

INTERVIEW XIII

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INTERVIEWEE: GEORGE E. REEDY

INTERVIEWER: Michael L. Gillette

PLACE: Sheraton-Washington Hotel, Washington, D.C.

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G: Let's start first with the Kennedy-Ives bill. We discussed that some last time but not in any detail.

R: Sure. This all arose because of some rather smelly revelations that came out about that time of the uses to which they were putting these various health and welfare funds that a number of the unions had come through with. Actually there were only a few instances of genuine scandal. I think there was one in the Teamsters. And also I think that in the case of the United Mine Workers--and naturally John L. Lewis was the one that started that whole thing of the health and welfare fund--there weren't any revelations of scandal per se, but it became very obvious that the fund had not been administered very prudently and that it had been brought close to bankruptcy, not because anybody was stealing but simply because they were too generous with it.

There was quite a backlash, which resulted in a number of proposals for some very restrictive legislation clamping down on labor. And Jack Kennedy, as I remember, held hearings on them. The first witness--I also remember that--was John McClellan of Arkansas, who when he actually appeared in the stand was much more conciliatory

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than anybody had expected him to be. It became apparent that McClellan wanted some legislation to control this thing, but that he wasn't really out after labor's scalp. And out of it grew this Kennedy-Ives bill. And I've forgotten the provisions now, but it was a registration thing primarily I believe, and I think that it lodged in the Labor Department the responsibility of keeping tabs on those various health and welfare funds.

At that particular point, some of the more conservative elements in the Republican Party--I mention them in this memo, the NAM and the U.S. Chamber of Commerce--got the idea that the Kennedy-Ives bill in their mind was much too weak, and that if they could wait a year they could get a much stronger bill out of the next Congress. What they were really relying upon was the mistaken belief that there would be a continuing build-up in public sentiment that would put labor totally behind the eight ball. Well, they were very foolish.

One of the things that I did, I took a look at the actual situation and what became very obvious was that, if anything, the next Congress was going to be less disposed to pass that kind of a bill than the current Congress. In a way that's too bad because some such legislation was needed, and somewhere down the road, I've forgotten exactly how, they did get some regulation of the health and welfare funds. This was sort of the last gasp of the extreme anti-labor factions of the Republican Party. I don't believe it could be revived again among even the most conservative Republicans, short of the John Birch Society. But for some reason they simply had not looked at the

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racers. They didn't realize that there was no way that the next Senate was going to be even as anti-labor as the current Senate. It simply wasn't in the cards.

I wrote this memo to Johnson, and of course what Johnson was doing there was using this memo to soften some of the real sabotage-- the Republicans were trying to sabotage the Kennedy-Ives bill. The memo was successful. That was the first time a lot of them had looked at that situation. Their hair stood up on end, because they realized that if anything, if a labor bill came before the next Congress, it was quite likely to result in pro-labor legislation. And in fact, I believe that the next Congress did pass--

G: It was the Landrum-Griffin Act.

R: --a couple of bills that were really pro-labor. You know, somewhere along the line they straightened out that incredible mess that the Republicans had gotten into on the closed shop because they didn't understand the closed shop. I can still remember that one. I can remember the legislation that got out of it. But the Congress that followed was more sympathetic to labor than that Congress was.

G: Was Johnson under any heavy pressure from anti-labor forces in Texas to support a more general, more--?

R: Not particularly. Not particularly. You know, the labor situation in Texas was really rather complex. There were certain fields in which labor was rather strong, certainly in the oil industry. And even in other areas where one would not expect it, [such as] Brown and Root. Johnson once told me that Brown and Root had a corporation, which he

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never named to me, he said it went under another name, whereby if somebody wanted a job done with a union organization, they had one all ready for them. They could give it to you either way, either union organization or non-union. The labor people were really rather strong in both the railroad industry, which at that point the railroad brotherhoods were still pretty important, and in the oil fields, and they had a fair foothold in the building trades. You know, the head of the AFL-CIO in Texas, Jerry Holleman, was out of the electricians union, the IBEW.

Texas was really full of bootleg contracts. I don't know if you're familiar with that. The Taft-Hartley Act tried to do something impossible; it tried to abolish the closed shop. Well, you cannot have union relations in the building trades without a closed shop. It simply is impossible, for all kinds of technical reasons I won't bother you with. But here it was, a law in the books that very plainly said there could be no closed shop. So what they were really doing was bootlegging contracts. They were signing closed shop contracts and pretending that they weren't closed shop. It was like the famous--Abraham Lincoln loved the story of the Irishman that walked into a saloon, said, "Give me a glass of lemonade with a drop of the crater in it unbeknownst to meself." Well, that's what they were doing, they were signing contracts with a closed shop in it "unbeknownst to meself." Jerry Holleman once told me that he really didn't give a damn about Section 12-B. You know, that's the one that--

G: 14-B, isn't it?

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- R: 14-B, you're right. That's the one that allows a state to pass anti-labor legislation stricter than that of the federal government. Jerry said it never really bothered him any. I don't know if Jerry would still take that position, but he told me [that] and he was right.
- G: Another memo that you have describes a conversation that you had with Arthur Goldberg.
- R: Yes. That was rather amusing in a way. I don't know what had gotten Arthur in that. I think he was just trying to needle me a little bit, maybe trying to needle Johnson a little bit. Because I went right into him [Goldberg] immediately, [and asked] who in the devil were the labor leaders who were so disturbed over Johnson's failure to answer the charges made by the Senate Republican Policy Committee? Well, he mentioned Reuther, which was ridiculous because Walter and I were very close friends. And obviously what he was asking for was rather foolish.

You have to understand something. The Republicans in the Senate have a totally different organizational setup than the Democrats do. On the Democratic side of the aisle in those days--and I discovered today that it's still the same, because I went up and visited the Policy Committee and talked to the staff director--in the Democrats, everything's under one tent. The Senate floor leader is chairman of the Policy Committee, chairman of the Steering Committee, chairman of the conference, and the only separate organization is the Senate Democratic Campaign Committee. That should be separate; that's an election organization. But the Republicans have a separate chairman

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for each one of those groups, and what that really means is that there's no need, that the Policy Committee doesn't have any function. See, on the Democratic side of the aisle, the Democrats use the Policy Committee in order to shape legislation to get passed. I'm not now talking about a discussion of the merits of the legislation, but how to get it passed. I don't believe most of those staff members on the Senate Republican Policy Committee could even find their way to the Senate floor, and about all they'd do is to put out political propaganda. Very, very foolish, nobody pays much attention to it. They're always putting out pamphlets showing that Democrats got arrested for moperly [?] on the highways or carrying concealed ideas or something like that.

For Arthur Goldberg to say that anybody should respond to that staff document was really rather laughable. I don't know whether Arthur was serious or not. But I had talked to Earle Clements about it, and of the people that were around Johnson, the two that dealt mostly with labor were myself and Earle Clements. As this memo said, Clements couldn't find very many--he said there were some labor people would be happy. I should add that Andy Biemiller had a big birthday party every year--he's dead now. Somebody would send him an enormous ham from Tennessee, and almost every labor leader in Washington would show up at that party. I was always invited to it, so I knew pretty well what was going on. I've forgotten whether they followed the Clements approach of taking the [Albert] Gore document on political contributions or not, just to give them something to reply to. But it

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would have been absolutely asinine for the Senate or the House Democratic leadership to respond to a bunch of anonymous assistants on the Senate Republican Policy Committee.

G: Was this also LBJ's reaction to it?

R: I don't know, but I assume so. He would react almost any way I would react in labor, because of all of the fields of government and law, this was probably where he was the weakest.

G: Now, another element of the legislative issue that did not get into the Kennedy-Ives bill was an effort by the Republicans to eliminate what they considered a no-man's land, where the National Labor Relations Board would not or could not step into some dispute and arbitrate. Do you remember that?

R: Yes. They were foolish to take that one on, because it was much too technical. One of the problems with any kind of law affecting labor is that all of these unions are different and all of these unions are affected differently by the law. You cannot pass one act that is going to hit all of these unions together. Now, there's always been a great deal of difficulty in determining the precise extent of the jurisdiction of the National Labor Relations Board. I doubt if it's been settled yet. The Taft-Hartley Act extended the jurisdiction enormously. It brought in all kinds of corporations that had not been under the labor law before. That was another mistake the Republicans made. I'll never forget when they called in the first general counsel under the Taft-Hartley Act. I believe his name was [Robert N.] Denham. something like that. And they asked him to give an example of a firm

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that wouldn't be covered by the act, and after about ten or fifteen minutes of very hard thinking all he could come up with was a California brick manufacturer that made his bricks out of material drawn entirely out of California and who sold 85 per cent of the product within the state of California.

But it was a terribly tricky piece of business. In the Senate or the House, when legislation gets that complex, the only way you can pass it is by universal agreement. This is one of the difficulties with [situs picketing]. George Meany was terribly interested in situs picketing and he really had a rather good case. That's a troublesome business, that situs picketing. Obviously there's something wrong with just permitting indiscriminate picketing, but on the other hand, not to allow situs picketing really takes from the unions, many of them, a very normal weapon. And I think that if the thing hadn't been so complex, we could have passed some kind of a bill. But when legislation gets that complex, the Senate will not pass it unless there's universal agreement. You couldn't get universal agreement. The same thing happened to this Republican effort to try to extend the jurisdiction of the NLRB even further. It was just too complex, nobody wanted to play with it.

G: Well, I think we've covered the labor bill pretty much. Of course it was passed by the Senate but not by the House.

Let's go on to the federal aid to education, the National Defense Education Act. In the years prior to that, evidently the aid bills had taken the form of school construction and these had been defeated.

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Here you had loans and grants under the guise of defense. Let me ask you to elaborate on that and give the context of it.

R: You know, the thing that I think Johnson was the most serious about was doing something about education. His real desire was really to make education absolutely free all the way up I think to the Ph.D. level, if he had known there was such a level. Now, what had frustrated him in the past was it had been impossible to get any federal aid directly to the students. Everyone was afraid of any form of aid to the students because they thought it might reopen the church-state controversy, which in most instances it would.

I think what happened here is that in the course of the hearings on the outer space act, we came across some figures that at the time seemed frightening--they no longer frighten me, but then even I was impressed by them--as to the so-called tremendous lead the Russians had over us in a number of fields of technology. I remember the big one was metallurgists, where they had ten times, or something like that, as many metallurgists as we did. To a great extent that was used deliberately by Johnson to attempt to get some aid directly to students. Up to that point there hadn't been a chance of anything except construction funds and possibly some contract grants for research. But Johnson had his chance here, and he took it. In retrospect I've sometimes wondered whether it was a wise course or not, but now that's an irrelevant consideration. You couldn't possibly pull it back now without really creating serious damage, because everybody's come to depend upon it.

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G: Where did the idea originate to sell it as a defense measure, the National Defense Education Act?

R: I'm not sure. I'm not sure, but it really doesn't matter too much, because at that particular moment somebody was going to come up with that kind of an idea. The outer space thing really had made a tremendous turnaround in the thinking of many people.

G: Did Johnson really believe that this was necessary as a way to counter the Russian advances in space?

R: I don't know whether he did or not, but he really did believe that everybody should get an education. I think he would have skinned the cat with any knife that anybody handed to him.

G: Yes.

Now the amount allocated was cut sizably from I think seventeen to five million dollars, for one thing. I think John Sherman Cooper was the one that introduced that amendment.

R: Was that a cut in the authorization or in the appropriation?

G: It was in the authorization, yes. Do you know why?

R: No. That's one of those things I've forgotten. I could only guess. I've really forgotten the reason why. [I'm] especially surprised that that would come from John Sherman Cooper.

G: [Patrick] McNamara also included an amendment that was defeated, calling for some aid to school construction. Do you remember that?

R: I don't remember that specific thing, but McNamara--you're talking about McNamara of Michigan now?

G: Yes.

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- R: McNamara was always trying to push some sort of school construction bill. Basically, however, what you must realize is he was trying to find some way of getting money to parochial schools. I don't know that that was true in this particular case or not, but I do know that everybody was afraid that that's what he was doing.
- G: Anything else on the passage of that?
- R: Not really. It wasn't hard to put across because, again, [of] those figures on the space act. Since then I have realized that that really is not an adequate reason. But those figures in the space act had impressed everybody, and it wasn't too hard to put it across.
- G: I gather some information had come out of that Joint Committee on Atomic Energy that LBJ was on, too.
- R: Maybe, but that wasn't quite as impressive because, you see, the big thing here, we were way ahead of the Russians in atomic energy. But if you start looking at this as a horse race, the Russians had definitely gotten ahead of us in outer space, largely because of their work with rocketry and also because they had gotten ahead of us in metallurgy. What I didn't realize at the time, [and] what I realize now, [is] that was only a very temporary leadership. In a few years metallurgists were a drug on the market. Besides, it's always a mistake to try to just react that way. Something may have come out of the Atomic Energy Committee, but it wouldn't have been as important as the outer space stuff.
- G: Okay.

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Now that summer LBJ was away a good deal and [Mike] Mansfield was acting as leader. Did this give Mansfield the chance to develop leadership abilities?

R: Not particularly. I don't think he was any different at the end than he was in the first place. His whole style of leadership was quite different than Johnson's. I think Mansfield looked upon the leadership as somewhat of a moral post. In his mind, the leader was somebody that should stake out clear-cut, moral, correct positions for the United States. To some extent he was like Bill Knowland on it, except of course Knowland was conservative and Mike was liberal. But they both had the same concept of leadership, that of raising a banner around which good men could repair. Mike never really got very good at the art of getting a bill through the Senate as Johnson did. Earle Clements had a considerable amount of ability in that regard, but he'd gotten defeated. That's why Mike replaced him as the assistant leader. Everybody respected Mike, that was the big thing. I can't think of anybody in the Senate that didn't.

G: There is some indication that Johnson helped improve the relationship between Wayne Morse and Dick Neuberger. Do you remember that?

R: Could be. Oh, hard to tell. You know, Morse was very cantankerous. Morse deliberately loved to pick fights. That goes way back. He picked one with Abe Fortas when Fortas was under secretary of the interior. I read the correspondence between the two men, and I read it and reread it and reread it and reread it, and I never found what

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in the devil they were fighting about. He went down to Texas and he made a speech attacking Johnson right in the heart of Texas.

And Neuberger was equally bewildered as to why he was being [attacked]. I suspected that Neuberger was going to get into some trouble because he was brash. He did not realize that the Senate of the United States was somewhat different than a state legislature. I remember he charged right into the Senate press gallery one day to hand out press releases, and believe me, the press is very stuffy about that. They do not like senators coming into the press gallery.

Oh, Johnson may have intervened, but I didn't know about it and I don't recall the thing getting any better.

G: Okay.

There was an issue that came up in August to the effect that [Ralph] Yarborough had taken Dallas' side against Houston in a Civil Aeronautics Board matter. Do you remember that?

R: No, I don't remember it.

G: I don't know whether there was any truth in it.

R: What was it about?

G: I don't--let's see. I've got the--

(Interruption)

--all right. Well, let's go into this on tape.

R: On this whole question of the Supreme Court bills, no one in the world could defeat those bills merely by opposing them. The issues were incredibly complex, and I've often wondered whether if we had passed the bills they might not have gone down the drain anyway, because

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on the first test the Supreme Court might have declared them unconstitutional and that would have been that.

But what happened here was a deliberate effort to introduce every possible complication, because the Senate would have looked very bad passing any of those bills. And yet in a sense you couldn't stop anybody from passing them. These were all bills against thievery or bills against--they all had a highly emotional significance to them, but nobody really knew what they'd do. For example, the Smith bill. The only thing that was clear-cut about the Smith bill was it would have an impact upon railroad legislation that had been passed for about seventy or even eighty-odd years. Nobody was quite sure what the impact was. You know, something like the Bricker Amendment. The only thing you knew for sure was if the Bricker Amendment was passed then the federal government could no longer regulate the hunting of wild geese. That was the only thing that was clear about the Bricker Amendment. They weren't the sort of things that could be met head on, because even though most of the Senate was against them, most senators were very, very reluctant to go on record against them. And everything that you see in there was a deliberate exercise in obfuscation.

G: Do you recall if the situation really worsened when the liberals attempted to bring the bills up in order to show that they could defeat them and then lost control of the situation?

R: It didn't really worsen, no, because there were still all kinds of parliamentary devices that could be used to take care of it. But it might have been better if the liberals hadn't brought it up at all,

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because there were too many members of the Senate who actually were against those bills but simply didn't want to vote against them. Much too dangerous.

G: My notes indicate that Johnson persuaded Milton Young to take a walk, and for other people to--

R: Milt Young?

G: Yes.

R: That wasn't very hard to do. Milt Young was an extraordinarily liberal senator, something that most people didn't realize. He was one of the last of those real prairie progressives. He was pro-labor right down the line. A very liberal man.

G: He got [Robert] Kerr to sit out the vote, stay in the cloakroom.

R: Well, that wasn't too hard to do either. Of the various things you've read to me, the greater difficulties would be with [George] Smathers and with Bennett. But Kerr was, I wouldn't say pro-labor, but he definitely was not anti-labor. Let's see, who else have you read there?

G: Wallace Bennett, [Allen] Frear.

R: Bennett and Frear were both very, very conservative. Frear was a rather unusual man; you could usually talk him into almost anything with a little bit of fast conversation. Bennett wasn't so simple. Bennett was a rather hard-shell conservative--not nutty, he wasn't a nutty conservative, but he was hard-shell, and that was a hard man to move. I don't know how Johnson ever did it.

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G: Now, I think it was the columnist David Lawrence who came out and said that Johnson had betrayed the South after this. Do you remember that article? It really stirred up a lot.

R: I think he said it more than once.

G: Why would he do that?

R: Well, Lawrence was one of the most conservative members of the Washington press corps. He wasn't as far as Fulton Lewis, Jr. or anybody like that, but Lawrence was about as far south as you could get in terms of conservatism.

G: Well, what was Johnson's reaction to the headlines that he had betrayed the South?

R: Oh, I don't think he bothered about it too much, because--

G: He got a lot of bad press out of this.

R: Yes, but how long does that last? Even Johnson realized that the only thing bad about bad press is if it leaves lasting impressions, and that wasn't going to leave lasting impressions. You were beginning to get a shift in the South even then, growing union organizations. And it may well be that Johnson was actually helped by those headlines. I certainly think his national career was.

G: Did he ask you to in any way counter the Lawrence piece?

R: No. No. In the first place, he would have known it was impossible, that there wasn't much he could do except just answer the mail. I probably had to answer an awful lot of mail. The most revealing thing would be to go and look at the mail that I answered during that period. But he didn't know anything about it other than that.

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G: The next day he wrote to [Richard] Russell that he was going back to Texas and let things settle down for a while. Can you recall his reasoning there?

R: Simply to drop out of sight for a little while and let nature take its course, which it did. The whole thing blew over in a couple of weeks.

G: Now, his mother was ailing at this point.

R: I don't think that had anything to do with it.

G: Really, okay. Let me ask you about that fall when his mother passed away. You were in Texas at that time?

R: Yes.

G: Let me ask you what you remember about that?

R: Very little. The only thing I'd really recall is Lillian and I were watching TV one night when they suddenly interrupted and Paul Bolton came on KTBC to announce that Rebekah Baines Johnson, mother of the--I think--what year was that?

G: 1958.

R: --mother of the Senate Democratic Leader had died that night, and Paul had a little eulogy and quite a little bit about it. Strangely enough, I don't remember much more. Frankly, the lady was not very popular with me, nor was she very popular with many other people. I have been amazed at some of the expressions that I have run into since her death.

G: How did her death affect LBJ? Did it change him at all?

R: Not particularly. He was very peculiar about any kind of a death. Death and funerals depressed him terribly, but once the funeral was

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over, all of a sudden it seemed to go out of his mind completely. To him the end of the funeral was--he hated long funerals. He would go and he would sit there and he'd suffer through the funeral. But it was well for him that he did, because the second it was over, it was gone. One of those things he took for granted. I don't think even his mother's death would have shaken him that way, or his father's, that is shaken him the way it would most people. He was not a man to mourn for any length of time. That doesn't mean his mourning wasn't sincere. But as far as he was concerned, once they were in the ground, that was it.

G: Now, shortly thereafter Sherman Adams resigned, almost immediately. Can you recall LBJ's reaction to that?

R: He'd rather anticipated it. I think he preferred having Slick [Wilton "Jerry"] Persons in there because he knew how to deal with Slick. Sherman Adams was a little bit more difficult to deal with in some respects. You know, Sherman kind of had the New England conscience. It was rather strange that he got into all that stuff with--what was the man's name--Goldfine or Goldfarb?

G: Bernard Goldfine.

R: Bernard Goldfine. There just wasn't much reaction. It was very obvious that the Sherman Adams resignation was inevitable.

G: LBJ did not have any role in that, did he?

R: No.

G: Also at the same time the administration was making a lot of statements about the crisis of Quemoy and Matsu.

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R: Yes.

G: Let me ask you to recall what you can about that.

R: There isn't too much to recall really. I saw Quemoy a number of years later and wondered what in the devil was all this about. Quemoy is about the size of this hotel room. There were a couple of cannon on it and that was it. I didn't know why the Chinese Mainland communists would want it and I didn't know why Chiang Kai-shek wanted to defend it. But you see, what was happening here is rather interesting. You must realize that the whole Lyndon Johnson political strategy during that period was to drive a wedge between Eisenhower and the Republican Party. Now, the Quemoy-Matsu thing was rather difficult because the conservatives in the Republican Party who normally would oppose Eisenhower in foreign policy were very strongly for defending Quemoy and Matsu. There was a complication there, too. It had become unrespectable to be an isolationist after World War II, and yet there were an awful lot of people who were really isolationists and wanted to be isolationists. One of their ways of doing it was to support Chiang Kai-shek in China just as hard as they could on the thesis, "Look, we're not going to vote for any funds to Europe until you take care of Chiang Kai-shek. He's against communists, too."

Well, when it came to defending Quemoy and Matsu, there was a rather difficult problem presented because this was one issue where the Republicans were not going to be divided. On the other hand, on the Democratic side of the aisle there were many Democrats that had very deep reservations about defending Quemoy and Matsu. So without

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some very careful work, this could have been a situation in which for once, maybe for the first time in eight years, the Democrats would have come out as Eisenhower's opponent on a foreign policy issue and the Republicans would have come out as being with him. There had to be some awful careful work there.

G: Who did the work?

R: Johnson. There was a question of leadership strategy. When I say careful work, I don't mean in the sense of digging up material and all that, but just in handling the thing they had to sail awful close to the wind.

G: I have a memo to the effect that Ben Cohen wanted LBJ to support Dean Acheson's view on this crisis, which was in effect placing the matter before the U.N.

R: You've got to put that in perspective a little bit. One of the major charges against Acheson was that he was responsible for the invasion of South Korea by North Korea. At one point he had outlined the various parts of the world which he regarded as of strategic importance to the United States. He left Korea out. And of course what the conservatives claimed was that the whole North Korean attack was because Acheson had virtually invited the North Koreans into South Korea. On this particular case, that particular bit of background caused some problems, because what it meant was that Acheson's name could be very troublesome. See, it involved a part of the world where he had been involved and for which he was under heavy attack. Therefore in a sense you couldn't exactly back up his position on that one,

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and I'm not even sure whether it was the right position or not. This is something else. I rather doubt that it was the right position. You've got to follow a certain logic. What actually happened here is that Chiang Kai-shek was on Taiwan and he was there only because it was land he held, and you'd have to make a rather difficult argument to say that they didn't have a right to hang on to Quemoy and Matsu, too. After all, he held them by right of occupation. It was a tricky one.

G: Did Johnson get pressure from the China lobby, the Henry Luces and people?

R: Oh, yes, but it's nothing that he couldn't resist. Not only that, he had rather good relations with some of the members of the China lobby. His relations with Bill Knowland were very good. His relations with Styles Bridges were very good, and Styles would always protect him.

G: Okay.

(Interruption)

R: --the [poultry processing] plant in Fredericksburg.

G: What do you remember about that?

R: Oh, just that it was kind of a great day for Fredericksburg because Fredericksburg, economically, had fallen on evil times. The biggest single commodity out of Fredericksburg were those very fine peaches. They produce a marvelous peach; it doesn't look very good but it has a terrific flavor. It's pretty hard for a place to make a living out of that, but there's not much more you can do in Fredericksburg. So

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this new poultry plant really opened up all sorts of economic vistas for them.

"Ernest Stubbs, go hunting" [reading from notes]. Of course he always went hunting.

Oh, I see where the Eugene Debs thing came to me, it's that memorandum about concentrating on Meade Alcorn. Meade Alcorn was making himself rather foolish with this socialism thing. You know, socialism had ceased to be a boogieman. It was very easy to ridicule him.

I remember the tour of Oak Ridge now that I think of it. I remember the tour to Oak Ridge, and I remember having dinner with Silliman Evans. God, I don't remember that farm at all. I do remember the lunch at Hermitage. You know, I wonder. . . . It may be that that visit to the farm did just drop out of my mind, because it could not have--you know, probably about all they did was take a look at some of the cattle. But I remember the lunch at the Hermitage very well, because they gave us a meal that Andrew Jackson was supposed to have liked very much, and I kept wondering about Andrew Jackson's taste buds. Something awful with eggs and all kinds of things.

All this really was was sort of getting ready for the election. I remember flying to Austin in Silliman Evans' plane with Evans piloting it. You know, Silliman had been a pilot in World War II on that big run where they ferried planes over to Africa.

"Georgetown meeting for Homer Thornberry." I remember that although I don't think I went to it myself, to the dinner. "[LBJ]

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goes fishing with the Speaker, Homer Thornberry and Silliman Evans, later drive to the Scharnhorst Ranch." That was all just sort of moseying around the countryside. "LBJ drives to Fredericksburg to take the Speaker and Silliman"--that was because Silliman landed his plane, which I think was a Beech, if I remember correctly, I think he landed his Beech at Fredericksburg.

"Today's Health, 'The Heart Attack Saved His Life.'" I think that was that article written by Jack Harrison Pollak. Was it?

G: I don't recall the author.

R: Frank Denius. I didn't go with him on that trip to Raymondville or the McAllen Country Club.

G: You did go with him to Indianapolis.

R: Oh, sure.

G: He went to make a TV appearance with Vance Hartke.

R: I remember that well.

G: There was a rally in Indianapolis. Anything memorable about that?

R: Not really, except he had really enamored Vance Hartke. Vance Hartke turned into one of his most loyal, complete supporters in the Senate. I'll never forget it. The first time I talked to Vance, Vance had realized something that nobody else had realized, and that was that the Indiana system was made to order for somebody who was willing to take the time to go around the state and drop in on every little Democratic caucus and every little Democratic meeting and shake hands. He was mayor of Evansville at the time. I remember his telling me, he said, "I'm going to pull a big surprise here," which he did, pulled a

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hell of a big surprise, wound up United States senator when everybody was counting him out.

G: Then he [LBJ] went to Casper, Wyoming.

R: Wait a moment, let me take a look. Senator [Joseph] O'Mahoney and it wasn't Whitaker [?], what the devil was his name? You're not right about Whitaker, but I can't remember what the name was.

This is a great line, that business in Salt Lake City where he challenged Eisenhower to name any member of the Democratic leadership in Congress that he called radical or socialist. You know, that was a rather interesting point. When the Republicans were making their charge that the Democratic Party was a party of socialism and radicalism, what they were really talking about were a series of Democrats that didn't exist. You know, they sort of had the idea that there was a Rooseveltian mafia floating around that had taken the gospel of Karl Marx and sold it to the Democratic Party. Johnson had a very effective response to all that, "Do you think Harry Byrd is a socialist? How about John Stennis? How about Walter George? How about Dick Russell?" Of course, he could make the thing sound so damn ridiculous that even Meade Alcorn would have to back up.

What the devil is HR 3?

G: Oh, that's I think the Smith bill again, or one of the anti [Court bills].

R: Oh! I thought the Smith Bill was HR 1.

G: Well, anyway, HR 3 I think was one of the. . . .

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R: This business about Houston and Russ Jolley--Mayor Cutrer, who the devil is Mayor Cutrer?

G: Oh, it's Louis Cutrer.

R: Dub Singleton, Horace Busby, Texas League of Municipalities, that was just all touching base in Texas.

G: That was election day, and of course the Democrats did have a big sweep. Do you recall that?

R: Oh, and how! Too big.

G: Had he anticipated that?

R: Oh, he knew they were going to pick up seats; I don't think he anticipated that big a sweep. Actually it was too big a sweep. We didn't realize it at the time but we would have been much better off if the Democrats hadn't won as many seats. For one thing, with that kind of a majority the Democrats no longer had the unifying force of opposing the Republicans, which meant that they were willing to go off in all kinds of different directions. Also, the Republicans really had gotten themselves into a bad deal that year. You know, to have Knowland resign his Senate seat to run for governor against Pat Brown--you didn't run against Pat Brown. If you run against Pat Brown, it just meant you were running for the publicity because you weren't going to defeat him in California. The only thing that was even close out there was Goody [Goodwin] Knight. There was a chance that Goody Knight might have been able to defeat Clair Engle. Actually Goody Knight was somewhat more liberal than Clair Engle and that was kind of a liberal year. They defeated [John] Bricker, [Charles]

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Potter, [Edward] Thye--who was a fairly decent man--[Chapman] Revercomb, [George] Malone, [Arthur] Watkins.

I remember that, [Nelson] Rockefeller winning the governorship from [Averell] Harriman.

We were pretty well resigned to the fact that [Ernest] McFarland was going to lose. Everything I had heard had indicated that [Hugh] Scott was going to defeat [George] Leader, but from the standpoint of Democratic Party policy and what the Democrats wanted, Scott was no problem. Nobody shed bitter tears over it.

What we didn't realize at the time, again, was that this huge majority was really going to make it more difficult to get cohesion out of the Democrats. It worked two ways. One, because of the huge majority, everybody expected Lyndon Johnson to take over the government virtually, which he couldn't do. Two, it made it more difficult for him to get cohesion out of the Democrats. And three, it really brought Eisenhower out fighting. You'll notice if you look at it very carefully that LBJ did not do too well during those last two years. Eisenhower started to exercise the veto, and it was potent.

See, all of a sudden George Meany came out for the Kennedy-Ives bill, or rather legislation like it. But also he stuck in his revision of 14-B. Poor George.

G: That fall LBJ published an article entitled "My Political Philosophy." Do you recall that?

R: Is that the "I'm a free man--"?

G: Texas Quarterly.

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R: Busby wrote that.

G: Did he?

R: I was always a little worried about it, because what it seemed to be saying--but it was effective, there's no doubt about that. I didn't like what it said, but that's another point. It sounded awful nice.

Ho-ho-ho-ho-ho! I remember the Stu Alsop trip. That was the trip, I'll never forget Stu Alsop in that swimming pool. Here we had this heated swimming pool and he was in this floating chair. One of the servants had given him a Scotch and soda, and I took a look and I said to myself, "For the love of God, Stewart, I'd sure like to have one of those Christ-how-the-wind-blew columns of yours right now."

He had the dinner for Paul Kilday.

G: Now there's an indication that LBJ invited a lot of the newly-elected liberal senators to the Ranch before Congress convened. Do you remember that?

R: He invited some of them. I don't think--he may have invited them all.

G: Do you recall the purpose of those?

R: Just to bring them into camp. It was to make friends with them early.

I remember Paul Butler and the civil rights controversy.

"Johnsons and Alsops go fishing"--God! If you knew how funny that line was, "Johnsons and Alsops go fishing later that afternoon and visit the Scharnhorst Ranch." They gathered around one of those tanks out in the field. I've forgotten who the attendant was now, it wasn't Gene [Williams], but he'd bait the hooks, toss them out in the water, hand it to Stu Alsop. One of the funniest things I have ever seen

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in the country. Have you ever seen one of these satires on the Englishman in the jungle, all dressed, with a native bringing him all of the food on a silver plate? That's what that fishing was like.

But let me get back for a second to this announcement of Paul Butler's. I could see problems right there. Paul Butler at that point had already decided to pitch in his fortunes with Jack Kennedy and he made very little disguise of it, virtually none. The Democratic National Committee for all practical purposes became a Kennedy preserve. And I remember looking at that announcement and realizing that what was going to happen here was that he was trying to put LBJ on an extreme spot. You see, when you get into civil rights legislation, then Jack Kennedy could say anything he wanted to. But it's a little bit different [for LBJ]; the Senate Democratic leader has the responsibility of pulling things together.

Butler did a number of things like that. In a way it was almost outrageous, the manner in which he used the Democratic National Committee to promote Kennedy's presidential fortunes. Now, at that particular point I am not sure whether Johnson was really thinking of the presidency or not. I have no way of knowing. I rather doubt it. He was beginning to get in that mood where he wasn't very happy with politics, where he was thinking of a complete change of life and everything else. It's terribly difficult to decide just what his motives were at that point. But I know that Paul Butler identified him as the only real opponent to Kennedy. [Stuart] Symington was regarded as an opponent, and [Hubert] Humphrey was regarded as an

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opponent, but they weren't worried about them. They were worried about LBJ.

(Interruption)

G: You were instrumental in preparing his address to the U.N.

R: No. There's a very difficult little piece of business here. I don't quite know how to handle it, because it involves another man that I really like. What happened here is that when this opportunity came up to present the U.N. resolution, Johnson immediately thought of Horace Busby as the person to write the speech, and that was because Busby had written a really excellent speech which Johnson had delivered to the Democratic caucus in January of 1958 probably. And it was a very effective speech. But there was a difficulty here. Buzz had no real experience with the United Nations, and the speech that he wrote would have been a very difficult one, because I remember it was full of "frontier". He had the word frontier in there about eighty-five times. I don't know, but it was at least that. And you know, among Europeans a frontier is something you cross when you start a war and stayed across into the new frontier.

Well, I didn't quite know what to do, because Johnson would have just assumed that I was jealous if I had criticized the speech. He was like that. And thank God Eilene Galloway was there. You know, Johnson was a little afraid of women, especially women like Eilene Galloway, who was--have you talked to Eilene?

G: Yes.

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R: Well, as you know, she's quite--I'm very fond of Eilene, but she has real force, real force, and she just told him flatly that the speech would never do, which it wouldn't. And Eilene was the one that really wrote it. Eilene did a good framework for the speech and then it was given to Buzz, who smoothed it up a bit and put it into more readable English. But it was a very difficult situation all around. Eilene was absolutely right. Buzz, who had never been around the U.N. and who had had very little experience with other countries, hadn't realized that the kind of speech that would go over for a Democratic caucus could really cause some bad troubles in an international assembly.

I can still recall, we went up to New York and Henry Cabot Lodge was the ambassador to the U.N. at that particular point. We had dinner with him up at the Waldorf Towers, one of the finest steaks I've ever eaten in my life. I don't think he got that from the Waldorf; he must have supplied his own beef.

G: Let me ask you to back up a minute. Hadn't you suggested the idea of Johnson addressing the U.N.?

R: Sure.

G: Well, how did the invitation come down?

R: I've forgotten exactly how it happened, but the--

G: Did Lodge invite him?

R: No, Lodge couldn't have done that. It probably came from Eisenhower himself. You know there was a great deal of difficulty on this because when Johnson had started the outer space hearings, they were

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pooh-poohed by the Eisenhower Administration. I think Sherman Adams made some crack about "let Lyndon Johnson play outer space basketball" or something like that. And consequently getting the act through was quite an undertaking. I've forgotten where the original suggestion came from.

I had been very intimately involved with the whole thing. What actually happened on the outer space deal was that Charlie Bruten [?] came down to Texas after the Russians put up their first satellite, and Charlie sold me on the thesis that we ought to get busy with the Senate Preparedness Committee and really go into it, and I sold Johnson on it. But then Buzz wrote that terrific speech--and it was terrific, no doubt, one of the best I've ever read--for the Senate Democratic Caucus, and after that he thought of Buzz in terms of speeches. And of course Johnson himself had never been around the United Nations and didn't realize that there were certain types of speeches that wouldn't go over.

But what I'm trying to remember now is just where the idea originated. The memo there that is being referred to I think was written when he asked me for advice on whether he should do it or not. I wrote a memo to him--I haven't seen the memo in years, but I remember the substance of it--that I thought it was terribly important for the United States that he do it, because if you had a resolution that was being presented under a Republican administration, to have the leader of the opposition present it would just be terrific. Well, [reading memo] "[It] nails down unmistakably the essential unity of the United

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States on the outer space question. He'll appear before the United Nations in three roles: leader of the Democratic Party, leader of the Senate, the man who originally proposed the idea." You know, Johnson was the first man to ever propose that the United Nations take over the whole project of exploration of outer space. It's funny how many people forgot that, but that was one of his early proposals. That was one I did write in.

G: That was your idea to do it?

R: Yes, that was my idea. I was terribly interested in the thing at the time. If you read this, this is not a memorandum proposing that he address the United Nations. What it is is a memorandum trying to give him some philosophy on how to approach the address. ***

G: Was there any rivalry between Johnson and Henry Cabot Lodge for publicity at the time?

R: No. No. Not a bit. Not a bit. In fact, I can't imagine Henry Cabot Lodge entering into that kind of rivalry. He's a very easy man to get along with. You know, I'd known him a long time, and he definitely is not a lens louse or a publicity hog. Let's see, who was it he ran with? On what presidential ticket was it?

G: Nixon?

R: Nixon, that's right. The trouble was, they couldn't even get him to get out and make a couple of speeches. He'd make about two speeches a day and that was it. He wouldn't shake hands.

G: Anything else on the trip to New York or the speech?

*** See document appended to transcript.

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R: Not too much. I've given you the guts of it. The person that deserves the primary credit for it was Eilene Galloway, that is for the actual wording of the speech, even though the final wording was done by Busby and most of the ideas in the speech did come out of me. That is the idea of the joint exploration of [outer space], the basic thrust pretty much.

G: How well received was the speech?

R: Very well received. Very well received. It really was a good speech, after Eilene had set down an adequate framework and Buzz had gone over it and put it into more graceful English. The ideas behind it were the kind that had a genuine appeal at that particular time.

G: Well, why didn't the idea go forward?

R: Oh, you'd have to have more historical perspective than I do. I suspect that at that particular point the Russians still had their tremendous lead in rocketry. And they did, their lead in rocketry was just way over ours. And I think the Russians probably interpreted this as a bid on our part to catch up to them, you know, make it an outer space thing, then we'd get all of the technology that they've got. This was one area of technology, it's amazing how far ahead they were, and not just because of the Bolsheviks, who are a recent development. You look at the history of it you will discover that the Russians were playing with rockets in the last century. This is not a new thing with them.

G: So this is the sort of proposal that one side, which thinks it's behind, makes--?

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R: I don't think that's why we did it, but I'm just speculating that that's why the thing fell between stools, because I do know something about communist reactions, and the communists would not accept the fact that we were offering in good faith, which we were.

G: When LBJ returned to Washington, he met with President Eisenhower about it, briefing him on his trip to the U.N. Anything there that you recall?

R: Not really. You know, I don't think Eisenhower was too much interested in the whole project. To some extent I think Eisenhower had come to the realization that something had to be done. But the meeting between the two men on that particular point had nothing noteworthy to it. It could have been scripted in advance.

(Interruption)

What happened there is that, largely through the Kazens down in Laredo, we had gotten word that [Adolfo] Lopez Mateos wanted to have a meeting with Johnson. Now, it was very awkward, because this was before the Mexican election. There was no doubt whatsoever that Lopez Mateos was going to be elected president of Mexico, but the State Department advised Johnson very strongly against it, because it would just look peculiar, look as though he were in there interfering in a political campaign. But after the election was over, the approaches were made again, and this time the State Department said okay.

Now, the trouble was that because of the heart attack Johnson did not want to go to Mexico City, that altitude. So the meeting was arranged at Acapulco. I had quite a time. I really felt kind of

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sorry for him. He stayed on the Mexican presidential yacht. I stayed in the Club de Pesca, which was owned by Miguel Guajardo. I got to know Miguel very well during that. I went in advance and did some of the advance work.

And the meeting was rather successful, except we never did find out exactly why Lopez Mateos wanted to meet with him. The closest we could get is that Lopez had been reading somewhere about Johnson and had come to the conclusion that he and Johnson had had similar childhoods. They were both born to very poor families. Somewhere Johnson talked about riding to school on the back of a mule. Well, Lopez had had to ride to school on the back of a burro. Altogether, though, it was kind of a love feast with--oh, what was the name of that very remarkable Mexican? Justo Sierra. Justo Sierra, you have to know something about Mexican history. But he and his father and his father before him had somehow been in with almost every administration in Mexico. Justo said not with Porfirio Diaz, but I wonder even there. Once I saw a picture of one of the administrations in 1916 and there was Justo's father. Well, Justo was in very strongly with Lopez Mateos, and I got to know Lopez fairly well myself. So Justo, whose English was marvelous, did the translation. Meanwhile, I stayed at the Club de Pesca, and Johnson and most of his party [stayed] out on the presidential yacht, which wouldn't run, but they had gotten the engines fixed well enough so they could take it out in the middle of the stream and get the air conditioning to work a little bit.

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So when Johnson was going on back, he thought it might be well to have somebody kind of representing him at the inauguration ceremonies of Lopez Mateos. So I literally went to Mexico [City] to represent Johnson, and I had a marvelous time. They put me up at the Hotel Monte Casino [?]. I wasn't quite sure that I was ever going to come back. He finally sent a general down there to get me with an airplane. There was a knock on my door one morning, I opened it, and there was this National Guard general with an airplane.

G: Is that right? How long were you down there?

R: Oh, I must have been down there a couple of weeks.

G: LBJ also visited Miguel Aleman down there. Do you remember that?

R: Yes, because the Aleman estate is right outside of Acapulco. You see, you had Acapulco and you got a little town called Puerto Marques, and the Aleman estate is at Pier Marques. The Aleman estate is really fantastic, it's unbelievable, all those little cottages and a little railway that runs up and down the side of the mountain, and a marvelous dining room at the bottom. There was some German baker in Acapulco that made marvelous sweet rolls, the best I've ever had. Many years later in 1960, I'll never forget coming back from Las Perlas one night. Some of the women in the party--I think it was Eloise Thornberry--said, "Let's go out in the kitchen and see if there are any of those marvelous rolls," and before I could stop her she was in the kitchen. The shriek could have been heard all the way down to the South Pole. Have you ever seen a Mexican kitchen in the tropics? Loaded with cockroaches. If you have any feelings about cockroaches,

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don't go into a Mexican kitchen south of Mexico City, which Acapulco was. But that's another story. I was always so amused by it.

My other amusing memory of it was that the embassy sent a young man down to see that I got through Mexican immigration and Mexican customs in order to get in this airplane the next morning. They had had a young fellow just down from the United States who spoke perfect Spanish. Well, he walked up to the counter and he said, "I have Senor Reedy here, muy importante." "No Reedy. No Senor Reedy." The man behind the counter never heard of me, he never heard of Reedy and all that. I couldn't speak Spanish but I saw immediately what was wrong; my problem was I didn't know how much. I'll never forget some young sergeant coming up, and he suddenly shakes hands with the official behind the desk real hard, says, "Hi, Juan, how's the kids? Come on, Mr. Reedy," and wham, I was in the airplane. He said, "You know, ten pesos will get you anything in this country." I'll never forget, though, that young fellow from the embassy standing there with his jaw dropped open, wondering what in the devil had happened.

G: That's great.

(Interruption)

R: So that was one of the best things LBJ did in the Senate, and he did it very well.

G: This was what?

R: To change the composition of the Policy Committee, and generally speaking, to change the manner in which the Senate operated. You know, there's a trick to the Senate. You can change the method of

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operation as long as you've got a sensible reason for the change, providing that you don't change any of the formal rules. And this is a lesson that most of the political reformers haven't learned, they want to write it into the rules. That's not the way you do things in the Senate and LBJ understood that.

If I remember correctly, and of course this is quite a few years back, I think what he did is to put the two members, the two objectors, on the Senate Democratic Policy Committee. You know, both the Republicans and the Democrats assign two of the very younger members to handle the consent calendar. Any day when the consent calendar comes up, if you as a senator have a consent calendar bill coming up that you want to block, you don't have to be in the Senate chamber to block it yourself. You just tell one of the senators that's there as an objector and he objects for you. So LBJ suddenly realized that that was a very good way of putting very young senators on the Policy Committee, and that's what the Policy Committee badly needed, some very young senators.

End of Tape 1 of 1 and Interview XIII

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