INTERVIEW I

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INTERVIEWEE: HAROLD H. SAUNDERS

INTERVIEWER: Ted Gittinger

PLACE: Mr. Saunders' office, Washington, D.C.

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G: Would you describe the circumstances under which you first entered government service?

S: Yes. I came into the Central Intelligence Agency junior officer trainee program in 1956. I had been deferred from military service through college and graduate school, and knew I had to go in the military, wanted to come into the government, knew that there was a program by which I could come into the CIA and then be released to do military duty, become an air force officer, and then come back into the trainee program. It was a good way of combining military service with my desire to get on with a government career.

G: Why CIA?

S: It seemed to be the place where I could employ in the foreign affairs field the kinds of analytical techniques that I had learned in a Ph.D. program. My Ph.D. was in American studies, but I thought it would be interesting to know a little bit more about international relations.

G: In American studies. Where did you take that degree?

S: At Yale.

G: Did you know Professor Goetzmann at that time?

S: Bill Goetzmann?

G: Yes.

S: We came in in the same year. We were, in effect, classmates.

G: Well, of course, he's at The University of Texas--

S: Yes.

G: --heading the department. You ought to look him up if you come through Austin.

S: I should do that. The department was small; I think three or four of us came in that year and he was one of them.

G: How did he escape the clutches of the CIA? They were looking for people with your kind of skills, were they not?

S: Well, he is a committed scholar and I would not say that I was. I was absorbed in what I was doing, but by the time I had finished my Ph.D. I was ready to go off and do something else. Hence I was looking for the government experience, and found CIA as a good route to combine the military service, get into an analytical program dealing with foreign affairs, and so on. So it met my needs. Bill Goetzmann wanted nothing more than to finish his dissertation and turn it into the first big book he did, which I guess won one of the--

G: Won a Pulitzer, I think.

S: Yes.

G: Well, that's interesting. It's interesting, too, that you're from Yale. I keep coming across ex-CIA men who came out of Yale. Is there any significance to that?

S: I don't think so. That's where I went to graduate school; I happen to be a Princeton graduate. I find them all over the place, too, especially in the foreign service.

But then I started in CIA after doing my air force duty for about three years, and I had a job as a special assistant to the deputy director for intelligence, who was the head of the analytical branch of CIA, all of the analytical--

G: Who was that?

S: Robert Amory, who later on came over to be one of the three top people in the Budget Bureau.

But Allen Dulles was then the director of CIA, too. I got a good overview of how CIA fit into the governmental picture. And incidentally, my boss, Bob Amory, and one of his senior assistants, Robert Komer, were the agency's representatives on the NSC planning board in the Eisenhower Administration. And that was ultimately my route to the NSC staff, because in 1961 Bob Komer went to work for Mac [McGeorge] Bundy, Kennedy's national security adviser, and Bob asked me in September of 1961 if I would come join him, as they began to beef up their staff a little bit, and the agency agreed to send me down to the NSC on detail. That's how I got to the NSC.

In between my job with Amory I had served as a desk analyst in the Office of Current Intelligence, working on Japan, which was good experience just in terms of doing that kind of daily analysis and reporting job, but it didn't have much relevance substantive to what I did later on.

G: Did you know any of the people working on the Soviet Union at that level?

S: I'd have to search back in memory. One of the people, of course, that worked in the Office of National Estimates at the time was Ray Garthoff, who is now over at the Brookings Institution, but who had a State Department arms control career in between. Howard Stoertz was also in the Office of National Estimates at the time.

G: Does the name J. J. Hagerty ring any bells? An army lieutenant colonel, I believe.

S: No, I didn't know him. I knew another Hagerty, but not him.

G: So you were on detail from the CIA.

S: For my first years I was. As time went on and I kept staying on and on and on at the NSC and kept being promoted at the NSC, there was a--I had thought that administratively they would turn me over to the NSC at some time in the middle sixties, but I learned in--I guess it was in 1968, when President Johnson made his announcement that he wasn't going to seek another term as president, the agency came down and said, "Well, wouldn't you like to go on leave-without-pay status for a year, because after the election you may be looking for a job. We would like to have you back and we'd like to keep the door open. Wouldn't you?" I said, "That's very nice." I was surprised to find out I was still technically on their payroll, although I'm sure the NSC had been paying me for several years.

I think ultimately I severed the tie with CIA sometime at the beginning of the Nixon Administration, which was about eight years after I had gone down there. As a matter of fact, in 1974 when I left the NSC to go to the State Department with Kissinger, I got the administrative people at the NSC to do a formal statement of what my employment record and relationship with CIA had been, because I thought if I ever had

to go before the Senate for confirmation hearings for some job sometime I should know how long my affiliation with CIA had lasted, since it obviously had lasted a lot longer than I thought it had.

G: And someone was bound to ask you in such hearings about--

S: That was quite possible, since I've never been hush-hush about my relationship with the agency; I've put it in *Who's Who* and all that, because I was with the analytical side.

G: How would you compare the operation of the NSC staff under the various national security advisers you have worked with?

S: That's an interesting question, which I've thought a lot about. I'll give you a one-sentence starter anyway: The NSC system is just meant to advise the president, therefore there's no right way to do the job and there's no wrong way; there's just the boss' way. And that's not meant as a frivolous comment, because every human being who happens to be president will make up his mind, make big decisions in his own way. Some presidents, like Johnson I think, liked to talk with their advisers; they worked their way through problems orally. At the other extreme you have somebody like Nixon who--yes, he wanted to hear the argument, but in the end he wanted to go off with elaborate papers and sit with his yellow pad and do his toting up. Kennedy I suppose read everything in sight, not in the systematic way that Nixon did with pros and cons papers, but just read every analytical piece that he could read about a problem and made up his own mind, and then he liked to hear the argument of advisers.

When you've got human beings who make decisions in such different fashions as those, you have to organize a staff around them, and indeed a whole NSC system around

them, to serve that particular decision-making style. Just to take an example, a contrast, since we're talking primarily about Johnson, the contrast between Kennedy, Johnson and Nixon in the way they organized the NSC probably tells a lot about the men. Kennedy came in after the very elaborate NSC system of the Eisenhower Administration, took the advice of the Jackson subcommittee of the Senate Government Operations Committee, and in the words of that committee report tried to "de-institutionalize and humanize" the NSC system. I think that was the phrase that the Jackson report--and indeed it's appropriate, I suppose, right now to be recalling Scoop Jackson's words.

But Kennedy took that very much to heart, broke the system down, made it very much a collegium of senior people doing their jobs without a lot of organization. When Kennedy met--at least on the Middle East, which I'm familiar with--when Kennedy met with his advisers it wasn't necessarily, or it wasn't perhaps even normally a meeting of the National Security Council. The people who were in the NSC were present, but so were some others. Anyway, there wasn't an elaborate weekly meeting of the National Security Council, or semi-weekly meeting the way it was under Eisenhower. The meetings happened when they were needed, with the President, with the right people, and the informality of the staff operation meant that Kennedy got a flow of commentary and analysis and recommendations from a number of different people. That was his style.

For Lyndon Johnson, that was a little bit too free-flowing; [he] moved toward more system, not back to the elaborate Eisenhower system, but I think more NSC system, more NSC meetings. And then of course there was the Tuesday lunch, which was informal, as suited his style, but nevertheless it was regularized. Some notes were kept of

those meetings. There was a kind of agenda, at least in the form of memos from Walt Rostow to the President, and oftentimes as a staff, we were very conscious of getting things ready for the Tuesday lunch, making sure that a State Department memo would get to us over the weekend so that we could do what we needed to do and get it to Walt by mid-Monday so he could get it on up to the President, and so on.

But as time went on and Johnson thought about the NSC system itself, he did reorganize it in a particular way. You remember he set it up so that the pre-NSC review of options would take place under the deputy--then called [the] under secretary of state, the number-two person in the State Department. My picture of what Johnson must have said to Rusk and McNamara was, "You two fellows are smart people. I know, because of your different responsibilities, you're going to disagree on a lot of things. But I want you two fellows to sit down and figure out together what you would do if you were president. Don't come to me with your separate points of view without having sat down and tried to figure out how you would put those into a sensible course of action, knowing the responsibilities that I have for bringing all this together. Then after you've done that, we'll sit down at the Tuesday lunch and I'll have one recommendation from you fellows. But then you can tell me why you disagreed, what you fought over, what your problems were, why you really don't like this recommendation. Let's get it out that way, but put the energy into staffing out something I can do." And indeed the review function was placed under the deputy secretary of state and meetings were held over there. As a matter of fact, that was one of Johnson's frustrations that I think you'll find in the NSC files in the Johnson Library--that Nick Katzenbach didn't seem to be picking up the ball on this. I

remember Walt writing memos saying, "Well, if he's not going to do it, how do we make him do it?" And that sort of thing.

(Laughter)

But Johnson wanted to put the burden on his cabinet officers to try to reach some common point of view.

Nixon came in and he said, in effect, "If all the bureaucracy's energies go into staffing out one recommendation to me, then I'll never have a real choice. I'm going to move the review of options back into the White House under the NSC adviser, Henry Kissinger. I'm going to be sure that each department is encouraged, indeed instructed, to come up with a full-fledged option that reflects its view of the situation. And it's the NSC adviser's duty to sit down at the subcabinet or cabinet level, pre-NSC, and have a full discussion of all the options to make sure that each one is fleshed out in a practical way, in a reasonable way, and that it's been reviewed for political implications and so on. And then when the NSC adviser reports on his meetings, he will give me a choice." And indeed what you saw in those meetings was a process of three or four or five options coming up to the pre-NSC level, being discussed there, and you could almost see a sculptural act taking place, the shaping of the options. Five options became really a choice when Kissinger reported to Nixon, a choice between option two-and-a-half and option three-and-a-half. Combinations were made and account was taken of the advantages and disadvantages of various approaches. But Nixon wanted that choice.

Kennedy wanted a choice but in a more chaotic sense. Nixon wanted it very systematically and intellectually played out as perhaps only Henry Kissinger would, or

could. Johnson was somewhere in the middle there. He welcomed the informality of the Tuesday lunch but wanted some systematic work to be done beforehand.

Just another little vignette which I think bears out the characterization of Johnson: During the 1967 war in the Middle East, you remember he brought Mac Bundy back into the government to be the executive secretary of the executive committee of the NSC [Special Committee of the NSC}, which was modeled on the Executive Committee of the Cuban missile crisis. And I think one reason he did was that, given a major international and national crisis on his hands, he was worried by what he, I think, felt was a kind of chaotic decision-making process in the State Department, and wanted Mac Bundy to come and insert some kind of system in it. He also recognized that with Vietnam going on and Walt's time concentrated heavily on that, perhaps this was another full-time job, at least for a period of weeks. He just wanted to assure that there was a systematic decision-making effort there, that things weren't just being left to chance. So I think he felt the need for--

G: That's a good point, because it seems to me there was already a standing committee chaired by Eugene Rostow dealing with Middle East affairs. Was that what you have reference to?

S: That's the one that I think he felt was chaotic. As a matter of fact, the people in the State Department referred to it as the "floating crap game." It was wherever Gene Rostow happened to be at the moment, whether it was the men's room or the dining room or his office or on the way down the hall. And the department worried that internally things were not being handled systematically in the way that--the department can be criticized

for a lot of things, but in a crisis it is normally very good about not dropping balls. They're set up to be the net that keeps balls from falling to the ground. They've got people assigned to do a variety of things. It may be a little bit ponderous, a little bit bureaucratic, and it's not the big decision-making process; it's not what you need at higher levels. But it does make sure that all the ground is covered, and somewhere in government you need that. I think Johnson was probably getting reports or updates on that fluid, amoeba-like, unsystematic nature of the process at State around Gene Rostow.

G: Did Johnson have his man in that committee, do you think? He was noted for that.

S: I don't think that, knowing the people around, he would have had somebody like that. I think he was exposed enough to Rusk and probably Gene Rostow and others in the course of discussions on the telephone. And I think it would come up in conversation that things were a little bit more indefinite than President Johnson would have liked. Plus the fact that when you've got a major international crisis, a president is not going to leave the management of that to the third level of the State Department, and indeed it is very difficult to do everything from the State Department. When the executive committee of the National Security Council sat down with a Mac Bundy, there were questions of what happens if the oil flow stops; what's the impact on the international financial markets, what's the military situation, and so on across the board. So you had the full range of expertise and senior-cabinet-level thought that--

G: Did you sit on the new committee?

S: I did sit in with them, and I must say that wherever the notes are from those discussions--and they are probably in some of my file boxes, anyway, in handwritten form--I think

they probably would stand up as some of the best discussions of the American interest in the Middle East; the dilemmas facing a big government like ours in a crisis of this kind; the candid discussion of what we could and couldn't achieve; what we did and did not want to try to achieve. Those discussions at certain moments were extremely good, very--they're really brilliant conversations.

G: McGeorge Bundy, in this capacity as chairman of such a committee, how would you characterize his performance?

S: For one thing, as chairman his job was to assure that all the staff work was in place. I served both Walt and him at the same time as senior staff member. And a good bit of the work we did was to get to the committee necessary studies of these larger issues: What if oil supply were somehow choked off, and so on. So Mac was very systematic, first of all, as he had, I think, been as national security adviser, but he was a good senior staff man to the President in making sure that the government was being pulled together--"coordinated" is the technical bureaucratic word, but pulled together. And that was what the President wanted. He wanted to make sure that balls weren't dropping, that every contingency had been covered, somebody was thinking about anything that needed to be thought about, somebody was thinking ahead. So Mac first of all assured that systematic staff work, through the State Department and through me.

As the chairman of the meeting, it was a comfortable relationship. After all, he was sitting down with his former colleagues; he wasn't an outsider brought in who had to establish his presence there. He just sat down and went to work. They talked easily together. He did not chair in any way with a heavy hand. He was the organizer among

equals, really, or the person in the chair for the sake of convenience, but I don't think there was resentment of him. Walt Rostow would have to talk about his own feelings about having somebody brought back in, but as far as I could tell, there was no--whatever internal feelings there might have been, there was no friction, because the two men had worked together before and certainly knew what the President's wishes were. They were both committed basically to making the staff work for the President's benefit.

G: Where did this leave the "floating crap game?" What had they to do?

S: Well, the State Department always has to do the necessary operational and communicating job with ambassadors in the field. Remember, early in the Six Day War, I've forgotten how many Arab nations broke relations with us, but seven runs in my mind, plus or minus one or two. So the State Department was evacuating foreign service and Americans in a half a dozen different countries. They were doing the whole reporting and communicating business with the embassies abroad. They were the people that were doing the staff papers that Mac Bundy was asking for. They were looking forward to a variety of contingencies that they might have to cope with, and so on. So there was more than enough for them to do. And then the State Department task force went on functioning as it had. It's just that it was a slightly different mouth to the funnel at the White House end. It really didn't affect their operations at all.

G: Can you think of examples in which the National Security Council staff did exemplary jobs, not necessarily handling a crisis, but handling a policy or making recommendations or disseminating it, or in other cases when something went wrong, which might serve as an example of how the staff didn't do well and perhaps an analysis of why?

S: The example I think that explains how the staff functions when it functions well, that I most commonly use, comes not from the Middle East narrowly defined, but rather from the broader area for which I had responsibility, which included Morocco on the western end and what was then East Pakistan on the eastern end. But it's the example of the Indian famines of 1965 and 1966, I guess. There is an extensive file on this in the Johnson Library, and I think, if I recall, that file was probably the take-off point for one of the chapters in *The Vantage Point*.

But the point that I would make in response to your question is that if you take a crisis like famine in India, to take a unique kind of crisis--this wasn't a war or an oil embargo or something like that; it was a different kind of crisis. But the United States was being asked to supply something like ten million tons of grain in back-to-back years to India, to avert famine. And the potential consequences for the United States included everything from the fact that that reduction in the grain overhang for the U.S. grain market would have resulted in an increase in the price of bread in the American supermarket, on over to the fact that, if you remember the mid-sixties, they were the years when people were beginning to look at the food-population crisis in the years ahead and predicting that the world was going to starve if we went on the way we were.

Along with that, India was on the verge of a breakthrough in what we called their Green Revolution, an agricultural breakthrough, with new seeds and fertilizers and new farming techniques and the whole business, with the U.S. Department of Agriculture heavily involved in that. Then we had the fact that President Johnson was coping with the near-demise of congressional support for the foreign aid program generally in the

Congress. Then you had the fact that Mrs. Gandhi was particularly acerbic in criticizing American policy in Vietnam. Every few months President Johnson felt that he had gotten an Indian jab of some sort, a birthday message to Ho Chi Minh or something like that, and that was politically difficult. Plus the normal relations with India to Southeast Asia. You take that spread of issues and you had everybody involved, from the Department of Agriculture and the Council of Economic Advisers and the Budget Bureau and the congressional relations people and the State Department and AID, not to mention CIA in the background.

The first recommendations came forward from the economic people in the State Department. Yes, they touched base with Agriculture and AID, but they made recommendations that President Johnson couldn't go along with, given his concern about the beginnings of inflation, [and] all the other problems that I've mentioned. He would say, "No, I'm just not going to do that. You go back and tell them so-and-so." And we'd take his instincts about what he wanted to do and didn't want to do and go back to the State Department and Agriculture Department and say, "The President doesn't want to do it this way. He wants to do it this way." And they would say, "You can't do it that way. The real world doesn't work that way. It just isn't going to happen." "Well, if you wanted to go this general direction that the President wants to go, how would you do it?" "Well, maybe you could do this. We don't recommend it, but maybe you could do this." So you would get another memo back, and literally--it was at that time I described my job in the NSC as conducting a continuing conversation between the President and the professionals in the government. And I regarded that as a dynamic description of the

NSC's job; the two layers of our government, the political and the professional, working together toward a common solution. Literally, that case would document the memos bouncing back and forth and back and forth, and working their way toward a solution that in effect said, "Yes, we will supply so much grain but this has to be coordinated and I'm sending my secretary of agriculture out; we've got to get India solidly on the road to its own agricultural revolution. I can't be in the business--I, the President--of committing the United States to feed India in ever-increasing amounts forever. I've got to do something to show that we're getting something, and that of course will help in Congress, if I can say what this aid money is doing this year. 'But we have achieved this and we're on this road, and five years from now they'll be self-sufficient in grain,' or whatever." I think it's that kind of staff work that you probably see in a number of different instances where the NSC was really doing its job of pulling everything together for the President, in conducting this real exchange.

On things that we didn't do as well as we might have--I'll take an example now from the 1967 war. If you look at the documents that I collected on the 1967 war [NSF, NSC Histories, Middle East Crisis], all the White House documents, literally all the White House documents that I could find anywhere on the 1967 war--when I concluded that exercise I wrote a little note to the historian at the front of the first of that collection of documents. I can't remember it all, but I know one of the points I made was that one of the most interesting things that this collection of documents reveals is that the biggest decision made by the administration in connection with the 1967 war is a decision that was never made. The decision was that after this war, unlike 1956, Israel would not be

asked to withdraw from the territories it occupied until it achieved peace, recognition, and security with its neighbors. Resolution 242 in November of the year was the embodiment of that equation: withdrawal in return for peace and security.

Where did this idea come from? Now in 1983, when this interview takes place, we look back sixteen years to more than a decade and a half of Israeli occupation, and we think about its consequences for the future shape of the Middle East. It's remarkable to think that nobody in that first week of June of 1967 or in any subsequent week down to November 19, or whenever it was that 242 was passed, nobody said, "But, you know, if the Israelis don't get out, we're going to be in a heck of a fix." Nobody wrote that memo. It's a self-indictment, in a way, for me to say this. I've just been back through my Kennedy NSC files and I find a meeting, I think in the spring of 1963, when there was an impending crisis in Jordan, and President Kennedy, sitting with advisers and saying, "If the Israelis move into the West Bank, we're going to have a terribly difficult time getting them out, and our position in the Middle East will be severely affected." That was 1963 and Kennedy was worried about what would happen if Israel even occupied, let alone stayed, in the West Bank. But in 1967 we didn't write that memo, and I think that in retrospect is a--I don't think it would have made any difference if we had, in the heat of the war and given the President's disposition and so on. But if the staff had been doing its job--I would much rather go back to the Johnson Library today and find a strong memo saying, "Hold up a minute here. This isn't such a good idea." We kind of stumbled into it. Part of this idea is that this time, once and for all, we're going to settle the Arab-Israeli issue; this time we won't have withdrawal without peace.

There are several different inputs to that. One is that Lyndon Johnson, who had opposed President Eisenhower in 1957 when Eisenhower was ready to impose sanctions on Israel to get out of the Sinai, Lyndon Johnson said in 1967, "I'm not going to do what Eisenhower did." So Johnson was predisposed by that earlier experience, almost exactly a decade earlier, not to force Israel to withdraw until something had happened that made Israel a more accepted part of the Middle East, and might make it less likely that you'd have a repeat of the 1967 war.

The second thing that happened was that the Israeli line, which was in the air--it came to Walt Rostow from his close relationships with Eppie [Ephraim] Evron, who was the Israeli minister, number two in the Israeli embassy. I'm sure it came to President Johnson through Abe Fortas, Arthur and Mathilde Krim, and a number of his personal friends who were leaders in the American Jewish community. And for all of these reasons, I think you'll find--my memory may still serve me--I think you'll find a White House statement somewhere around eight o'clock on the morning of June 5, 1967, which is simply the White House's first reaction to the news of the outbreak of fighting in the Middle East. But the statement will say something, I think, to the effect that, "Well, this time we've got to settle it once and for all." It didn't get detailed about [a formula of] no Israeli withdrawals until recognition, peace, and security. But the atmosphere was that "This time we're going to settle it once and for all." I think that's an example of an historic decision that nobody thought about, it just happened.

Now, you could go on and on about this and you could argue that it was a larger decision-making process at work somewhere. But at some point I'd be interested in

going back to the notes of the executive committee of the NSC. I can't remember at this point whether or not anybody raised this there, because by that time, at least by later in June, people in the United Nations were still debating the difference between the ceasefire in place and the ceasefire and withdrawal, calling for a withdrawal of troops and under what conditions there would be withdrawal. So there may have been a bit more systematic look at that, at least at lower levels, in later June and July. But as far as the White House was concerned, it was a decision that should have been more fully staffed.

G: Is there a possible explanation in the wording of Resolution 242, the famous controversy over what "the territory" means?

S: No, I don't think so. I'm talking about a profound decision that the wording of the resolution reflected, the decision that was already made. The decision that was made was really articulated most fully, most early, in Johnson's June 19 speech, in which he laid out the four or five elements for a peaceful settlement in the Middle East.

G: As long as we're on this topic, we can skip ahead a little bit. Abba Eban claimed in his memoirs that he found a certain amount of waffling on this very issue when he came to the United States; that Ambassador Goldberg, for example, at one point presented him with a position paper which was not firm on stating that in return for withdrawal there's got to be recognition and peace, and that he had to remonstrate with Ambassador Goldberg about this. Did you ever hear anything to this effect?

S: Here I may have a different view after having been through my own records, but my impression is that Eban could only be talking about a rather technical manifestation of

uncertainty rather than the fundamental frame of mind that I'm talking about. When you're talking about presidents--Walt Rostow made this clear in one of his books; I've forgotten which one, the way presidents look at issues and strategy is somewhat different from the way foreign ministers do. When I say that this was in the President's mind, I'm talking about the highest level and most profound kind of decision making. I think what Eban was commenting on was probably some position the United States had taken in relation to a particular draft of a resolution at a particular moment, and he may have found us a little bit waffly in contrast to what the Israelis would like our position to be. But I don't remember any waffling on the fundamental equation, which as I say evolved in the people's minds and I think was very clearly and starkly stated in Johnson's June 19 speech. Again, my memory may be off, but I think there are very strong words that forcing Israel to withdraw without peace, recognition, and security is a prescription for renewed war. I think that's almost Johnson's wording.

G: I think it is, yes.

As long as we brought up the 1967 crisis, can we go through the chronology of that, as best you can remember the various developments? Would I be correct in stating that you should look back to the increase in terrorism and retaliation in 1966 in order to start a chronology of the 1967 crisis?

S: Yes, that's right. Just at this point on the staff, Walt Rostow had succeeded Mac Bundy in 1966 and Walt had brought a--and Bob Komer at that time had gone from being the senior Middle East staff member on the NSC staff to be a special assistant to the President for pacification in Vietnam. I stayed on the NSC staff, dealing with the Middle

East, and Walt brought from the Policy Planning Council [William] Howard Wriggins to be the senior person on that area.

In the spring of 1967 Howard was preparing to leave and go back to his academic post at Columbia, or go to an academic post at Columbia, and Walt had offered me the senior staff job on the Middle East. And in February of 1967 he very kindly authorized a trip for me to go to visit the Middle East. So I was there at the prelude period that you are talking about. Israel had shot down six Syrian MiGs over the Golan Heights. There were the terrorist attacks of the year before and then there was the Es Samu raid in Jordan. So always with these crises you have to go back a bit and walk through the build-up.

But the reason I mention my trip to the area is that being there in February and March--no one at that time was talking about the escalation of terrorist attack and retaliation in any way that led one to expect a war within three months. I would be interested to go back and read a couple of the telegrams that I sent to Walt at that time, or even a trip report that I did when I came home. I think it would have reflected increased tension, things not going well, but I don't think you would have seen the escalation. Of course, it then happens fairly quickly as you get into April and May, and then of course the take-off point was Nasser's declaration that he was closing the Straits of Tiran; that's commonly pegged as the kickoff of the crisis.

G: The Israelis certainly said it was the *casus belli*, I think.

S: Yes, you're absolutely right: Why did Nasser do that? Let me backtrack just a minute. I think [to answer] why did Nasser do that, you really have to go back to the exchanges

between the Israelis and the Syrians, and I guess some increasingly belligerent remarks by [Israeli Prime Minister] Eshkol and some threatening noises from the Syrians. Looking back at it, I remember at the time I commented to somebody about the baseball theory of Middle East crises: three strikes and you're out. Nasser had not gone to the aid of the Syrians when they'd been clobbered; he'd not gone to the aid of the Jordanians after the Es Samu raid. And then I've forgotten what Eshkol--another threat shortly before the closure of the Straits. I think Nasser was just feeling that he could not--I think he wrote memos to this effect--Nasser did not feel that he could just sit there a third time and not go to the aid of his Arab brethren. So the buildup that you noted properly is an important part in triggering the May 22 event that was the *casus belli*.

G: Did you go to Cairo on this trip?

S: Yes, that's the first place I went. What that brought home to me--I arrived on February 22 of 1967; the date sticks in my mind both because of its American significance, but also [because] Nasser gave one of his stem-winding anti-American speeches the day that I arrived. I remember it being interpreted by the embassy people in Cairo that night that I arrived. The reason that was significant is that Lyndon Johnson had been trying to somehow pick up the relationship with Nasser that Kennedy had tried to develop, and now we were three-and-a-half years later. But Johnson had tried to maintain the food aid program that Kennedy had begun as a way of maintaining some kind of working relationship, at least in the economic development field, with Nasser.

Johnson was increasingly concerned about his ability to get this through the Congress and get congressional acquiescence in it. I remember we were sending memos

back and forth to Johnson, and I think some of his people in the congressional relations shop were doing some of the feeling out on the Hill about whether Johnson could get congressional leadership acquiescence in this. And then bang: this Nasser speech on February 22. I can remember my thought in Cairo when I heard that the speech had been given, having just come from Washington, was, "Well, that takes care of President Johnson's efforts to continue this program." And Johnson wasn't all that keen about busting a gut, as it were, to get on too well with Nasser--

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--who was basically an unattractive character, as far as the U.S. Congress was concerned. So a lot of the NSC staff effort had been to persuade Johnson to go along with this. We'd gotten him to agree to do it, and then just at the point when we were that far along, bang, down comes Nasser. My reaction was, after all this effort to try to get this thing back on the track, a speech like that is going to send President Johnson up the wall.

G: Was Ambassador [John] Badeau still in residency?

S: No, he had left, I can't remember exactly when, but I suppose not too long perhaps after Kennedy's assassination.

G: I meant Battle.

S: Battle, yes. As a matter of fact, Luke [Lucius] Battle was just phasing out of Cairo. His household goods were being packed up, and he invited me anyway to come stay in the guest room at his residence, which I did. I think I went on to Saudi Arabia, maybe one or two other places. In any case, Luke Battle also started his orientation tour around the area and we ended up in Israel at the same time. And together with Tim [Townsend]

Hoopes from the Pentagon, the three of us ended up in the Galilee together and the Israelis took the three of us on a trip around Lake Tiberias in an Israeli gunboat, which is really a landing craft with some armament on it. They took us cruising up the eastern shore of the Sea of Galilee with the Syrians right off on the shore. This is the area of course where the Israelis had shot down the six Syrian MiGs not too long before. I can remember later on stories in the Cairo press, because of course they were attentive to Battle, who had just been ambassador in Cairo. But they somehow got onto the fact that both Hoopes, who was better known, and--I of course at that time was very junior and not terribly prominent at all. But the idea of an NSC [staffer] and the new assistant secretary [of state] and the deputy assistant secretary for ISA [International Security Affairs] in the Pentagon were all touring Israel right at that moment--and the Cairo propaganda machine decided that that was somehow related to the prelude to the 1967 war.

But anyhow, somehow or other their propaganda machine just assumed that--when in June they came up with the idea that the Americans were behind the Israeli preemptive strike, they harked back to this trip of Luke Battle to Israel in February and March and saw that as the beginnings of planning for it. Battle was then back and had been sworn in by the time the war broke out.

G: What was his reaction to the Nasser speech that you remarked on?

S: Luke is a very philosophical person who has the capacity to take large negative developments in stride, not because he likes them but because he'd probably lived through enough of them that he copes with them. I think the people in the embassy felt

pretty much the way I did: Jeez, we've tried so hard to get this relationship stuck together in some kind of reasonable way and then just as we do, this guy goes and tears it all up.

There's a point that occurs to me that might just be worth noting here, because it has to do with President Johnson's relationship with leaders like Nasser. I always felt that--I remember thinking this at the time--that President Johnson, with his political capacity and his tremendous experience in the Congress, dealt with foreign leaders very much as he would other American politicians. You could see this in a variety of ways: His anger with some leaders who would come on a state visit to the United States, have a good visit in Washington, go off to some other American city and make a stinging comment about the American policy in Vietnam, which was especially sensitive for Johnson. I can remember his disinviting visits from the Indian and Pakistani prime ministers in that context, saying, "I'm sure they'll do exactly this kind of thing. I don't want them here." But I always felt that there was very distinctively a politician-to-politician kind of relationship. That was the way Johnson conducted international relations, and of course Nasser was no exception to that. What Johnson couldn't stomach was the fact that Nasser was going to say and do things that were going to make it very difficult for Johnson to sustain the policies with the Congress that he might intellectually feel were the right policies to pursue.

This speech of February 1967 is a good example. Johnson knows that Nasser's an unattractive character; he knows how the Congress feels about a man like Nasser. He reluctantly is persuaded by his National Security Council staff and the Secretary of State that Nasser is important to the Middle East, we'd better have a relationship with him;

therefore we've got to do this, and he grudgingly goes along. And then Nasser gives a speech like this. And it's just the politician reacting: you can't trust a guy like this; he doesn't know how to work with you, and if you can't work with somebody like that, you've got to put him in his place. I don't want to do any more extrapolating from this point, because I don't want to be a psychoanalyst, but I do think it's the failure of the relationship with Nasser which every president has tried to develop. Eisenhower tried it; Kennedy tried it; Johnson reluctantly tried it. Here you have at the beginning of the 1967 war period--there's a period leading up to it--you have as part of the prelude the gradual petering out almost, or demise of this third effort in the Nasser period to work out a good relationship with him.

G: Do you attach any significance to the fact that we did not have an ambassador in Cairo in the months immediately before the crisis broke?

S: Yes, I think that's important, but I don't think it was decisive. We made efforts to remedy that. But Nasser would have done what he did on May 22 in declaring the Straits closed, no matter who had been there. Nobody knew he was going to do it, so nobody could have stopped that. The point where your question becomes relevant I think is not that period in May, but right at the very end of May and the very beginning of June when we might have had a chance to walk Nasser back a little bit, to use one of Walt Rostow's favorite phrases: walking the cat back.

Then of course we had Charlie Yost out there; we had [Robert] Anderson going out; we had the possibility of a visit by the Egyptian Vice President as the war weekend actually approached. So by the time when the absence of the ambassador might really

have made the difference, I think we had filled the gap. We had sent other people out; we'd been in communication and were in the process of at least cranking up some kind of effort to turn things around. If we hadn't had anybody there from May 22 though June 5, then I would say that, yes, we really did miss the boat. But I think we recovered quickly enough after May 22. After all, the other devastating thing that happened in that early period, namely U Thant's withdrawal of the UN Emergency Force, that was something that I don't think anybody could have stopped. It just happened; it was there and it was a *fait accompli* before we had a chance to weigh in anywhere, let alone New York.

G: Did you have a chance to observe President Johnson's reaction to the withdrawal of the UN force?

S: No, not directly. Usually the pattern of interaction between the NSC operation and the President is that, of course, the NSC adviser is in minute-by-minute, hour-by-hour, or two- or three-, four-times-a-day contact every day. And he will get those reactions; he will often be the first one that either tells the President the news and hears the President's reaction, or gets the brunt of the President's first reactions after he's read something on the ticker. But the staff then--people like myself--would have the President's reaction in a way, filtered through Walt. Or where we were involved, it was not on that minute-to-minute basis, but a number of meetings and other contacts of that kind. But they were generally prepared situations; memos had been prepared for a discussion, or they served a particular purpose and the staff was involved. Exceptions to that, of course, were some of the meetings in the Situation Room during the war where the President came down and joined us as just part of the discussion.

G: How did the National Security Adviser, Mr. Rostow, react to the withdrawal of the UN force?

S: Again, I don't remember that explicitly. I remember all of us were appalled and thought it was a major mistake; that it didn't need to happen, and if it hadn't happened, it could have--but then nobody could understand what U Thant could possibly have had on his mind when he just caved immediately to the Nasser request.

G: Have you gotten any enlightenment since that time as to what U Thant might have been thinking of?

S: No, I guess that's one of those things that recedes into history. I remember at the time that he had some reasons for doing what he did, certain basic legal reasons, that U.N. forces were there at the invitation of the Egyptian government and if they're asked to leave, they have no choice. On the other hand, I think all of us felt that if it had been another secretary general, Dag Hammarskjöld for instance, he would have found a way not to have heard the request, or been out to lunch when it was delivered, or gotten somebody on a plane to Nasser before the troops moved back. But I think there was just a general feeling that it was an incredibly inept performance and a critical mistake, a genuinely critical mistake.

G: Are you able to comment on the credence of the charge that Nasser did not really expect U Thant to withdraw the UN force, that he was in effect running a bluff, which was called?

S: I can only comment on it in the sense that--not of any evidence of any kind--but just the feeling that a lot of us had, which was just that.

G: A great deal of importance has been ascribed by some people to the idea that the Soviets were feeding false intelligence to the Egyptians about an Israeli buildup against Syria, that this played a crucial role in some of the decisions that Nasser took. Do you have any inside information on that?

S: I think there's some credence to be placed in those reports. There were at least some CIA reports that indicated that the Soviets had done that at the time, and I think that's the best evidence in a way. It's not what people wrote later, but at the time I think in the memos you'll find phrases like "the Soviets throwing the match into the haystack." So at least there was a perception that the Soviets were doing some of that, and as I recall it was a perception which grew out of one or two CIA reports that they were doing this.

Now, I would not jump from that comment to the conclusion that the 1967 war resulted from Soviet disinformation. That was one factor of several we've already mentioned. The steadily rising level of terrorist and retaliatory action was already setting the stage for trouble, so it is more the match in the haystack then. The haystack is there; the haystack is dry. And maybe it's more like a small spark in the haystack, and maybe there are several sparks thrown in, all of which contribute to smoke and fire before they're done. Not one match that ignites the whole thing.

G: Can we talk about the Abba Eban visit a little bit, because there have been some allegations flowing from that, too. One of which is that the Israelis felt they were given a green light at some point during their visit, maybe not from President Johnson--in fact, I've never heard that it was from President Johnson--but from officials on the next level or perhaps even the third.

S: I could not marshal any evidence for that theory. If nothing else at all, common sense would tell you that the Foreign Minister--*that* Foreign Minister, Abba Eban, former ambassador in Washington--would know enough about the American system to know where the final decisions were going to be made and who he should listen to, and who he should listen to for interest but not as the definitive spokesman of the United States Government. I think President Johnson came on strong enough with Eban in that meeting on May 26 so that Eban could not have gone away with any perception other than that the President did not want Israel to go to war. Again, Johnson must have been--I was not at that meeting, and there are good memcons of it around, but Johnson would have been at his most persuasive because it was, again, a very large political point that he was making. It was a very simple point and it pervaded his thinking throughout this period, a point that only a president has a right to make. What he was saying to Eban was, "I have my plate full with Vietnam politically in my own country, in terms of a major war going on out there, and I do not want another crisis to cope with. You know you guys will depend on the United States in the end if you get into trouble, and I'm telling you right now I don't want that proposition to be put to me, and I don't want you to do it." And I think that people after the war, for months--Walt Rostow is one of them, Harry McPherson I think would be another--heard Johnson say at one time or another--not every day, but on occasion--that he still felt that the Israelis had made a very serious mistake. And the phrase that everybody quotes, "You don't need to be alone unless you go alone." I find it difficult to see how Eban could have misread all of that. I should think he would have read Johnson's position for what it was and known that Johnson's

position would govern the American position, that anybody else who might have said something different should be taken very carefully into that perspective.

Even when you get down to the question of how much time the Israelis thought they had. At the very least, there is the interpretation of feeling that the United States assumed that they would wait at least two weeks for the United States to get its countermeasures moving. The Israelis could not have gone off with the assumption that somehow after the first week they were free to go. I haven't re-read it; here is the Johnson letter of June 3 to Prime Minister Eshkol, but again this is the letter that would have been in the Israelis' hands just as they made the kick-off decision. Again, that was a formal communication by the President of the United States, and it was a letter that could not have been read as a green light, even an amber light.

G: Did you participate in any of the discussion during that visit about the relative military balance in the Middle East?

S: Internal discussion, yes. What you had going on at that [time] when Eban came, for that two- or three-day period, were two sets of discussions. One of course was the set of discussions with Eban on what the United States was going to do, and then there was the Israeli intelligence assessment.

G: What were the outlines of that?

S: I can't remember in detail, but the essence of it was that powerful forces were arrayed against Israel and with the Jordanian-Egyptian rapprochement--in a way that joined Arab forces--the situation was becoming more and more serious. Eban used the phrase, "the noose is tightening." But in any case I think the Israeli military assessment painted a

fairly serious picture of the Israeli [position]. So while there was an effort to put together the response to Eban on what the U.S. would do, there was also the intelligence assessment on our side which, as we all read, Johnson had it reviewed at several different levels, but it always came out the same: The American Defense Intelligence [Agency] judgment, the CIA intelligence assessment, basically said that the Israelis can handily defend themselves against any conceivable combination of Arab enemies. And I think, if I recall, the JCS even projected that it would take Israel three or four days to get to the Suez Canal. I think they were off by a day, as it turned out. But still, Johnson was afraid of those intelligence estimates, and then when the Israeli intelligence chief came with this more alarmist assessment, he again had the intelligence people on our side go back to their drawing boards and see what they made of it, and whether they would want to revise their views. Again, his fear that the Israelis would--he did not want to be caught being asked by a drowning Israel to throw the life preserver out at the expense of what he was trying to do in Vietnam. He wanted to be sure; he was just scared to death that the bureaucracy was being bureaucratic and wasn't being sufficiently sensitive to changes in the situation in the Middle East.

G: Right. Do you recall your reaction to the news that the fighting had begun?

S: Yes--well, I guess there's no good way to really describe the reaction as it ought to be. In working in the government in that field, you got so used to the phone calls early in the morning or in the middle of the night saying, "Something's gone wrong," that your basic reaction is "Oh, gosh, this is bad. I've got to get up and get dressed and go to the office." Then your mind begins sorting it out as you drive to work, trying to think of all the

things, all the possible interpretations of what little information you have, the kinds of things that we need to do, because you know you'll be asked, "Well, what should we be doing here?" Your mind goes to all that very quickly. But it was actually Walt who called up, himself; usually it would be the Situation Room. He called and just reported that there was an attack under way, and it was pretty early. At that early stage you couldn't tell exactly what had happened. When I arrived, about twenty-five or thirty minutes after he called, Walt had us working pretty hard on the question of who fired the first shot. That pretty quickly became an irrelevant question, as the picture began to get rounded out of the events of the Israeli air strikes and their success. But Walt felt, given the President's own personal investment in trying to keep the Israelis from kicking the war off, that the President's first question would be "Who fired the first shot?" And the Israelis did try a little bit of funny business about Egyptians firing across the Gaza border, which is sort of like the 1982 business of the assassination attempt on the Israeli ambassador in London. It had very little to do with kicking off the invasion of Lebanon; similarly in 1967. But it was quite clear after [not] very long that the Israelis had mounted a major preemptive strike. Whoever might have fired the first bullet, the Israelis really launched the attack.

G: What were our major efforts directed toward in the first hours after the news?

S: At the beginning of a crisis like that, there are a number of practical things you find yourself doing in the first hours. One is a very obvious one: You try to find out what's going on; you try to get the best possible picture of the situation. A lot of the effort in the first three or four hours is spent on piecing together a picture, a press report from here

and something else from there and so on. One of the silly things that I remember during that period was that one or the other of us had gone on summer time recently enough so that we didn't know what time it was in Cairo. And a lot of time was spent trying to figure out what time it was, because it was not irrelevant. You'd get the Foreign Broadcast Information Service reports of Radio Cairo at such-and-such a time, related to similar reports from Israel announcing that certain things happened at a certain time. And to get an accurate picture of the sequence of events, you needed somehow to know what time it was in Cairo, because the time difference between Israel and Egypt--you were picking up Israeli radio and Egyptian radio and some briefings by the Israeli military, all using local times. But you didn't know what local time was; it was hard to get things pieced together. Anyway, that's one kind of effort. And indeed a lot of my effort was devoted just to piecing together a picture of how things had evolved.

A second effort, of course, was one I mentioned earlier, namely the first White House statement reporting the reaction of the President to the news; that was drafted. Of course, this was not an event coming out of nowhere. The crisis had been brewing and decision-making meetings had been held for a couple of weeks--two or three weeks--before the war broke out. There was a machinery for crisis management--oftentimes at the beginning of a crisis, you've got to establish the machinery; even though it's in mothballs and ready to go, you've still got to get the people together and activate it. In this case, it was an ongoing effort in the government so you didn't have to spend a lot of time with that. And then of course there are all intrastructural kinds of things that you do. But then of course immediately the effort turns to trying to bring the fighting to a

stop, a ceasefire. And connected with that of course you've got possible exchanges of messages with the parties in the conflict, just to get their assessment from their two sides as to what this is all about, what their objectives are. And then you've got the UN effort of wherever it is you're going to try to put your main energies toward achieving a ceasefire. So there are the original contacts, diplomatic contacts, in preparing for them. Will we call for a ceasefire or a ceasefire and withdrawal? A major question.

Then by midmorning, I guess, we were ready. All the people involved in this assemble in the Situation Room, and there's an effort then to establish what the situation is and to begin making a checklist and a list of work assignments, things that people need to do to pull together the effort. The first morning is essentially given over to activities of that kind.

G: I've seen some of the dispatches from both sides in the first hour, and it strikes me that anyone who was trying to make sense out of them would have a very tough time indeed, because both sides were making large claims. And although I suppose there would be a historic tendency to put more credence on the Israeli side than the Egyptian side, still you can never be sure. How did you deal with that?

S: I think it's interesting that a core picture emerges from some rather little things. The Egyptians can come out and say, "Well, we just destroyed the Israeli air force," but that's just such a huge inaccuracy that you can dismiss that. But by the time you've put together a lot of little reports that the Israelis attacked here at seven-fifteen; they attacked over there at seven-thirty-five, that over here the fighting was reported and so on--that's how you put a lot of little things together; you get a fairly accurate pattern. And in

Arab-Israeli wars, you tend to take the Israeli assessment not because of any predisposition, but just because their military tends to operate pretty much the way ours does. They're a democratic society; they can't get away with gross misstatements of casualties or anything like that, because lists of casualties are going to be published in an open society. Their standards of accuracy conform pretty much to those of our own military, so you tend to rely very heavily on them for your accounts. And of course you've got other--as the thing goes on, you've got other intelligence sources that you can begin to bring into play. From all of these things that come in, they all tend to flesh out a picture; they're all complementary parts of the whole picture. So it's not so hard after those initial moments.

G: So it didn't take too long before you would have been able to go to President Johnson and say, "Well, this is more or less what is happening."

S: Yes. I'll be interested to go back and look at the files. I would bet that before the end of the morning we were able to do pretty much that; certainly by the end of the day it was quite clear where the Israelis were--

G: You were working in your office then?

S: No, basically [I] moved over to the Situation Room, which usually happened in a crisis, because all of the material was coming in there; a lot of the action was there. Walt's office was nearby. It was just much less convenient to be over in the Old Executive Office Building across West Executive Avenue. It's just three flights up, but it's just too far out of the center of things to be effective.

G: Is the next significant thing, newsworthy thing, shocking thing, whatever, the attack on the *Liberty*?

S: No, I don't think so. I think the--I can't do this right now; I will be able to do it better later. But I think you have to work your way through the week. And maybe I need to go back to your earlier question. You asked what we gave our attention to. I said we gave our attention in the first hours to just initial reactions, initial communications, getting our crisis machinery running smoothly, and all of that. I think the second subject maybe that would fall on a list of where we put our energies is our initial picture of what our substantive effort is going to be. Now, it's pretty obvious you're going to try for a ceasefire, but is it a ceasefire and withdrawal, or it just a ceasefire in place? That required getting some assessment of the Israelis' objectives in going to war, and that's not an isolated thing, because this is Monday morning and Saturday afternoon Johnson had signed off a letter to Eshkol, which had gotten there Sunday morning. So you're only twenty-four or thirty-six hours away from the last communication on this general subject, so [you are] going back to the Prime Minister of Israel and saying, "What are you doing anyway, and what are your objectives?" and getting a response. That's a critical part of your assessment of what their objectives are and it's a critical part of deciding what you're going to do.

Now Eshkol, as I recall, came back with a message saying, "We have no territorial aspirations. We're just defending ourselves against the tightening of the noose. Maybe we weren't attacked this morning, but the noose was tightening, and so we had to do [it]." I think--and again, I would have to look at the record--but in those first

hours I think the United States was free to call for a ceasefire and withdrawal, without in any way raising the problem that Johnson had later on with the idea of Israeli withdrawal without peace, recognition, and security. While there was the rhetoric in the early morning hours of June 5 of "Let's settle it once and for all this time," if I recall correctly, our first resolution in the United Nations was a resolution calling for a ceasefire and withdrawal. So it was not a systematic effort to leave people in place until there was peace. If I recall--and somebody told me I'm wrong about this, though I think I'm right on it--the fact that the Soviets delayed the vote in New York on that first resolution ultimately led us to say, "Well, if you don't want anything complicated [like] ceasefire and withdrawal, let's just call for a ceasefire; let's tell everybody to stop shooting," which in effect left them where they were. In any case, we were getting Eshkol's statement of what his purposes are; we were determining what our posture was going to be; we want to stop the war; if we go to New York [to] the Security Council, what kind of resolution are we going to have, what are we going to call for?

So that's really the second effort, and of course part of that first day's crisis management operation was very quickly opening the hot line with the Soviets, and general agreement through that exchange of messages that both sides would stay out of the conflict. So that was a third effort, posturing ourselves toward other elements on the international scene. Of course, I've forgotten what we did with the European allies; we got in touch in some way. So by the end of the first day, we had really done several different things. We established our analytical base; we established our assessment of the parties' intentions, so we must have gotten something from Cairo at the same time. We

established an international environment, [the] UN Security Council, hot line and so on, for dealing with the crisis. I think the next day or two, Tuesday, Wednesday, were heavily devoted to the efforts to bring about a ceasefire, and continuing exchanges on the hot line.

(Interruption)

The second and third days I think were geared heavily to UN action and to following the course of the fighting. There's just always an intense effort that goes into following a military situation, so that you are in a position to know whether you are going to get a panic call for help from somebody.

One other part of this, of course, is really part of trying to limit the scope of hostilities, and that was trying to keep King Hussein out of the war. There was that exchange of messages. The State Department partly conducted that.

There were other crisis meetings in the White House, trying to keep policy together, and as we said earlier, Mac Bundy was brought in to coordinate that effort. The *Liberty* really came somewhat later, after an already very substantial effort was under way to try to contain the conflict. The *Liberty*--as many tragic events of that kind are, I think probably was an event outside the mainstream of policy making, and even certainly outside the mainstream of the conduct of the war itself. It would be a horrible but isolated separate incident.

G: Why did it take the Egyptians so long to accept a ceasefire?

S: I don't know. Part of it, of course, was the political difficulty of admitting defeat. Logic would tell us that if you admit defeat early you have less of a defeat than if you don't

admit it until later, if it can help you stop the conflict in between. But I think it's that. I don't know whether there was misinformation passed by their own commanders as to how they were doing, the slowness at the top political levels to know what was going on.

G: Did you know that Israel was planning an attack on the Golan Heights as the war progressed?

S: I can't remember exactly when we began thinking and talking about that, but I have the feeling that that didn't come as any surprise. The Israelis had been deeply concerned about the Syrian shelling from the Heights. We've already indicated the terrorist incidents and shelling. It was a major part of [the] buildup to the war.

G: Now, Eban--I hate to keep going back to him, but he does say some controversial things. He says that at the point when it became obvious that the Egyptians were finished and that there was not going to be much of a problem on the Jordanian front, that he was in phone conversation with a high government official in Washington who told Eban that it would be ironic if the Syrians, who had perpetrated more atrocities and were more the cause of the war than anybody else, got off scot-free. And Eban said he took this as fairly obvious encouragement that an attack on Syria would be not be deemed a lick amiss in Washington circles.

S: I think that's too much of a surface interpretation. The Israelis had their war plan; they had a plan of going after the fronts one at a time. They went after the Egyptian front; probably the opportunity for the Jordan front came sooner than they expected; because of the Jordanian shelling they had to do something about them. Actually what they did was relatively easily accomplished, probably unexpectedly so, once they got past Jerusalem.

But they could not have had the capacity to shift their reserves and so on into the Golan without having had that as a part of their war plan. So I don't think it was an idea that occurred to them late in the game. And as I say, just going back to my own personal experience in February, March of 1967, the purpose of putting Luke Battle and Tim Hoopes and me on an Israeli gunboat and running us up the eastern shore of Lake Tiberias was so that we could get the best possible view, from the bottom up, of the Golan Heights. Part of our tour was to be shown the bunkers in which the children and the kibbutzim lived and so on. There was a serious effort by the Israeli defense forces, even then, to show us that Syria was a menace. And I can't believe, that being the general Israeli view of it all, that having the opportunity that they had, they didn't right from the outset intend to go after the Golan. And if incidentally somebody on the phone to Eban said something that might be interpreted as an amber light, why, all to the good; throw it back at the U.S. later on. But I don't think that's the same in any way as saying that the U.S. somehow encouraged the Israelis.

G: I don't as a rule like hypothetical questions, but I can't think of another way to put this. If we had known ahead of time of Israeli plans for the Golan Heights, how would that have affected what we were trying to accomplish by way of a ceasefire and withdrawal?

S: I don't think it would have changed much, because we started right at the outset to try to stop the war, and the effort in New York intensified as Tuesday and Wednesday went on. I didn't know whether we might have made a little--an ounce of extra effort, knowing that the Israelis had intended to go after the Golan. I don't know if we would have made that extra effort or not. I think we were already making a substantial effort. I don't

remember it being a big surprise from the Israelis. The point was there was a war going on and we felt that it was a war between Israel and all of its neighbors, and on any given day the war was going to expand a little bit more one way or another, and the effort was to stop it before it got to the point where somehow the Soviets would come behind one of their clients, or where Israel would find that it had gone a bit far and begun to stumble.

End of Tape 1 of 1 and Interview I

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