INTERVIEWEE: LEVERETT SALTONSTALL

INTERVIEWER: JOE B. FRANTZ

October 31, 1968, in his office, Boston, Massachusetts

F: Senator, to begin, tell us a little bit about yourself and how you came to be in the United States Senate.

S: Well, I started in politics as an alderman in Newton in 1919, or 1920, and I went from there to be an assistant district attorney of Middlesex County which is our greater Boston area, and then I went from there to the state legislature for fourteen years. And eight of those years I was the speaker of the House--for four terms. I then ran for the Governor of the state and received the nomination for Lt. Governor. That was in 1936. That was the great Roosevelt year. I was defeated by a checkup--recount--vote. I then ran again for Governor in 1938 and was elected for three terms. And in '44 I ran for the United States Senate where I was for twenty-two years. I had not intended to run for the United States Senate. I had intended to quit politics, but Henry Cabot Lodge resigned as a Senator to go into the Army, and when he resigned I had to appoint a successor. I appointed Sinclair Weeks, who later became the Secretary of Commerce. He said he would accept the appointment but not to run again. So I had to make a decision to run, and I did decide to run. That was in the 1944 campaign. And I served in the Senate until I retired voluntarily in January 1967.

F: Now, in 1944, when you first ran, the country went Democratic. You bucked a national trend there.

S: I did. I got a good majority vote in both 1942 and 1944. My closest

election was in 1940 which was again another Democratic year, but I just survived that.

F: I would suspect probably your greatest triumph--in a sense--was your defeat for Lt. Governor in 1936, because everything in the nation went against the Republicans that year.

S: Well, everything--that was a very lucky defeat. The Governor candidate was defeated by about 135 or 140 thousand votes. And I was defeated by 7500 votes so that I felt encouraged to try again.

F: Did you know Mr. Johnson prior to going in the United States Senate?

S: No, I did not. I knew him when he became a United States Senator, but not before.

F: You, of course, when he came in, you have always been members of opposing parties, but from my knowledge of it, you have worked rather well together.

S: I think we worked very well together in matters that were really not of a political character. He served on the Armed Services Committee under Chairman Russell, and I served on that same committee for, I guess, my whole career--twenty-two years, first on the Naval Affairs Committee and then it became the Armed Services Committee. I served also on the Appropriations Committee and I think Senator, or President, Johnson was a member of the Appropriations Committee for one or two years, as a, perhaps an ex-officio, from the Armed Services--I don't think he was ever a full-fledged member. I may be wrong on that.

F: Were you on the preparedness investigating sub-committee that Mr. Johnson headed in the latter fifties?

S: Yes, I was. I was the senior Republican on that committee. Senator Russell who was the chairman of our committee made Senator Johnson chairman of that sub-committee because Senator Harry Byrd of Virginia was the Finance Committee

chairman and he did not want to have that responsibility. So Russell, I think with a little difficulty, persuaded Johnson to do it. And when Johnson did undertake it, he did it very thoroughly and very well. I was the chairman of that sub-committee appointed by myself, you might say, when I was the chairman of the Armed Services Committee for two years and I had made myself the chairman of the investigating committee because of, you might say, a political internal row among the Republicans, and I thought it the easiest way out of it was to do the job myself.

F: This sub-committee has been a continuation of what was once known as the Truman Committee, is it not? --a straight line of progression there?

S: Yeah, I suppose you could--I would suppose that there, if my memory is right, there was an interval of several years after Truman left the Senate before it was established again. But it was established again really from the Korean crisis, as I recall it. And I was the chairman at one time there--the Korean crisis and we have a very short armament--of shells and so on--and Mrs. Smith of Maine, Senator Margaret Chase Smith, was the chairman of that sub-committee, and did an excellent job of building up the ammunition in Korea.

F: What has this committee sought to do through the years?

S: Well, the committee over the years has tried to make the Defense Department alert, to keep it on its toes, you might say, and where we got any real criticism of the department, we would have a more formal investigation. Where there were minor complaints about it, we'd do it as individuals, through our staff and through contacting the members of the Defense Department who were appropriate to the occasion.

F: Did you get involved in the inter-service rivalries?

S: A little bit between the Air and the Navy, but that was really before my

time, as I recall it. That was back with Senator Tydings and others with the relation between the aircraft carriers and the B29's and so on.

F: In the latter fifties, when Mr. Johnson was chairman, you had particularly the sort of traumatic experience of Sputnik.

S: Of what?

F: Sputnik--the first Russian missile into space.

S: Oh, yes, sure.

F: And, as I recall, that accelerated the work of the committee.

S: Well, yes, it did. When you mentioned that, Dr. Frantz, Johnson was the head of the committee that really created the NASA law--space law. And he had an assistant who later became an Assistant Professor at MIT. I forget his name for the moment. And I had an assistant who, between them, really wrote the basis of that law. And I would say that the present NASA law was really the creation of President Johnson and, if I may say so with a smile, I had something to do with it. In other words, I can see some of the lines in that law that I wrote myself.

F: For the record, who was your assistant in this?

S: Oh, I forget.

F: Well, we can come back to that.

S: It was a gentleman from--who's now down at Yale.

F: Was there any serious attempt to have a joint space committee, the same way you had a joint Atomic Energy Committee between the House and the Senate?

S: Well, I think that came later. That came later. And it never came, if my memory is right, as a joint committee. It came as a Senate committee and a House committee--that was ultimately established--but there was some talk of that. But I don't remember when it was originally conceived that there was any talk of that. It was an Armed Services matter and went through the Senate as such.

F: You will recall that in 1960 one of the principal issues which later proved to be at least overrated if not false, that the Democrats raised, was that there was a missile gap.

S: Yes.

F: Is this the beginning of the feeling after Sputnik that there was such a gap. Is this where you get credence for...

S: Well, I think it was made a great issue by the presidential candidate, Senator Kennedy, but from our investigation, I don't think it was ever conceived. Now there was the, I think the Air Force, had a stronger feeling on that than the other services, and of course the investigation and the intelligence of the Air Force credited Russia with a lot more ability than I think it was later proved they have. And I certainly remember that the Air Force Intelligence and the CIA Intelligence were quite at variance and that was also brought out by a committee of the preparedness committee that President Johnson, then Senator Johnson, was the chairman. And again, I was the senior Republican. And we sat for a good many hours on that subject.

F: Was the Air Force--had a greater respect for the Russian potential than the CIA?

S: Oh, very much so.

F: What--were they dealing in the ultimate potential or...

S: Yes--the ultimate...

F: What caused the variance?

S: ...potential and as I recall it--that was some years ago now--as I recall it, the question was the method of propulsion so to speak, whether the Russians could get the missiles into the air, where the bases were, and the power behind, that would throw the missile into the air.

F: Yes. As the ranking Republican on this preparedness sub-committee, did you have the feeling that Mr. Johnson was using the committee hearings for political purposes?

S: No, I would be honest to say no, I wouldn't think so. We went into those things very, very carefully and at no time, Dr. Frantz, on the Armed Services Committee, with a very few exceptions, over the twenty-two years I've been on it, did politics come into the discussion. I tried to keep them out. I know Russell tried to keep them out. And President Johnson and the other Senators--very, very little political discussion as such. Occasionally on candidates and so on, but very seldom.

F: Did you give--you ranking Senators--give much in the way of instructions to your investigative counsel or did you pretty well leave them alone?

S: Well, we--I would say that I left them alone. I think President Johnson kept in pretty close touch with Mr. Weisl and Mr. Cyrus Vance. But we would leave the counsel to carry out his side of the questions and occasionally the Senators would interrupt but after the counsel got through, then the members of the Senate would take it up. And occasionally they would start them, but not often.

F: Was there any attempt in this preparedness committee to strengthen the hand of the Secretary of Defense at the expense of the secretaries of the individual services?

S: I think that's always been the tendency. I think it was carried out to a greater degree, of course, under Secretary McNamara than it was before, and as one who helped to draft the Defense Department law, we watched the authority of the Secretary of Defense from Forrestal go constantly up. When Mr. Forrestal became the first Secretary of Defense, he really had no authority to do anything. He had the powers of persuasion and the people liked him

and respected him. And that is the way he acted. And then gradually in the first amendment, I guess it was in '48 or '49, maybe a little later, we gave the secretary more power and then gradually he had more power by law, but under McNamara he took it as an executive responsibility.

F: On this preparedness sub-committee under Senator Johnson, I have heard a report was drawn up, but I have never seen it. Do you know whether there was such a report and what happened to it?

S: You mean a report by our Senate committee?

F: Yes, sir.

S: I don't remember that.

F: Yes, sir.

S: There was a report by Mr. Sprague who was, who expected to be, the Under Secretary of the Air, or the Assistant Secretary of the Air, under President Eisenhower, and that missed out because he could not get rid of his conflict of interest. So he never was appointed. But Sprague later made a very extensive report as the head of a committee on the security of the United States and its defense against missiles and all like of that. That was given to President Eisenhower and it was kept very confidential and I think we later were able to see that report. But ultimately it was given some publicity.

F: Was there any difficulty between the Armed Services Committee viewpoint and the viewpoint within the Department of the Treasury over defense spending at this time?

S: Of the defense spending?

F: Defense spending--defense development.

S: Oh--always a difference of opinion. And that was particularly true with the Air Force and General Vandenburg, when he was the head of the Air Force.

They always wanted more than we gave them. And then the great problem particularly at that time under the then Secretary of the Air who is now the Ambassador of NATO in Paris, and still is, I think. I always felt that there was a great difference of putting an airplane together--that's what you might call the simple expression--they would have the wings, they would have the engines, but they would never be able to put them together and there would be a spread of maybe six months before they could get them as a unit. Now I think that was the one thing that Mr. Wilson, when he was the Secretary of Defense, as a production man, accomplished more than any other secretary. He was much maligned by some, but I think he did much to build the production element in the Department of Defense.

F: As a member of the preparedness sub-committee, did you sort of play the role of watch-dog over excessive stock-piling?

S: Oh, yes, we had a special committee on that. As I recall it, there was always a special committee. Senator Symington, is now, I think, still the chairman of that sub-committee, and that really wasn't and certainly in later years wasn't a part of the preparedness committee. It became a special sub-committee.

F: In 1963, to move ahead a little bit, you introduced an amendment to the Appropriations bill that year which would have cut procurement costs of the Armed Services by 1 percent. The amendment was defeated, fairly narrowly. But I wonder if you--if that cut was looked upon as a part of your philosophy that you can tighten up procurement costs or did you think the economy demanded it at the time?

S: Well, I think--if I recall correctly at all, it was more the former than the latter. In other words, it was a combination of the two, but the

procurement of new capital costs, as I recall it, after several years now, was somewhere around sixteen to twenty billions of dollars, and we thought we could cut that down a bit because the Army and Navy and Air Force had built up their supplies. Now, of course, the opposite is true with this crisis over in Viet Nam. When that crisis is over, it is my humble judgment that the Defense Department appropriations must be continued at a very substantial rate to rebuild and re-equip and re-procure the airplanes and the helicoptors, the ammunition, even the rifles that have been lost and used up over there.

F: Do you recall, and this may not involve President Johnson at all, but do you recall the Kem Resolution?

S: If you will refresh me a little.

F: Well, this was a resolution at the time of Korea in which a Senator Kem, I think from Missouri...

S: Uh, yes. ...Kansas...Missouri.

F: Introduced a resolution that President Truman was to reveal to Congress the content of secret conversations he had with Prime Minister Attlee, and any talks that he had with anyone regarding Korea. And there were--to a certain extent it was a party vote but you were one of the three Republicans who led the fight against the Kem Resolution.

S: Well, I don't remember that I was one of the three, but as you mentioned it, I would be against Kem on that. I would be against it because I always believed that from the days of George Washington down, the Executive Department had to have certain information that should be exclusive and should not be available to the Congress. Didn't that whole subject also come up with McArthur and the Truman trip to the island of Guam?

F: Yes.

S: And I learned, well I learned my lesson, if you want to call it that, the first year I was down there, at a social dinner party, where Mr. Forrestal and Mr. Acheson were and after the dinner, we had a long discussion on that and they were very informative (and very learned) as to the days of George Washington down. That subject first came up with George Washington. I can't remember what incident, but he refused certain papers and it has come right down in our history. I'd feel very strongly on that.

F: To shift a bit, one continuing issue throughout your Senatorial career has been the question of whether revenue bonds issued by the Tennessee Valley Authority could be used to install new steam plants without Congressional authorization. And I would like to hear you elaborate on that a little bit and then comment on whether, as far as you remember, if Mr. Johnson ever took any hand in this.

S: Well, I can elaborate on that a little bit because we had a committee-on-conference on that subject. Wasn't the steam plant called the Johnson Steam Plant?

F: The Johnsonville--Johnsonville.

S: The Johnsonville Steam Plant. And Senator Wherry was the conferee. He was senior to me. And he didn't want to stay on the conference committee because he wanted to vote against the Johnsonville extension. And he felt because of the public utility situation in Nebraska, that he couldn't conscientiously, or politically if you want to call it that, vote that way. So he asked me what my position was. Well, I said I was against. "All right," he said, "you take my place on that committee." Well, I have always taken the theory that the Tennessee Valley Authority, which was established, its done well down there, but I also believe that extension of the public power should not be extended under

that authority where which would require new steam plants to be built and was really outside of the original purpose of this Tennessee Valley Authority, the TVA. So that I have always been consistent in that policy. Now, I don't recall President Johnson's part in that debate. But we had that over a period of years, and I think it has been gradually extended and I don't think the public utility companies fight it quite as much as they used to fight it. And now you've got the same problem up here in the State of Maine with this--what is it called, the Lincoln something project--the Lincoln District School, or whatever. And that's the same situation. And, of course, it involves there in Maine the question of the sale of the power. They build up a lot more power and where are they going to sell it? And those questions also come up. And, of course, we do have very high public utility electric light rates and costs up here in Massachusetts as compared with the TVA or compared with Washington.

F: Yes, sir.

S: I don't recall specifically President Johnson's participation in that discussion, but I would assume that he would be on the opposite side from what I was.

F: Yes. Another continuing issue through your career has been the gradual approach of some sort of national health care program, medicare, national health insurance, whatever you care to call it, and in 1960 Senator Javits introduced an amendment to the bill which would have provided for federal grants to states and for voluntary action. You will recall that.

S: I was for it.

F: And then the next couple of sessions you introduced such an amendment.

S: You looked me up very carefully. Yes, I took that bill from Senator Javits. I asked his permission to do so. And I did it because I thought it was a

very much better bill than the one that was proposed which would give all authority to the public departments as opposed to more taking care of it through private interests, and Javits himself said to me that he thought his bill was the better one than the bill that went through but he would have to be in favor of the government-sponsored bill because of the position of Governor Rockefeller, and he had to follow along with Governor Rockefeller and so he was very glad to have me take it over. And as I recall it, we got 35 or 37 votes for that proposition. And I think this is also true, that 80 to 85 percent, I may be a bit high but not too much, of the Senators who voted for the extension of the Medicaid proposition, thought that they were voting for an amendment of the Kerr-Mills Bill, and that the Medicaid proposition went way beyond what the views of a great many of the Senators, like myself, who voted for it because it is an enormous increase in expense to the federal government and when all the fifty states adopt laws that will allow their states to come into that program, it's going to be an extraordinarily expensive undertaking for the federal government.

F: Did the White House make any direct contact with you during these years of debate?

S: No, not that I can remember. I don't think they did, because my position was perfectly clear on it.

F: In 1954 there was passed a Saltonstall-Kennedy Act regarding...

S: Fish research.

F: Yes, sir. And now, then, Texas, although it has a long coastline, is not basically a maritime state in its outlook. And I was wanting to establish whether Mr. Johnson, to your recollection, showed any interest at all in this.

S: No, I can't remember that he did. The person who did show interest from the agricultural point of view was Senator Russell of Georgia. And, one or two others, and I guess Ellender. The people who helped put that bill through was Magnuson of Washington who, of course, had a fish interest, and I guess Morse, to a certain degree, but I don't remember him. I do remember Magnuson. And I--the ultimate result was that we didn't get quite as much of the receipts from the tariffs that came in for the agricultural department as we would have liked to do, but that was a compromise.

F: You got 30 percent.

S: Yes, that was a compromise. I forget what we originally asked for.

F: And then that was made permanent a couple of years later.

S: Yeah, that was right.

F: On the Appropriations Committee of which you now, under President Johnson, being the ranking Republican member, do you get any sort of a direct relationship with the White House?

S: I didn't personally, Dr. Frantz, get a close personal relationship, but I could feel the effects of the White House influence.

F: How was this?

S: Well, through Senator Hayden of Arizona and one or two of the others on the Democratic side. Not so much Ellender. To a certain degree Russell, but not much. I guess, really, very little. But other members well, you could feel that there had been pressure put on them, but I can't remember that the White House, either directly or indirectly, approached me in President Johnson's term. Now we could always, as I say, you could always tell it where there had been pressure put by the administration.

F: Could you give a specific instance? Where Senator Hayden might, for instance, said that the White House....

S: Well, I'd hate to give a specific instance and then be wrong. But it was mostly on foreign aid, and that sort of thing. I think I could say definitely on foreign aid. But Mr. Hayden and I worked very close together and in his later years he--I could very proudly say that he relied a great deal on my judgment and we worked together--Russell and I worked together on the Appropriations for the Armed Services. And in his earlier day, Pat McCarren and I worked together on State and Justice, and so on. And many, most of the appropriations, I would say, went through without too much politics involved. The one thing I say with a smile was on the retirement. Now, from a point of view of insurance companies, their actuarial policies, of course, the retirement fund is busted--way, way busted. Well, when Eisenhower was President, then the Democrats would want to put on an enormous appropriations to build that up and when the Democrats were President, the Republicans tried to do it. And I always joked with Senator Magnuson on that because he and I worked together on that committee of independent offices and we were on opposite sides but of course nothing happened.

F: Incidentally, I saw Senator Hayden last week and had an interview with him.

S: Oh, good. Well, he was a great friend of mine.

F: He seems to be going on forever.

S: Yeah. Well, I was very proud--I don't know if you want to put this--

F: Yes.

S: Very proud about this foreign aid, when we were having these terrible difficulties with Otto Passman of Louisiana on a conference committee. Passman would talk for half an hour. He had lots of facts, but he didn't put them together very well from our point of view. Hayden, way up the line on this large conference committee, turned, put his head forward,

and said, "Now, Lev, you tell the Senate side." I did. I was very proud, so I carried the ball on that for a number of years.

F: You have been in an unusual position as the ranking Republican on both Armed Services and Appropriations. There is a, I suppose you must say a cliche, across the country, that the Armed Services budget is almost sacred. Would you care to comment on this?

S: Well, it's sacred to the point of view that those of us and the people as a whole want our country to be secure. They want our country to be safe. And we want to continue to be strong so that we have the respect of Russia and potential enemies so that when our diplomats, secretaries of state, and so on, have to deal across the table from them, they can deal from the knowledge that they have the strength behind them. I've always taken that position, and I know Senator Russell feels very strongly, and Senator Johnson, and later President, I don't think we ever had a great difference of opinion. As you see, there was Russell and Stennis, myself and later days Mrs. Smith and Young of North Dakota and others including Senator Johnson when he was there, and we all went from the Armed Services Committee to the Appropriations Committee, so we carried the ball really in both committees.

F: You are on the Board of Regents of the Smithsonian?

S: That's right.

F: What does that entail?

S: Well, it entails an opportunity to meet with a distinguished group several times a year and to understand a little better than the ordinary citizen what the Smithsonian Institution represents--the museum, the facilities, and the research facilities, research up in the--Alaska and Iceland and so on and the research activities done down in the Panama Canal, broadly

speaking. And the search for gold and the old Spanish Armada and so on, and then of course the Smithsonian runs the zoo in Washington and it's built up this new museum up on Tenth and Constitution Avenue and the acquisition of several properties and one fine property that will come in the future when certain people are no longer with us. And all that sort of undertakings. And under this fellow, this new director, Dillon, what is his full name?

F: I can't think of it right now.

S: Well, under the new director...

F: Ripley.

S: What"

F: Ripley.

S: Dillon Ripley, who has a great imagination and a great ability to acquire, the Smithsonian had certainly acquired more interests in various ways--in protraits, paintings, and the great problem now is to build an air museum and to get the money for it. Now, I would have always hoped as I say with a smile when I approached President Johnson once when he was a Senator that some of these very well-to-do oil men in Texas, like Mr. Hunt and one or two others, could be persuaded to give an air museum and call it the Hunt Museum as opposed to the National Art Gallery and one or two other museums that have been given. And all I can say is that I didn't get very far with Johnson on that one. I think he was being cautious or careful.

S: I persuaded Mr. Carmichael, the previous director before Dillon Ripley, to go out to Texas. Carmichael went out and saw some of these people but without any appreciable result. Incidentally, we have two carriages of my family on the floor of the museum on Tenth Street and Constitution Avenue.

F: Yes, sir. That's a wonderful building.

S: Have you ever noticed the carriages in there?

F: Yes, sir.

S: Well, one of them was my gift from my mother and fixed up by my mother. My grandmother went off from her wedding in it. My mother went off from her wedding in it. My brother and my sister--but my wife wouldn't.

F: I see. Well, that's too bad.

S: But that carriage is on the floor there.

F: Is this appointment to the Board of Regents a presidential appointment?

S: No, it's an appointment by the Senate. There are two members of the Senate, one from each party, and two members of the House.

F: Your position that you had on the National Historical Publications Commission--that was a presidential appointment?

S: That was, and I was recommended by Justice Frankfurter. And I enjoyed that. The one, perhaps, assistance that I gave to that committee was the fact that we got an appropriation. We asked for $500,000, first the authority, and then we got $300,000 in appropriations, but in the second year they weren't satisfied with that. I thought they were lucky.

F: This was the first time that the Commission had ever received an appropriation?

S: That is right.

F: When was this, do you recall?

S: Well, I would say, roughly, very roughly, I would say six years ago.

F: Yes, I think it was 1963, actually. You are on the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts--on the Board of that.

S: Yes, I still am, I think.

F: Is that a presidential appointment or is that handled by the Kennedy family?

S: No, that's a presidential appointment, as I recall it.

F: President Johnson named you to that.

S: Yeah. As I recall it, yes.

F: Because you were from Massachusetts or because he likes you or because you are close to the Kennedys?

S: Well, probably all three. I hope all three.

F: You were, for a long time, on the Republican Policy Committee.

S: That is correct--my whole career. Just happened my whole career was on it.

F: Well, now while Mr. Johnson was President, what sort of discussions went on in the Policy Committee.

S: Well, we counted for more when the Republicans controlled the Senate, when Taft was the chairman and then under Eisenhower we had responsibilities. We met with President Eisenhower every Tuesday morning, four of us--and four members of the House and four members of the Senate. And I think President Johnson had continued that with the Democratic members by a breakfast. Eisenhower never gave us any food. The most we got was coffee. But when we became a minority group, the Republican Policy Committee could only meet and put on a defensive position, or take a position, on comparatively few instances. We did meet on the tax--increase of taxes--and so on. And we did meet occasionally on economy and that sort of thing. And on other matters. But nowhere near as important as when the Republicans were in control. But Senator Bridges arranged when the Democrats were in control under Kennedy and Johnson to have all the Republicans meet every Tuesday at lunch. And that's been called the meeting of the Republican policy committee and those meetings have been very successful in discussing matters that were coming up that week, and also in getting speakers from the Administration.

F: Is there fairly free discussion in those meetings or is there some difference as to seniority?

S: Why, I would say there was very free discussions. And, of course, the senior members of the minority side generally led the discussion. For instance, if there was anything on the Armed Services, Senator Hickenlooper as chairman would call on me. And the same way on appropriations and on conservation, education, and so on. Health, education, welfare--these other people would come in. But there was never an effort to take a vote, and put people on the line, so to speak, but there was freedom of discussion.

F: You have been on the Joint Commission on Coinage.

S: On which?

F: Coinage?

S: No. Not knowingly.

F: You're listed in a directory on that.

S: On coinage? C-o-i-n-a-g-e?

F: Right. Have I told you something about your career?

S: I didn't know it.

F: Well, now then, you're also listed as being on the Joint Committee on the Reduction of Non-essential Expenditures.

S: Yes, Senator Byrd put me on that.

F: What is that?

S: Well, that was a committee created really by Senator Harry Byrd, the first, the elder, and it was a joint committee. Not, it--during my career--very seldom met. And when some Republican died or was defeated, Byrd asked me to go on. I was on it the last four or five years I was there. It never took much participation because you had this other joint economic committee and then you had the Appropriations Committee so this Non-essential Expenditures didn't really meet but once or twice a year.

In fact, I don't think it even did that some times. But Byrd had a staff member who collected a lot of facts and collected the number of people who were working for the government and that sort of thing and they would get out a report about once a month.

F: You are also on a Select Committee on Small Businesses.

S: Yes, I was on that from its inception. That was created by Senator Wherry who really was the leader on that. And that was, I would say, along about 194--I guess pretty near 1946. I--that recalls me to the fact that at that time I'd cast a vote, without going into it, that Senator Taft didn't like particularly and when he found that I had been put on this committee by Barkley, who was then the leader, he said to me, "Did you ask to go on that committee?" And I said, "No, I didn't. Barkley put me on it," which was the truth, and I stayed on that committee through my entire career. Now at one time we were fairly active, but in the last few years, it hasn't been too active. Senator Russell Long has brought up the question of patents, and then there are the taxes on small businesses and then the ability of small business to go into these great big shopping areas and get space and those questions have come up in that. And, of course, Massachusetts is interested in small business, so I stayed on that committee.

F: You ran for re-election the last time in 1960, which was also a presidential election year, and, of course, you faced the fact that a member from the opposite party was a presidential candidate and from this state--did that pose any particular difficulties for you?

S: No, not to any great extent because President Kennedy never took any position against me in any way.

F: Neither President Kennedy nor Vice President Johnson--or Vice Presidential designate Johnson--they never came into the state to try to purge you?

S: No, not even Truman. And Kennedy, the night of the election, the night he was elected, called me on the telephone about midnight to find out how I'd come out, and congratulated me.

F: As you recall, did Senator Johnson campaign in the state at all in 1960 when he was the Vice Presidential nominee?

S: Yes, he came up here I think once.

F: You had no contact with him?

S: No, I had no contact with him. No, I definitely didn't have. I asked him about it, as I remember it, afterwards. But President Johnson did speak for me on a television program that I was conducting in '59--both Kennedy and Johnson spoke for me--yes, in '58 and '59.

F: Both. What kind of a program was this?

S: Well, it was a program that we initiated on the TV to be put up here in the various stations where we could get them to take it, on questions that might be pertinent at the time. And President Johnson spoke, I think I have a picture somewhere, and Kennedy did. And, incidentally, when you go back to that, President Truman, when he came up here, was a candidate in '48.

F: Right, I was here then.

S: '48--yes. And he came up here, and I had an opponent who wasn't a very strong candidate, and his son went aboard Truman's train--now this is gossip--I can't prove this--he went aboard and tried to get President Truman to say something against me in his speech out at Fenway Park. And the report came back that Truman said, "Oh, no, I can't speak against Senator Saltonstall because Mrs. Truman is too good a friend of Mrs. Saltonstall's."

F: I see.

S: I don't suppose I ought to use that.

F: No. I think that's fine. You have done an excellent job of getting along with your opponents. They have been opponents, but not enemies.

S: Well, the only--Furculo in '54--was a difficult opponent. But since I ran for Governor, knock on wood, I came through fairly well.

F: Let's shift this just slightly and talk about Mr. Johnson as you have known him as a person, and your relationships along that line.

S: Well, I have always had a nice, friendly relationship. Now, President Johnson, as you know much better than I do, knew how to go after a person, so to speak. And so far as I was concerned, he always was very pleasant, sometimes buttered me up, if you want to call it that. And we always got along very well. And I was the minority whip when he was the majority leader. And I used to work with this fellow, Bobby Baker, quite closely on votes when we were on the same side, like on foreign aid, but when we were opposed, I never could get much out of him. But my feeling about Johnson when he was the majority leader was when he called for a vote at, we'll say three o'clock on a certain afternoon, he knew very well he had the votes. He might have had them very close, but he had the votes and he very seldom called a matter up for a vote or indicated that there would be a vote at a certain hour unless he knew damn well he had them. I recall that particularly in the Strauss nomination, and there were other cases where they were close. Baker said to me on one case--I remember, "Bobby, how close did you figure it?" "Well, I missed one--Senator Wiley of Wisconsin fooled me." I said, "I missed by four." So we had that contact. But I recall particularly on a discussion on the rules one year Johnson was going to adjourn the Senate rather than to recess it. I think adjourn rather than recess. And I

went down and whispered to him that if he adjourned the Senate, then the whole thing could be opened up again the next day, but if he recessed the Senate, it would be different. And he did recess the Senate and later came back and thanked me for the help. I recall that, particularly. As a Senate leader, I would say that he was not so much for a project, but where he wanted a bill to go through, he would use his abilities to get the people together to a compromise that he could get through and be the best that was possible. I don't think he particularly took the lead himself on creating legislation. He was a great manipulator -- to use that word in its best sense.

F: He has been accused of being an arm twister and wheeler-dealer and so forth. Would you care to comment on that? Whether you saw any evidence of it?

S: Well, I said--I've just said that I think he dealt with different people in different ways. He never put the whips on me, to use that expression, in any sense of the word. He would say, "help me." We worked closely together on the NASA bill and on this Senate Investigating Committee. On the Armed Services Committee as such, he didn't take so much part after he became the majority leader. But Russell wanted him to stay on the committee. I think Johnson wanted to get off at one time, and Russell wouldn't let him off. And he would only come in for a vote once in a while on a subject on which he was interested. But essentially he worked very hard as a majority leader to get things through which he thought ought to go through, but without creating them himself.

F: Did you see any evidence of obstructionism for politics sake, because you did have that situation of an administration of one party and a Senate of another?

S: Well, I would say on matters of national defense and that sort of thing,

he worked pretty closely with President Eisenhower. He didn't oppose him too strenuously. When we did meet occasionally in the Cabinet room with the Democratic people present, then Senator Johnson and others, but particularly I recall him taking very little part in the discussion. He stayed pretty quiet. He listened to Eisenhower but didn't very often declare himself or he might raise a few questions, but he didn't participate in an open discussion very much.

F: After he left the Senate to go into, first, the Vice Presidency and then the Presidency, did you have much relationship with him?

S: As a Vice President, I would say that I talked with him on the rostrum for a number of times.

F: Just a social visit?

S: Just social visits. So far as legislation was concerned, I wouldn't say I played much part with him. Now I think that when he became Vice President, he tried to take a stronger position with the Democratic Policy Committee. I always heard that he did until he found that he couldn't.

F: There was a division between the executive and the Senate.

S: Yes. Just how much influence he had--now--working on the Democrats, I don't know. I would say he had some, without any question.

F: Did you have much relationship with him after he became President?

S: No, he was always very nice to me. He--a number of times--I have his picture right up there--he said to me a number of times that much more of the legislation that went through on which my name didn't appear should be credited to me because of my trying to get people together and to work together--and that was on Appropriations particularly. And, then, the last contact I had with him was with relation to this railroad dispute a year ago last summer where he called me up one night when I was in bed

and said he wanted me to serve on this committee and I said, "Well, Mr. President, I'd like to give it a little thought and consideration." He said, "I don't want your thought or consideration. I want your acceptance now." And I had no reason not to do it, so I said, "All right, I'll do it." And that's really the last contact I had with him. He called me up on the telephone once or twice after, just after he had been made President, but since then, no.

F: What happened with the railroad dispute?

S: Well, Senator Morse was the chairman of that committee. There was Keppel of the telephone company, a professional negotiator, Keele, and--let's see--George Meany and myself. I think I went to Washington eight times. Some of the meetings didn't amount to anything. I'd go down, meet, and leave again. And we finally settled the dispute in New York or rather gave our opinion which settled the dispute.

F: The settlement you recommended held up?

S: Yeah. They had to take it. And there was some objection by the labor unions about it, but that's all died out. And, of course, it's overboard now anyway.

F: Yes, sir. Have you had any social contact with Mr. Johnson since he has been President?

S: Well, I've been to the White House a number of times for large dinners and one or two receptions, and that sort of thing, and there's a very nice autographed picture up there. I've got a number of autographed pictures from him. But that's the nicest one. And we've always had a pleasant relationship, and Mrs. Saltonstall has had a very--great deal of respect and a reasonably warm friendship with Mrs. Johnson. Not close at all, but always very pleasant. So my relations with President Johnson as a

Senator and as a President have always been friendly. I haven't always agreed with him by any means, and when you don't agree with him, you know it all right.

F: To what do you describe his sort of downhill plunge in popularity?

S: I think the Viet Nam war and his very firm strong position on the Viet Nam war. Now I supported him--I supported the Administration position really right up through. I still do to a great extent. And I think we're in the middle of a political campaign which is drawing to a close, I think that a new President, whether he be Humphrey or Nixon, and, of course, I hope Nixon can put a fresh view on that the same way Eisenhower did in Korea. I think Mr. Rusk, for whom I have a very high regard and warm friendship, and President Johnson have sort of dug themselves into firm positions where it's pretty hard for them to dig themselves out.

F: You were on the Armed Services Committee when Mr. McNamara was Secretary of Defense. Did you find him rather difficult to deal with? We get the term--the thought that he is opinionated--

S: Oh, he was very strong in his opinions, yes. And he based those opinions on facts. And certainly if you are going to disagree with McNamara you ought to know your facts very, very thoroughly. And even then you couldn't get him generally to change his point of view. And on procurement particularly. Senator Russell and I worked very closely together and when we were ready to make a report every year while I was there, I went to see Senator Russell in his office and gave him my thoughts and he gave me his thoughts and we weren't very far apart. We changed one or two things a little bit. And that went on under Kennedy, and it went on under Johnson. And sometimes with McNamara's approval or disapproval, but as a whole, McNamara's influence on our committee was pretty powerful.

It had to be, because he knew what he was talking about. But, in our opinion, he overdid certain things. I agree with him in his opposition to these anti-ballistic missiles. I'd rather put the money into attack missiles because I don't think we can ever guard all our cities without a perfectly un-Godly expense.

F: You had left the Senate when Clark Clifford became Secretary of Defense?

S: Yes. I knew Clark Clifford. He succeeded me as President of the Alfalfa Club.

F: I see. What is the Alfalfa Club?

S: You don't know the Alfalfa Club? Well, I became President of it because Johnson was in line to it and when he became President of the United States, he couldn't take it.

F: I see.

S: So I was listed just behind him, and so they put me up as President.

F: Tell me about it.

S: Well, the Alfalfa Club meets once a year with a big dinner in January, sort of--to people who don't get invited to the gridiron dinner and it isn't newspaper people. It's business people from all over. They give a dinner of about 500, and they put on the Alfalfa Club candidate for President who is supposed to make a very amusing and entertaining speech, and they generally are. Goldwater made a very good one, and we've had a number -- Bob Hope made one -- he was kind of tired -- he didn't do quite as well as he was capable.

When Clark Clifford succeeded me I introduced him. I gave him a nice introduction. When he got up he said, "Well, now, in Massachusetts they have an old saying that in Boston, the home of the bean and the cod,

the Lowells speak only to Cabots and the Cabots speak only to God. They have now changed it so that it reads -- Boston, land of the bean and the cod, where the Kennedys dine on caviar and the Saltonstalls get scrod."

F: Right. Your remark about Mr. Nixon giving a fresh start made me think about Clark Clifford and McNamara on this. Just the mere change of personnel gave...

S: Why, I think you can see it. I think Clark Clifford is--one of his great abilities is to get along with people and work with people and I think he has the support of Congress to a great degree than McNamara did because he gets along with them. And, of course, Clifford has been on some very important committees in connection with the White House anyway...you know what I'm talking about.

F: Yes, sir. You--how much attention does the Appropriations Committee pay to the fact that the Bureau of the Budget has okayed a certain appropriation?

S: Well, I think very substantial. There are <u>two</u> ways. For instance, the Committee on Appropriations has increased the Presidential request for research on health every year. Maybe not this year, but every year that I served on that subcommittee they increased the Presidential and Budget Director's requests. Now, on the other hand, I think the general impression of Appropriations Committee is to cut down on the budget request unless some member of it has a special interest in some subject. Senator Magnuson on the doctors' research and the Veterans Administration, I know as an example. And Senator Hayden and his private rifle shooters. We're always putting that in to please Hayden. And a few things like that. But more it's cutting down rather than increasing.

F: In 1964 did you take a very active part in the campaign of Mr. Goldwater?

S: As far as they asked me to, yes, here in Massachusetts. Now, when Goldwater came into Massachusetts, they had a great difficulty--the person running it was a very conservative Republican named Lloyd Waring. Volpe was running for Governor and Brooke was running for the Senate. They weren't keen at all to be seen on the same platform with Goldwater so as to be introducing him or anything. So finally practically on the last day before he came here, Waring called me up and asked me if I would. I said, "Of course I would." And so I did. And Volpe appeared on the platform. I don't think he said anything. He shook hands. Brooke never appeared at all. That was the problem.

F: Did Mr. Johnson have any relationship with you during '64, during the campaign?

S: Not that I can remember.

F: He recognized the party lines and stayed clear.

S: Oh, yes; oh, yes.

F: Right.

S: Of course, our state has always gone Democratic except for Eisenhower and Coolidge--even for Al Smith. We went for Al Smith.

F: That put you in a minority, didn't it?

S: Yeah.

F: Do you think of anything else we have to cover, Senator?

S: No. I will look back upon President Johnson and his Senate career as a very able majority leader from the point of view of getting things done.

F: He is more practical than philosophical or doctrinaire?

S: Yeah. I would call him a practical leader rather than a creative leader. He didn't take the strong positions that Mansfield would take on foreign aid and the Viet Nam position and so on. And he knew who was on his side,

generally. For instance I recall now that I once had a short speech supporting his position which wasn't entirely the position of all the Republicans, and I said...

F: Do you remember what issue?

S: No, I don't remember. But it was one of these rather difficult--I think foreign aid issues. Anyhow, the minute he heard from me, that I wanted to speak in support he said, "Are you ready?" I said, "Yes." "All right," he said, "speak under the three minute rule." So I spoke under the three minute rule, and he gave me an extra two minutes. But he was that kind of a fellow, that kind of a leader; and I recall that when Senator Russell was asked to be the majority leader, he said about Johnson, "Johnson wasn't the best speaker, he wasn't the most creative fellow, and he wasn't the--", well, I don't know, there was a third one. I think it was researcher or something; but, he was the best of all three combined. So Russell, you can get this from him, Russell really created Johnson as the majority leader. That is correct, is it not?

F: Yes, sir. Mr. Johnson thinks so.

S: Well, I forget what...

F: Do you think that history is going to be a little more kindly to Mr. Johnson than contemporaries are now?

S: Yes, I do, because I think domestically he, as President, created and signed and stimulated much legislation of a domestic character that has built up, if you will, the authority of the federal government, perhaps to a greater degree than I would like. But he's created more responsibility and more government participation in our own individual lives. And he's bettered, certainly, the housing, the

education facilities, and more of the integration facilities than he is now given credit for. And I think his great difficulty will be the Viet Nam war and whether he got into a position where he couldn't help himself. Kennedy built it up--I was out there in Saigon in 1957, and I was briefed and so on and we had, I think, 550 people out there--something like that. That was built up under Kennedy and by the time Kennedy quit, Johnson--it was in Johnson's lap. And he either had to go forward or stop somewhere.

F: When you were there in '57, the 550 were purely in an advisory--none of them in a strictly military capacity?

S: Right. They were leading--well, they were as advisors and leaders with the South Viet Nam Army and the Thai army. I went up into one town where it was Communist-held a week before, and watched a review. But I think that was in Thailand.

F: Did you have any suspicion then that the war would be increased in intensity?

S: No. I don't think so.

F: Or our position would be enlarged.

S: No, I don't remember that I did. There was, of course, the feeling.

F: Yes, sir.

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By Leverett Saltonstall

to the

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