recommendation.

M: I just wondered whether or not they went to the local congressman involved--particularly him because he's so close to the State department budget.

R: No. That was something that might have been assumed. My policy was never to comment, and I simply discretely avoided any such questions. When the questions were asked I avoided the responses because I could understand why one might feel that. But that wasn't so at all. From what I gather from Mr. Macy, I think he was interested in looking for someone whose reputation wasn't merely that of a scholar and someone who had merely written books and had taught and knew the academic world, but someone who had earned a reputation as a good administrator. It was Mr. Macy who, I'm sure, was quite impressed by what we had done in the Foreign Claims Settlement Commission. The Commission, by the way, administered a program of war claims, involving roughly 23,800 claims. We did that in a four-year period.

M: This would be from World War II?

R: These were World War II claims. The law was passed on October 22, 1962.

I was then chairman of the Commission. I testified before--I was the Administration witness--the Interstate and Foreign Affairs Committee of the House. That law was passed. Pursuant to that law the President was to appoint members of the Commission. He could have reappointed the three existing members within a year, and so on October 22, 1963, President Kennedy reappointed me to the Commission. We thereby acquired a three-year term under the new statute. The prior statute gave the commissioners no tenure. We held office at the President's pleasure. Now we acquired a three-year term. And from May 7, 1963, to May 7, 1967, we administered this remarkable program where we paid, we tried to indemnify, Americans who had owned property anywhere in the world that had been destroyed by military action in World War II. So you see we had jurisdiction on a world-wide basis and we heard claims ranging from industrial complexes, oil wells, great big claimants--Ford Motors, General Motors, International Tel and Tel, IBM--to small claimants: individuals whose houses were destroyed. We even had a personal injury jurisdiction. It was a remarkable program. It was one of the most significant and dramatic experiences of my life, having heard all of these cases. That was done in four years.

M: That's a major administrative task that demonstrates administrative ability.

R: And there never was any problem concerning the proper administration of that program. We were also involved in the Philippine rogram. You might have read perhaps some question about lobbyists, or what have you.

M: That got into the public print, I believe, when the Philippine claimants made some political contributions to certain congressmen.

R: That was in the newspapers, if you remember, for quite some time, but you never read a word about the Commission itself.

M: No. That's true.

R: To go back to your original question, I believe it was Mr. Macy's thought that it would be helpful to the Bureau if the Bureau could build upon or acquire a reputation for good administration.

M: Once you were in the State department working in the C-E Bureau, did President Johnson ever indicate any specific interest in specific programs, that is, in particular things that you were doing? Did he call you about them or consult you directly about them?

R: Whenever I would see the President he would always ask how things were coming along. It was always encouraging that he would simply ask. But on specific programs our contacts were with the White House staff. Our day-to-day, or routine contacts, were either Mr. Cater, Mr. McPherson.

On one occasion I received a phone call from Joe Califano who told me that the President was interested in the Russian cultural agreement. I indicated to him that the specific responsibility for that came under the Assistant Secretary for European Affairs. I said, "That is something that John Leddy's working on, but I'm familiar with it."

He said, "Well, you look at it, the President wants to make sure that you know about it, and call me back if you're satisfied with it."

As I recall, before I even had a chance to call back, Joe called again. I then told him I had read the agreement and I had discussed it with Mr. Leddy. He said, "I'm going to tell the President you looked at it and you're satisfied with it."

And I said, "Well, I am. I discussed specific provisions with him."

M: Mr. McPherson, you mentioned, was one of your predecessors in the job that you were in, so he had occasion to know your problems.

R: I'm glad you mention Harry McPherson because he was helpful in a variety of ways. One of the first things that we did in the Bureau with White

House help and White House encouragement was to conduct a conference, called the American Effort in International Educational and Cultural Activities. This took place on June 25, 1968, and we invited people from both government and the private sector, all of whom were interested and deeply concerned with the problems of educational and cultural exchanges.

M: All Americans?

R: All Americans. It really was a true listing of Who's Who in this whole area. This was my way of not only getting to meet some of these people but also letting the private sector know that we couldn't possibly succeed without their cooperation. We needed the private sector. We wanted them to not only suggest what they thing we ought to be doing but could they do some of the things that we apparently would not have been able to do because of budgetary stringencies. It was a wonderful experience. There resulted from this a very nice summary of the discussions. I'm afraid it has some sort of an administrative confidential classification to it, but it was a wonderful one-day meeting. Harry McPherson spoke, I believe, at the luncheon; McGeorge Bundy spoke at the dinner.

M: You had the first team then.

R: It was a top-flight team. Dave Bell attended. I just wouldn't want to take up your time with the listing of all the wonderful people that were there. I learned a great deal. It was interesting to me to see how everyone had a commitment to the program and the program had what might be called a wonderful constituency but totally ineffective in helping with the budgetary problems. We were like the converters speaking to the converted.

M: Is that why there's been so many occupants of the job, this budgetary difficulty?

R: I can't say that--I don't know that. I'm of course not a typical example because obviously I assumed office in the latter part of the last year of the Johnson Administration. I really cannot answer that. It's a tough job.

M: There were four, I think--

R: That's one of the problems. I would have hoped that we could have had an Assistant Secretary stay longer, and I would hope that someone would stay that not only has a rapport and understands the academic community--which he must understand and must deal with--but is an administrator, because it's important to stay on the job, get to know the Bureau and the various offices in the Bureau and the relationship of the Bureau to the Department.

I could refer to the fact that, as I was thinking about leaving on or about the 5th of December, I wrote President Johnson a letter--in part, a letter of thanks for the great privilege that had been mine, but also a letter where I indicated some of the things that ought to be passed on to a successor. This is also the kind of information that we made available to our successors in the transition papers--and I do want to say that these transition papers are absolutely marvelous. They would have been of such great help to me had they been available to me when I took office. I had to learn simply by reading and asking questions and staying at the office until all hours of the night.

By the way this is an extremely time-consuming job. You have so many visitors to see. You never really leave the office before maybe 7 o'clock, 6 or 7 o'clock, and sometimes you've got to stay in the department because of some social function. So this is a hard job.

M: That might have something to do with the number of--

R: That's why I mention it. Yes, it's a hard job. It's not an easy job in any manner of means. And, mind you, you meet all sorts of different people

with different wants and different requests and you've got to read a briefing paper before you see these people. These are all extremely intelligent and bright people, so you can't just say, "Please send in Ambassador Jones," or "Minister whatever-the-name-may-be" and not have read about him and know something about him. So you're reading briefing papers; you are speaking to this individual and you're trying to be pleasant. He's going to ask you all sorts of questions, and you've got to answer intelligently.

M: Meanwhile, you're supposed to administer a 40-50 million dollar program.

R: In the meanwhile you're supposed to read what's in your in-basket--not to mention the speaking engagements that you have to turn down graciously.

By the way on speaking engagements, I accepted those speaking engagements that I thought would have given me an opportunity to thank the private sector, all of these wonderful people that greet and help make the stay of our foreign visitors in the United States pleasant. I went to a World Affairs Council, for example, in Los Angeles. They were thrilled that the Assistant Secretary would actually go to thank them personally for their contribution. And this of course would help them raise funds. We sometimes forget when we say to an American, "Will you entertain such-and-such a foreign dignitary," we say, in effect, "Will you take this man to dinner, will you do this, will you do that?" I know this because I used to do some of this myself. I would get phone calls, "We have Minister so-and-so and he speaks French and we have Professor so-and-so and he speaks Italian; will you take them out?" I'd say, "of course," but my "of course" means not only would I give them my time but I'm going to have to entertain these people.

M: In a very small way I know exactly. I've just participated in the international

student program on the local college campus in Arkansas, where we pay many of their local expenses. So I quite appreciate that type of activity is very important.

R: I never missed the opportunity to thank all of these volunteers for what they were doing, because this was the kind of a program which, to be successful, requires the cooperation of our citizens. I think it ought to be expanded. I think we can no longer look at it as a response to a cold war situation where we are trying to use some foreign country and foreign currency in a wise way. This is the kind of activity an advanced great nation ought to conduct, and the financing ought to be roughly commensurate to our gross national product and the fact that we are a great nation of 200 million people.

M: Of course that involves the congressional appropriations process. How constructive or how enlightened is that budgetary scrutiny by the appropriate congressional committees?

R: You know the budgetary process as well as I. That doesn't require my elaboration. I appeared before budget committees since '61 as chairman of the Commission. I had no problem as a chairman of a commission, because there I presented a program where I would say, "Mr. Chairman," be it the Senate or be it the House, "at the beginning of the fiscal year there remained 23,000 claims for decision; at the end of the year we will have so many decided." That was a tangible kind of a thing. It was just like saying, "We have a 10-story building to build; we've already built two stories,"--

M: It costs so much dollars to build additional stories--

R: Right! That wasn't a difficult budget at all. I could say the productivity per lawyer was this; now the productivity has been increased. So that, in

retrospect, was an easy kind of a budget to present. But when you come to the intangible kind of an activity, are we succeeding in obtaining mutual understanding--first of all, it's a long range goal. I cannot say to a Senator Ellender, for example, who says, "Look at the situation of France! You spent so much money in France; we still have troubles in France. Isn't that so, Mr. Secretary."

I looked up at the good Senator and the first thought that went through my mind is, "that doesn't prove that we're not doing our job. We don't know how worse off we might be if we didn't have all these contacts with these countries." I mention the word "contacts" because with some countries the educational and cultural exchange is the only true contact or bridge of understanding. Interestingly enough, I learned that many countries that don't even have relations with us wish the continuation of the educational and cultural exchange program. So you see it is a link; it is a bridge; it is a continuing communication, a continuing contact with that country. But it's hard. It's a hard program to defend, because the goal is long-range. It has no constituency as other programs. It's an amorphous type of--people of great commitment, but no effective organization, so there's no constituency, and it's hard to prove that we are succeeding.

Now in this connection I ought to refer to a report made by a very distinguished Advisory Commission on International Educational and Cultural Affairs. This is a Presidential Commission. They made a report, beautifully entitled, "Beacon of Hope." In his report they say that from their great and thorough investigation into this program, having interviewed all sorts of people all over the world, they concluded that the program was by-and-large successful. They concluded, first, that mutual understanding can be

attained, and that the program has helped attain it, and that the program has helped dispel misconceptions about America, has helped destroy stereotyping of Americans.

M: Is this a 1968 report?

R: No, unfortunately it's a '63 report, but from our experience in having written to ambassadors and all sorts of sources and other people, we find that these findings are still true. The program has been successful. However, it's very hard for me to prove to you, except by showing you the reports. Say, read the reports of our ambassadors; our ambassadors do say it's successful.

And one of the most difficult jobs that I had was answering all the letters of all the ambassadors. Sargent Shriver wrote the first letter, and said, "You can't do this--we need the program." And all these ambassadors wrote letters complaining about the cut. Well, I had to administer the cut. Our program was cut roughly 32 or 33 percent.

M: From 46 to 31 million?

R: Something like that? Yes, 31 million is what we got. The House granted 30. We went before the Senate and the Senate, I think, said 3 million more--we retained 1 million more in conference between the House and the Senate. Well, I had the difficult job of allocating that cut, and that made the job really difficult beyond words. But it had to be done. I had no choice.

M: The public prints made that cut the direct responsibility of the Viet Nam involvement. Is that pretty much your understanding of the necessity for it as well?

R: No, that is not my understanding of it. I said at the outset, there will always be either an international or a national crisis or a requirement

that will tend to have priority over this kind of a program. Whether it is the war on poverty or something else, we're back to the old discussion about the immediate need, the bread-and-butter thing versus the cultural need. What we need is a greater commitment. We have to appreciate that this also is the kind of activity that our nation must conduct in the national interest.

So, it's the easiest explanation to say Viet Nam, but the answer that I would have to give would be that, number one, we went up on the Hill at the worst time possible. First of all, we went up at a time when everyone was talking about cutting travel abroad, and here I was asking for money to send Americans abroad. As a matter of fact the Committee report of the House expressly says that we are helping to fulfill the President's wishes in cutting down travel abroad. That really was something that hit us so hard. So that was the first thing. Then, not only did we find ourselves faced with the problem of wanting to send people abroad, because that's the very heart of our program, of course--the President had in fact even alluded to exchanges. Obviously, these travel restrictions weren't going to apply to exchanges. But that was forgotten a little bit.

But the balance of payments--you remember every day we would read about balance of payments. So what are we doing? One, we're sending Americans abroad, spending taxpayer money, and two, these people spend their own money. So you see the balance of payments problem aggravated the whole thing. These two things really made the climate awful. It was obvious to me that, while things just had not broken right for the budget, and I expected a cut, I didn't expect a cut quite as severe as it was. But once it came, I simply said to the top staff, "Now, let's stop talking about what we would do if we had more; let's talk about what we can do and must

do with what we have." So we proceeded to tighten belts, and I abolished 54 positions. Parenthetically I was going to abolish quite a few of these positions anyway.

M: Overseas positions?

R: These were positions here, right in the Bureau itself. I'm talking about administrative--I'm going back to the thought of having the Bureau acquire a reputation for good, solid administration. For example, I had four special assistants when I arrived, and I just didn't know why I needed four special assistants. So I retained a staff assistant and a special assistant--a special assistant, a senior foreign service officer who would help me in maintaining a close liaison with the rest of the regional bureaus, and a staff assistant who would screen the mail. This, I thought, made sense. The other special assistants I gave line jobs. Both headed offices, which meant that they liberated some other person. So this kind of a technique was applied throughout the Bureau, and we abolished I think, 55 positions in the last fiscal year. This, by the way, meant that in the past several years the Bureau has abolished 90 positions.

M: So some of this would occur without reference to the budget.

R: Oh yes, I would have done much of this just the same. As a matter of fact, I think that the two special assistants situation I took care of before I even knew what the budget situation was.

By the way, I mentioned the relationship with other bureaus. The one thing that turned out to be eminently successful in the Department was bringing the regional bureaus closer to the work of the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs. And the fiscal '70 budget, for example, was a truly cooperative joint effort with all of the regional bureaus.

You see, when our budget cut was so severe, it was really felt by the

regional bureaus. Then they realized that in effect what had happened was that their ability to do things had been severely curtailed. Then for the first time they realized that you can't just say, "well, there's going to be a cut; let the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs take it." Now they saw that this was truly a cooperative effort. I must say, I received wonderful cooperation and in the fiscal '70 budget that I left--I worked on that budget. Since I stayed until the 10th of January, I was able to work on the entire budget preparation. That was a truly joint effort with all the regional bureaus.

M: That's something that needs to be done widely throughout government, and it's good to hear that it does happen occasionally.

R: The other thing that I think might be helpful to mention, is the role of the Assistant Secretary there, as Chairman of the Interagency Council on Educational and Cultural Exchanges. Now this is a council whose representatives are top officials in all of the agencies, some two dozen agencies.

M: Non-State department men.

R: No, not all of them non-State department; it includes the State department, who are engaged in this educational and cultural exchange effort. The policy guidance comes from the Secretary of State by presidential order. Policy guidance and leadership for this council and for all of these exchange activities having an overseas foreign policy objective or implication is the Secretary of State. And by subdelegation that function is delegated to the Assistant Secretary for Educational and Cultural Affairs. I must say that one of my pleasant and worthwhile functions was to have presided at those meetings where we see what the other man is doing, and what he does that he should no longer do. For example, what could the Bureau do to carry on where, for example, AID has phased out.

That council worked on the brain-drain problems and visa problems.

M: Did they take up any of the slack occasioned by your budget cut? Were they able to do any of that?

R: We tried to get some of that to be done, although everyone has his own problems. By the way, all the goals of all of these various efforts are not the same. They have specific goals. So just because they are all engaged in educational and cultural affairs doesn't mean that the objectives are necessarily the same. You just can't lump them all together.

M: Did you get a feeling when you were working on that budget, during the hearings and when the cut finally came, that Congress or people involved in it sort of thought, "Well, here are the colleges leading the protest against what our government is doing; most of this program goes to help academics; it won't hurt to punish these people a little bit?" Was there any of this punishment consideration?

R: Oh, I never got a feeling of that, none whatsoever. No, I never got that feeling. I would say that if I had to mention two reasons, it would be the travel abroad and the balance of payments. And this was at the most intense moment of those two factors.

M: The timing--

R: The timing was outrageous, yes.

M: Did the President or the White House staff, or both, work with any diligence to try and save at least part of the budget request that you were making--in Congress, I mean? Did they lobby effectively for your requests?

R: I don't know what was done, other than to say that I do know that there was great concern. I used to speak almost daily for a period of time with Mr. Cater. We all did what we could, but the time was just simply not right. The die had been cast long before--I shouldn't say long before--the

die had been cast before we actually went up on the Hill to present our budget requests. This seemed to be the kind of a nice cultural program that could take a real substantial cut. Period. And that was it.

M: In regard to specific programs, you mentioned the separation of any partisanship in the international educational operation. What about the cultural exchange programs? Is there great political pressure in choosing cultural groups?

R: No, not really. We welcomed people suggesting names of presentations to be sent overseas, but they all go before panels. The selection is actually by panels and screening committees. To a great extent the Bureau is really insulated from any of these influences and pressures.

By the way, on the cultural presentation aspect, let me say that whole operation was merely one million, 600 thousand dollars. The amount was small and unrelated to the publicity that it occasionally would get. As a matter of fact it was only $1,200,000 when I was there. That's a very small amount. The thing that we tried to do was to facilitate private travel, to facilitate travel of people that would go overseas and give lectures. For example, if I heard that an outstanding professor was going to a particular country, I would say, "Would you like to have our cultural affairs officer in that country arrange a lecture or two for you? How many would you like to give? What kind of an audience would you like to speak to?" So you see we played a facilitative service kind of a role. I mention this because this is the kind of work that cost the taxpayer nothing, other than the salary of our personnel, and the benefits are just enormous. So our program is really expanded by the contribution of, shall I say, again this type of private sector. We would also try to help cultural presentations the same way. We know that you're going to have

this combo in a particular city, we might pay the carfare from that city to a nearby city where we have use for it.

M: But not the whole expenses.

R: Not the whole expenses. So we would often merely cosponsor or make some small contribution. The presentation itself would get the advantage of being able to list the State department sponsorship, which is prestigious.

M: You mentioned awhile ago the committee that worked on the CIA orphans--not worth mentioning?

R: That whole area involves a classified report, and I don't know what's going to happen with that. That ultimately may require congressional action.

M: Of course, this business here can be classified as well, but that report will be available. Ultimately, assuming it's declassified, it will be in the record somewhere, so there will be a written account of that subject then, I suppose.

R: I would prefer not to discuss that and I have a perfect reason not to discuss it. Although I participated in some of the meetings of the so-called Rusk Committee that worked on that, I was not a member of it.

M: That gives you an excellent justification. What about, generally speaking, the part that American colleges had to play in specific programs at a time when a lot of leading academics were presumably out of sympathy with what the administration was doing in foreign policy? Did the college administrations cooperate in the role that they had to play with, say, international student exchange programs and things of this nature that you were involved with?

R: I'm of the opinion that the program always enjoyed the cooperation of the American academic community. You see all the campuses have a Fulbright officer who helps students. And students want these grants.

M: Sure.

R: The problems stem from the fact that there were so many who applied and so very few grants that we could make.

M: If they boycotted something, they didn't boycott this program.

R: They wanted this program. This is the sad thing. This is something they wanted, they liked. Now, one word about budget and one word about the colleges, because we've got to give the colleges credit for doing things that they did on their own without any money whatsoever. I will give you one example: One of the great efforts that occurred during the Johnson Administration was the passage of the International Education Act. I referred to the President's interest in education earlier. Well, that act was passed. That was a high point--to have an International Education Act designed to rekindle and increase interest in international affairs in the United States--very important. Unfortunately, as you know, that act was never funded. Here's a great congressional effort, a marvelous statute never funded.

You say, well, that's the end of it. Well, from my standpoint that isn't the end of it, because as a result of the passage of the Act there was a rekindling of interest in improving within the United States a competence in international studies. In effect, the colleges started to do on their own many things that the Act would have wished to be done and this, as I say, without any funds from Congress at all. So it did revive an interest; it did emphasize the importance of international studies; and many colleges organized appropriate departments and institutes even though there was no funding at all for the International Education Act. By the way, this point was actually mentioned at this meeting on June 25 that I referred to earlier as the American effort in international educational

and cultural activities. It was mentioned by then-Assistant Secretary Paul Miller of HEW. A fellow with a sense of humor who was present said, "Secretary Miller, what you're saying to us is perhaps some of these acts don't have to be funded." Well, surely that wasn't his point! His point was that the picture wasn't entirely negative and bleak.

M: What you're saying, I take it, generally is that in spite of the great budget cut there were satisfactory--

R: Response.

M: Well, and accomplishments over the last year in this area, even with the very restricted budgetary positions.

R: Right.

M: That the operation of the Bureau was not totally crippled.

R: This would not have been something that the Bureau would have done. This would have been under HEW. In spite of the budget cut, what we did was, we got not close to the bone, we got <u>to</u> the bone. We kept alive the skeleton because it was so hard to determine what programs you cut out. And whether the decision was wise or not I cannot say, but I did decide that it was the course to be followed at the time, namely try to keep the program alive, don't dismember or dismantle the organization, and let's keep these various programs going and try to add some flesh at some future year.

M: Which could be done.

R: Which can still be done because we've got the organization. We increase facilitative services; in other words we increase the services to those who go overseas on their own, you see.

M: Which are not expensive services.

R: Of course, that's practically nothing, just the cost of our own administrative staff.

M: What about toward the end of the year, were there any circumstances that involved you closely with the President in connection with your appointment to your present position?

R: I think that the President was pleased to appoint me because he personally knew of my prior consideration for a judicial post. I didn't know that there was a vacancy on the Customs Court. I learned that from the White House. As soon as I had been notified of the appointment I telephoned the President. He was very gracious; he said some awfully nice things. He said, "Well, I hope you're pleased. You'll be going back home. After all, you told me you wanted to go back to New York." So he was awfully kind and thoughtful.

M: I don't want to limit you by anything I don't know. Are there important things you would like to add that we haven't mentioned at all? Areas of discussion that I've overlooked that you think should be part of a record like this?

R: I presume that since the heart of the interview is the President and not I, I would be justified in giving my impression of the warmth of the President, his kindness--and I'd like to use that word--kindness, and admirable qualities of love of family and of people. And althought I could mention several specific incidents when I was in his presence, and he spoke as a friend, as it were, I'd like to refer to one specific incident. The day after I was sworn in in the Department of State, I received a phone call--I believe it was from Marvin Watson--where he said, "the President would like to have you come over with your family." The President knew of my rather large family. As you know, I now have twelve children; I had eleven at the time. I think it was Marvin who telephoned and said, "Ed, can you come over? The President would like to take a picture with your family."

Now, I'm not so sure whether it was Marvin or Jim Jones, either one, and I said, "By the way, my mother is here; may I ask her to come along?"

"Oh," he says, "the President wouldn't have it any other way. By all means." Well, I have what I consider to be one of the most beautiful pictures that has ever been taken of my entire family--as of that time--consisting of eleven children, myself, my wife and my mother with the President. And the President was absolutely overwhelming with the children, his ability to cope with them. He said, "Come over here, little girl." Okie [Okamoto (photographer for LBJ)] said, "Look at the President," and he told one little girl, "No, no, that doesn't apply to you. The others look at the President, you look at him." And he just grabbed her and put her between his legs and, oh, they thought this was great. The children speak of that moment so many times, and they never had any doubt about his warmth, affection and kindness.

M: Your twelfth child will never forgive you having done that so early.

R: I didn't time that right. But the picture, you see, is prominently displayed. The President later told me, "By the way, I want you to have one for all of your children and your mother." And that's exactly the quantity of pictures I received.

M: So you got thirteen prints.

R: I actually have.

M: Well, it's awfully nice of you to cooperate so generously with your time, Mr. Re. I appreciate it.

R: I'm delighted. Thank you so very much.

[End of Tape]

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By EDWARD RE

to the

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