

INTERVIEW II

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INTERVIEWEE: SARGENT SHRIVER

INTERVIEWER: MICHAEL L. GILLETTE

PLACE: Mr. Shriver's office, Washington, D.C.

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G: Let me start by asking you what the Bureau of the Budget's position in all of this through the task force period was. Do you recall, did they have a perception of what they thought the War on Poverty should be?

S: My memory on that would be weak.

G: Do you recall encountering any resistance from BOB at this stage of the game?

S: No, I don't remember encountering any resistance, and if you'll let me ruminate for a second rather than recall accurately the situation, then I might just say the following: President Johnson asked Walter Heller to lead an effort to advise him about what to do, if anything, concerning the poor. I'm sure that Walter Heller and the Council of Economic Advisers would not have done their work without consulting with OMB [Office of Management and Budget], or the Bureau of the Budget as we used to call it.

(Interruption)

G: [We were] talking about BOB.

S: Walter Heller was a good friend of Charlie Schultze's, and I think at that time Kermit Gordon was still running BOB. They were all very close intellectually and socially, and I would imagine Walter Heller talked to them considerably. Therefore I don't think that there was any opposition within BOB. Moreover, I add one other thing, and it's this, President Johnson told me that in the construction of the budget for that specific year--that would have been the budget that he submitted to the Congress in January of

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1964, his first budget--that in that budget they had set aside about five hundred million dollars for purposes of running, quote, "a war against poverty." Now that couldn't have been put in there without acquiescence, if not active support, of the Bureau of the Budget. So I don't know of any overt or covert opposition to President Johnson's initiative emanating from the BOB.

G: I understand that BOB did support the idea of having a new agency administer the War on Poverty rather than try to run it through HEW [Department of Health, Education and Welfare] or Department of Labor.

S: My guess is--although I'm not sure about this, that's why I'm guessing--that you're correct in believing that.

G: Did BOB oppose the idea of putting OEO [Office of Economic Opportunity] in the Executive Office of the President?

S: Yes, but that's a different issue. The BOB, like most people or most organizations in which the staff members are experts in public administration, would always oppose having an agency which is a "line" or operating agency in the Executive Office of the President. By definition, the Executive Office of the President is a staff function. It's supposed to be composed of people who work as staff members for the president, helping him to get the line agencies to do things. So they don't want a line agency, by definition, to be in the Executive Office. It doesn't belong there, according to good sound doctrine of public administration. So yes, they did oppose it being in there.

G: Why did it end up there?

S: My own belief is it ended up there because of President Johnson himself. Moreover, I'll add that I always admired him for his willingness not only to put it there but to keep it there. He specifically told me that the OEO, or the War on Poverty, was going to be a very controversial activity, and that in order to protect OEO or the War on Poverty from political attack in the Congress and elsewhere, he wanted to have it in his own office, in

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the Executive Office of the President, period. He moreover underscored that by saying that politically astute, sophisticated people in the Congress would be less likely to attack it if it were in his own office, that is in the Office of the President. Because, he said, they would think that *he* would think that they were attacking him if they attacked the War on Poverty. He knew how their minds would operate in the Congress, and he knew it's much easier for a congressman to attack an agency, let's say an independent agency, which is not right in the White House, than to attack the White House.

The classic, perfect illustration would be, it's much easier to attack an agency or department head than to attack the president's wife. You don't attack the president's wife because that's an assault directly against him personally. Nobody ever wants to get into that position, attacking the president's wife. Well, the next closest thing to his family is his personal staff, and then the next closest thing to personal staff is operations that are right under his control in the White House. So I thought Johnson deserved not only extremely high marks for being astute in understanding that reality, but high marks for being courageous and keeping the agency there. That is, keeping the War on Poverty or OEO in the Executive Office of the President.

G: Was this a proposition that you put to him or did he initiate it, do you know, that OEO would be an executive office of the president?

G: Number one, I did not initiate it. The conversation I just described came up, however, I believe at a time when there was agitation to take OEO, the War on Poverty, out of the White House. I personally was against that because I thought that OEO being in the White House, that is in the Executive Office of the President, gave the director of OEO a great deal more influence within the bureaucracy. I was right in that opinion. It did give the director of OEO more influence within the bureaucracy. But Johnson's point was [that] not only with respect to the bureaucrats was it a defensive mechanism to keep OEO

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in his own office, but also it was effective against the political people who would be opposed to it.

I just think he was very, very smart, as usual, to think of that and then to make the decision to keep it close to himself. And it was difficult for him; he got lots of flak from his good friends and from political supporters, who would say to him, "You've got to do something about the War on Poverty. It's killing me in Tennessee," or "killing me in Texas," or "killing me in Illinois." Wherever we were hurting political leaders they would complain directly to the President. He couldn't slough that criticism off and say, "Well, you know, that's over there, that's an independent agency. I'll do my best, but you know I can't always control what those people over there are going to do," that kind of talk. I've always admired him for his willingness to take that political heat generated by our efforts to help the poor.

G: How did the task force communicate with the White House during its deliberations?

S: Informally is about the best way, I fear, to describe the communications process.

G: Who at the White House did you normally stay in touch with?

S: Once again my memory is not going to be very good on that question. Having said that, I will add that we kept in close touch with Bill Moyers; with an assistant to Bill Moyers who became famous later on, Joseph Califano; with Charlie Schultze; with several people who were on Charlie Schultze's staff. One of them was named Cannon, C-A-N-N-O-N.

G: Bill Cannon?

S: Bill Cannon. Another one was a very smart younger woman who was in the Budget Bureau, whose name was Oppenheimer. I can't remember her first name, but she was very good.

G: Oh, Anne Oppenheimer.

S: Anne Oppenheimer. She was very good. And those people, directly or indirectly, from the BOB would be able to get their ideas through to the White House. Most new

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initiatives of the magnitude of the War on Poverty, needless to say I guess, drew the interest or attention of other people in the White House. For example, Larry O'Brien was interested in what we were doing. Mike Feldman was still in the White House in those days and he was interested in what we were doing, and I'm sure there were others who were interested. So there was a pretty good, I think, flow of information back and forth between us and the White House. And when I say us, I mean us. I wasn't a single conduit of information to the White House.

G: One of the responsibilities of your task force [1964 Outside Task Force on the War Against Poverty], in addition to drafting the legislation, was to prepare the message that the President would present to Congress with the legislation. I gather there was a delay in this and it took some doing and redoing to get the message together. Do you recall how it was finally drafted and what the problems with it were?

S: I'm going to draw a blank on that. I guess if I went back and talked to some of the fellows who were involved then I could refresh my memory, but right now I don't know the answer.

G: Do you recall if John Kenneth Galbraith worked on that at all, the message?

S: Oh, Ken Galbraith drew up a message. Before I ever became associated with the program, he actually had already drawn up a message for transmission of the original concept--that was the community action concept--to the Congress. That's what President Johnson gave to me when he first told me he wanted me to run the War on Poverty. What he gave me was the draft of a piece of legislation that had been developed by the Council of Economic Advisers, and I'm sure by the Bureau of the Budget, the draft of a piece of legislation, *and* the draft of a presidential statement announcing the inauguration of the war against poverty. That statement that Ken Galbraith had written and the legislation which had been drafted were focused on the idea of community action. That's all

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there was. There was supposed to be, let's just say, five hundred million dollars spent in that kind of an effort.

It was only after I got brought into this process, and only after I found out that you really couldn't spend five hundred million dollars intelligently in community action in the first year--especially when we weren't even going to get started until after the election; you couldn't spend that amount of money intelligently--that we then began looking for additional constructive ways in which to spend the money which President Johnson had set aside. In that process we began to consult with all different kinds of people from every walk of life in our country, probing for additional ideas, not conflicting ideas but supplementary ideas to community action.

G: Was there also a consideration of what sort of programs could get off the ground quickly and show reasonably rapid results, as opposed to long term?

S: Sure. Why? Well, the realities of political life in Washington are if you start something new, you're supposed to get something done. Even if it's somewhat unrealistic to believe that you can get much done on a problem as big as poverty in six months, nevertheless the reality is you have to go to Congress and explain what you're doing, why you're doing it, how you're doing it, and they always ask, what results are you getting? So sure, everybody wants to get some results to talk about. That's an aspect of the real world.

G: Bill Kelly perceived three stages in the composition of the task force, beginning with the theoreticians, and going to planners and logisticians, and then later on [to] people who were operationally oriented. Would this be an accurate description? Did the task force change in composition?

S: Sure, that's a fair way to say it, but that's not unusual with respect to a new program. You can say the same thing, I guess, about the Peace Corps, or about an individual program which we started under the aegis of the War on Poverty, like Head Start. The normal process of action in any society is that somebody has an idea or that maybe a group of

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people have an idea. Then a group of people, to use Kelly's analogy of theoreticians, get together and discuss the theoretical idea, the pros and cons, difficulties, *et cetera*. Once they've reached some kind of a tentative conclusion about the theoretical aspects of it, then you turn it over to planners and organizers to develop it the way Kelly says. Then you turn it over for operational people to run it.

What's the difference? It's like inventing a new weapon. Theoreticians in the Defense Department say, "Well, we need a missile which will do A, B, C, D, and E." They theorize about what kind of a missile they want. The concept or need is discussed among all the theoreticians of strategic warfare. Finally they agree upon the characteristics that they want. Then they go to various companies and ask for bids from people who are, let's say, in the construction end of things. They pick a winner. That company builds the new weapon and then they hand it over to the navy or the air force or another operational agency to run it. So this is a perfectly routine progression. I think Kelly is probably quite accurate in how he has described the process so far as the War on Poverty was concerned.

G: You brought in Jack Conway to help formulate the Community Action Program. Why did you bring in Conway? What did you expect from him in this connection?

S: There were a number of reasons for bringing in Jack Conway. First of all, he knew a great deal about the task of organizing programs locally. He had been in the United Automobile Workers for a long time; he knew how to organize unions, which is normally from the grass roots up. He believed in it; he believed in, quote, "participatory democracy." So that was one big factor.

Secondly, he was known as a person here on the Washington scene who knew how to get things done in Washington. He had lots of contacts in the Congress; he had lots of contacts in the labor-union movement; he had lots of contacts within the executive branch. That was another very strong factor in his favor.

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Third, he was well respected, highly regarded by the people who had been working on the anti-juvenile delinquency effort. He had credentials, credibility, with Bobby Kennedy, the Attorney General, with Dick Boone, with Dave Hackett, and others who were devoted to the effort which they had been making through the Committee on Juvenile Delinquency, or through the office concerned with juvenile delinquency. They trusted him and believed that he would be a good leader of that effort, the Community Action effort.

Each one of these divisions, as we ultimately ended up, like say Community Action or the Job Corps or VISTA or Head Start, each one of them needed a person who could personify what we were trying to do and who had the support of the people in that field. So for example if you picked Julius Richmond to run Head Start, you just don't go pick a doctor who happened to be a pediatrician. We picked Julius Richmond because he was well known in medical circles all over America; he was respected in this particular domain, namely early childhood problems. And you pick him because he can reach out and influence people in the American Medical Association, and in, you might say, the medical bureaucracy of Washington, *et cetera*.

You do the same thing when you go start a Job Corps. We picked Otis Singletary. He was the head of a university; we wanted people to understand that Job Corps was a place where you actually learned something, so we had a university person. He was from the South. He was, how shall I say, somewhat conservative in his political orientation. His father-in-law was a congressman named Bill Colmer from Mississippi. And he believed in the Job Corps idea. So he could construct it. He could reach out to educators and to businessmen. He was solid. He had to personify the Job Corps.

Well, Conway provided that precise type of service or leadership, had these precise qualities for Community Action that these other men had for other areas.

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G: Were any of these people brought in because of the political advantages that they carried with them? For example, being able to neutralize or gain the support of people on the Hill?

S: Well, the answer is yes and no. The answer is yes, because you don't appoint people to positions of the type we're talking about who are going to be liabilities with the Congress. I mean, you would have to be stupid to do that. So I mentioned Otis Singletary. It was helpful that he was from the South, that he was related to Bill Colmer. Nobody thought we would ever get Bill Colmer's vote because Singletary was there, because Bill Colmer was going to make up his own mind anyhow. But it's useful for various groups in the Congress to have people in an agency like OEO with whom they can consult and communicate and whom they trust. So Conway, as I said a minute ago, [had] access to people who were friendly to organized labor. Singletary had access to people who were interested in education and from the South. You could make the same observation that I'm talking about now with respect to every one of the divisions, you might say, of OEO. Certainly it's important that the leaders have political acceptability.

Let me give you another example. Gillis Long came aboard as director of congressional relations. Now, he had been a congressman; he got licked. One day in a meeting with Senator Russell Long I asked him who would be a good person to run congressional relations. He said, "Well, you know, you might think about Gillis. He's just lost his election," and told me a little bit about Gillis Long. I really hadn't known Gillis Long at all well; but I took that tip from Russell Long. I looked into Gillis Long and I went over and met him and talked to him, and I came to the conclusion, yes, this fellow would be very good for our program. And he was superb, I mean, God was very good to OEO to make Gillis Long available, because he had the precise qualities we needed.

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So yes, you pick people for these positions who are qualified to run them, but after a person has the technical qualifications, you always look for additional qualities that make that person even more desirable than the purely technical considerations.

G: Were there any particularly strong or influential members that you were able to neutralize by bringing someone on board from their district or from their state that carried some influence with them?

S: I can't remember that we ever employed anybody precisely for that reason. But on the other hand, I've already said to you, political considerations were always relevant in choosing whom you employ. For example, there was a fellow in congressional relations named George McCarthy, terrific fellow. It was also true that he had done a great deal of work with the Congress as a legislative liaison person. He was from Montana. Mike Mansfield was the leader of the Senate and George McCarthy knew all the people in the retinue of Mike Mansfield. Sure, that was a big help to us. I'm trying to think of other specific examples that would be useful for you. But the general proposition I've already described is true, I think.

G: What was your conception of the phrase "maximum feasible participation?" What did it mean to you?

S: What it meant to me is nothing more and nothing less than a very succinct description of how you run any enterprise best. Let me just describe to you my belief that in a corporation building automobiles it's very, very useful to have a maximum feasible participation by the workers. I think that their interests, their hopes, their future, their hang-ups ought to be involved in what is decided, because it will make the whole organization more effective. If you're running the United States Army it's still very important to know what the enlisted men think and what the noncommissioned officers think. Sure, you can order them to do things, but the best general is a general who has the respect and loyalty and allegiance of the foot soldier, as they used to say. Even Napoleon

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Bonaparte or Robert E. Lee, august as they were, had terrific loyalty from their troops. So when you're talking about maximum feasible participation of the poor, to me it meant that this agency should have the loyalty, interest, support, and participation of the people we were trying to help. Namely who? Poor people. That's a platitude to me.

For example, let's just say I asked you to be secretary of agriculture. Do you think that I'd be interested in whether or not farmers have any respect for you? Of course I'd be interested. Or if I asked you to be secretary of defense, do I want to put somebody in to be secretary of defense who doesn't know anybody in the army, navy, air force and marines? No, I don't. I want to put somebody in there who conforms to my conceptions of what ought to be done, but who can bring the troops along with him.

Maximum feasible participation of the poor was an arresting idea, shocking idea, simply because in our society people don't think of the poor--have not in the past thought of the poor--as having *anything* to contribute. You would never say that the secretary of commerce and his department should not have any participation by businessmen; of course a secretary of commerce and the Commerce Department are going to have maximum feasible participation by businessmen. They'd be fools if they didn't. But when you said maximum feasible participation by the poor, that was a revolutionary idea to many simply because we had little or no respect for people who are poor, I'm sorry to say. We still have that hang-up in our society. The biggest criterion of success in our country is how much money does somebody make.

G: So essentially involving the poor in the planning of these programs, this was embodied in the maximum feasible participation concept?

S: Yes, and it was a good concept, I think.

G: How about control of the programs by the poor?

S: Well, that was carrying it to an extent that I felt was not justified, at least surely not justified at the beginning. Some people, some theoreticians, believed "yes," what you

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should do is just give the poor money, like a line of credit, so to speak, to the poor people, to a community group of poor people, let's say, in Chicago. They would then, as I say, use the money like a line of credit and do whatever they thought was best with it. And it was argued that the poor should be given the freedom and the power to do that. That's what's called the empowerment of the poor. To the extent that anybody else gets in the way, it's co-opting--that's another phrase that was popular--co-opting the poor. So that if the Community Action Agency got jobs for poor people, that was co-opting them, and you shouldn't be doing that; so the theory went.

I disagreed with that. I don't believe in community action as being action by the poor alone for the benefit of the poor. I believe of community action as being communal, and that's why I always maintained we should have in the direction, at the local level of community action, the private sector, those people in the philanthropic area, *et cetera*; all of those people who have been working and trying to assist in the problems of poverty. We ought to have the local government people, and we ought to have the poor. That's a different interpretation of what the community is. Some people said the community was just the community of the poor. I never have looked upon our country in a way which says that we should develop specific groups and put them in conflict with other groups in order to achieve for that particular group a recognition or political power.

G: Adam Yarmolinsky wrote in an article that the power potential of the poor, constructive as well as destructive, was largely overlooked by the task force.

S: Well, that's probably right. If Adam wrote it I'd subscribe to it. He's a very accurate person with a fabulous memory, so I'm sure that if he wrote that, it's probably accurate.

G: But do you recall taking into consideration the power potential of the people that would be served by, say, Community Action?

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- S: When you say the power potential I'm not quite sure what you mean. You mean their potential for what--for achieving political office, you mean, or their potential for causing riots, or what are you talking about?
- G: In this case it would be both, if we consider riots destructive, and achieving office or even securing political gains, social gains, whatnot. I mean, do you think you all were significantly aware of what sort of a force the poor would constitute under Community Action?
- S: Well, I'll tell you about my own personal reaction. The thing that surprised me most was not the power potential or the intellectual ability or the energy of the poor, it was the hostility of the rich, or the hostility of the well-to-do. I was stupefied, frankly, that when Community Action was successful, and poor people, especially minority people, began to make progress either in getting jobs or making significant political advances, or speaking up, that there was real hostility to these people. Now you can say that shows you--you listening to me--how naive I am, but I have never had that kind of antipathy to some group other than my own group, so to speak, being involved in a discussion or involved in politics or involved in government.

Long before we ever started the War on Poverty back here in Washington, as I told you in our earlier session, I was president of the Catholic Interracial Council of Chicago, and I can remember having a party in my apartment, and the next day the elevator operator told me that it was the first time in the history of that building that a black man had ever come up on the front elevator and gone in the front door of an apartment of somebody living in that building. Let me just tell you something, I was extremely surprised.

I'm talking now about 1956, 1957, 1958. I was in a club in Chicago, and I wanted to have a sculpture made of my daughter, who was, let's say, four years old. I saw some sculptures in some exhibition some place, and the work of one particular sculptor

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impressed me as being just the right kind of a person to make this thing which I hoped to have made, a sculpture of my daughter. So I inquired about who this person was. It turned out the sculptor was a black man. I didn't know who he was when I first saw his work. So I asked this black man to come visit us. He said he'd be glad to come and he'd have to watch my daughter, he wanted to see her play, *et cetera*, to make an effective sculpture.

So one day we went up to this club where I was a member, and he sat on a chaise lounge and I sat next to him at the side of a swimming pool on Saturday morning, because my daughter was in there swimming and jumping in and out and playing with the other children. I don't suppose that there were ten, maybe twelve members of the club and their guests out there at that time. It was somewhat early Saturday morning. About five days later I got an official notice from the club saying, did I understand that I had violated a rule of the club by bringing a person who was not white to the club! I couldn't even remember the incident they were talking about. Then I remembered what they were talking about and I said, "Listen, all this fellow did was come up here and sit next to me and talk to me and watch my daughter swim. He didn't swim in the swimming pool. He wasn't in here using the men's room. He wasn't eating or anything, he was just observing as an artist." I resigned from the club. I couldn't believe they would object. I'm talking about 1956, not 1856! I'm talking about 1956 Chicago. I'm not talking about Birmingham. So that kind of an attitude still exists in our society.

But that was the thing that surprised me the most. As I said, it proves, I guess, that I'm very naive; but it's never been my idea of America that we started the United States of America and then turned it into a closed shop.

G: Do you think that the White House feared that the War on Poverty might alienate the middle class?

S: At the beginning?

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G: Yes.

S: I don't know.

G: As you look back, did you foresee the extent of conflict between the poor and, say, the local governmental institutions?

S: No.

G: It was more than you had anticipated?

S: Yes.

G: Would you have changed anything in this connection, knowing the sort of conflict that would take place?

S: No. I'm glad I didn't know in advance it was going to take place, but I'm very happy it did. It was good for our country to see and experience this particular reality in our society.

G: Okay. [Daniel P.] Moynihan in his book [*Maximum Feasible Misunderstanding*] asserts that after the legislation was submitted, the original task force members returned to the departments and the most forceful advocates of Community Action gathered and more or less radicalized the program.

S: I've heard that assertion made before, but I never saw any evidence of it, and I don't know that there's any truth to it.

G: You didn't feel that community action became more radical after the legislation was submitted, before it was implemented?

S: I personally didn't think that, no.

G: Let me ask you a few questions about the Job Corps. Do you recall the origin of the name, Job Corps?

S: I'm not certain.

G: There's some indication that you thought of it.

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S: I was going to add, I'm not certain, but my own memory would be that it was a name that--it was definitely the name that I finally decided upon. Now whether I first uttered it or not, I don't know, but it would be like me to have done so. The reason would be very simple: I thought that the most appealing thing, that one of the most appealing things to young men or young women who are poor is a job. In fact, there was one famous quote we got from a young girl who said when asked what did she want most in her life, or what did she want to grow up to be, she said she wanted to grow up to be married to a man who had a job.

The word job means even more to poor people than it does to well-to-do people, even though the word job means a great deal to everybody. In our society we almost define people by the job they have. You say, "Who are you?" and a person answers, "I'm a doctor," or "I'm a lawyer," or "I'm a politician," or "I'm a college professor." It's the funniest way to describe who you are, really, if you stop to think about it for a minute, but most Americans respond that way, "Who are you?" "I'm a baseball player." Actually, that's only what you do. But it shows that a job means so much in our society, and it's one of the most important things that poor people don't have. Putting that word "job" together with corps--having come right out of the Peace Corps--seemed to me to be a wonderfully terse, appealing title, "Job Corps." You're going to get a job and you're going to go some place where you're going to be dedicated, trained, organized for jobs.

G: You had a range of poor people to choose from in selecting Job Corps recruits. Did you select kids who were out of a job who perhaps needed some training, but who had sufficient motivation so that you could show reasonably quick results? Or did you get the kids who were really culturally deprived, that had, say, criminal records, that were poorly motivated, the high-risk cases?

S: I don't know the answer to that. I'm sure that there was an ongoing argument among the people who were responsible for the selection process. That's the same kind of an

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argument we had in the Peace Corps about selecting volunteers. But I don't believe there was any deliberate effort not to bring into the Job Corps youngsters who scored badly on tests or anything like that.

The reality is the makeup of the people who actually ended up in the Job Corps. The people who were in the Job Corps, in those years at least, a huge proportion of them were illiterate. The things we found out about what they needed, like medical care or getting their teeth fixed or getting a pair of glasses so that they could see the blackboard in a classroom, were absolutely eye-openers to most middle-class Americans. When we had to start creating books to teach people who were sixteen how to read a sentence like, "Watch Jack jump," let me tell you something, that was a real shocker to a great many people . . . because youngsters would come into the Job Corps, boys and girls, who couldn't read a three-word sentence, and they were in the tenth grade in some high school. So I don't think we conscientiously excluded the tough cases from the Job Corps.

G: Critics have charged that there was too much money spent on transportation, flying Job Corps trainees across the country to go to this camp or that camp, rather than locating the facilities closer to the recruit's own environment.

S: Yes, they did say that. I think now just as I did then, that's a lot of garbage.

G: Why do you feel that way?

S: Because what we were trying to do is exactly what they do in the army. In the army you try to make a soldier out of a civilian. You take him and put him into an environment which is totally different from what he's been in, and you try to control that environment so you can make him into a different kind of a person. We were trying to do the same thing in the Job Corps: teach or train people to participate as job holders in an industrialized society.

I believed then, and I still believe, that a great deal of unemployment, particularly what they call structural unemployment, that is people who *can't* hold a job, comes from

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the fact they've been in an environment, in a culture--they used to call it the culture of poverty. You cannot cure that malady by leaving the victim in the middle of the area of contagion, to use a phrase out of medicine. So what you do is you take the person out of that environment, put them in a different environment, and you try to mold them into a different kind of person. Therefore, taking somebody from Georgia and putting them in Idaho is not harmful; it's helpful. It's helpful for them as an individual.

Secondly, let me just say, it's helpful for the United States of America. It's beneficial for young people in our country to know other parts of our country and to have, as we use the phrase, their eyes opened. We want them to see what the chances are, what life is like somewhere other than in a specific little town or West Virginia hollow. If you don't know anything about the world except what you know living in a poor white family in a West Virginia hollow, you're not likely to have your eyes open, your ambitions aroused, your potential developed.

So transporting them, far from being a waste of money, was a good investment of money. But the problem always was that you were doing this for people who were poor. If you did it for their own son, the critic's sons, and you took the critic's son from Summerville, Mississippi, and transported him to West Point, obviously they thought that was good. Nobody criticizes the Defense Department for taking people to the Air Force Academy in glorious Colorado Springs and giving them the most magnificent physical facilities, food, entertainment, training, *et cetera, et cetera*, that money can buy. Why? Because we attach a great deal of importance to the development and training of air force officers. And yet air force cadets need those advantages much less than people who are desperately poor who have never had anything.

G: Part of the problem was, I suppose, determining, identifying who the culturally deprived youth were. I have a note that there was one suggestion, a proposal to lower the draft examination age to seventeen so that they could see who would flunk these service

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requirement tests and get these people into a Job Corps program, to beef up their eligibility.

S: Now that you mention it, I remember that. I can't remember much about it, but I remember that that actually happened, yes.

G: Do you recall what happened to the proposal and why it was not adopted?

S: I don't. As a matter of fact, I think the age for Job Corps was sixteen, wasn't it? Sure. So we were down below that level in terms of age, chronological level, from the beginning.

G: There was also a proposal for a cigarette tax that would finance a massive jobs program. Do you recall that?

S: I was very much in favor of that. I mean, here we all are talking today about the harm of nicotine. What could be a better way to reduce consumption of nicotine than to put a stiff tax on it, and with that money do something that was good for people?

G: What happened to the proposal?

S: It was too obvious . . . too simple, clear, and logical and useful. It went down the chute. It went down the chute for a lot of reasons. One is that nobody in politics likes to increase taxes. I don't care what they put taxes on, whether it's liquor or anything else, nobody wants to add taxes. Secondly, you don't want to add taxes when you've got a lot of congressmen with a lot of power who come from tobacco-producing states, who have got power to hurt you in some other way. Third, the tobacco industry is important in our economy. All you have to do is look at a magazine, any magazine, today and count the number of pages of advertising which are devoted to, let's say, tobacco. Or if you add up the ones devoted to tobacco and alcohol, that's a huge proportion of the total revenue of a number of magazines. So there's a tremendous resistance to taxing an industry, an area of the country, namely the South in this case, people with political power, by a rifle-shot tax like that suggested tax on tobacco.

G: Did the President himself defeat this proposal, do you recall?

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- S: Oh, I doubt that. I don't know. I shouldn't say right off the bat. I don't know. But then I want to add that I doubt it. I think that one probably got shot down before it got to him.
- G: Did the task force members believe that the Employment Service would do an adequate job of recruiting for the Job Corps?
- S: No. The Employment Service thought, however, that it would and so did the Secretary of Labor, Bill Wirtz. In fact, he resented and resisted strongly the idea that any other group or agency be involved in recruiting for the Job Corps.
- G: Did you reach some sort of compromise here?
- S: Yes. What was it? The compromise was that the principal responsibility for recruiting for the Job Corps and to a certain extent the screening of people, the forwarding of names, would be done through the United States Employment Service, but it would not be an exclusive franchise whereby nobody could get into the Job Corps unless they went through that particular route. So we used a lot of organizations, women's organizations for example, to recruit women for the Job Corps. It was hard to get young women at the beginning, and so we wanted to reach out through women's organizations. So we used the League of Women Voters, we used the YWCA, we used other women's groups.

One of the outcomes of that is we created a women's group of our own called Women in Community Service. That organization still exists. It's called WICS, W-I-C-S, WICS. The purpose of WICS was to recruit young women for the Job Corps, but then not just to recruit them, but to stay with them. By that I mean, if a young woman was recruited for the Job Corps out of Norfolk, Virginia, and she was sent to a women's Job Corps center in Florida or Kentucky or California, the women who recruited her in Norfolk would write her letters, find out what she was doing. Even before then they would get her a suitcase to carry her clothes to the women's Job Corps center or facilitate her entry in other ways. When she came back from the Job Corps training, the Women in Community Service in her hometown would then try to assist her to get a job in her

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community. So WICS was a terrific organization which took on an extremely important task which wasn't done by anybody in the government or in the private sector.

So sure, USES, United States Employment Service, was given a primary mandate but not an exclusive one. Everybody in government always likes to have the sole control of whatever it is that is close to what they are doing. My prejudice is always to broaden the mandate, let other people get into the action.

G: Why was the Job Corps originally designed as exclusively for men?

S: It never was. That's a canard, I think. I don't mean to accuse you of saying something nasty or wrong, but it never was intended to be just for men.

G: Really?

S: No.

G: Well, when the legislation went up it seemed to state that it was for men, and then Edith Green--

S: That's wrong. My memory is that one of the very first Job Corps centers opened up was in St. Petersburg, Florida and it was for women. I think that was almost the first one that we opened.

G: But I'm talking about at the stage where the legislation was drawn up and submitted, because I know Edith Green challenged you because there were no provisions for Job Corps camps for women and then the legislation was changed to incorporate those.

S: Well, you may know more about the record than I do, but I certainly don't remember that. The legislation may not have said that you have to have women's Job Corps centers and men's Job Corps centers, but nobody ever conceived, so far as I know, of the Job Corps as being exclusively for men. For example, my memory is that even back in the task force days, before there was any legislation at all, when we were having meetings about the Job Corps . . . there was a woman from New York, an educator, a black woman, whose name is out of my mind, who was among the most important participants.

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G: Noble? Jeanne Noble?

S: Jeanne Noble! She was the chairman of the group, or one of the chairmen of the group. Jeanne Noble. She was from Hunter College in New York, and that was before we ever went to Congress. And Bennetta Washington, who, when we went into business, became the director of the women's Job Corps, was a principal of a high school here, Dunbar High School in Washington. I can tell you this, I can remember the meeting quite well. We had it over in a rather large auditorium--where was that auditorium? One of those streets over there near the White House--and we must have had somewhere up to seventy-five people come there to talk about what the Job Corps ought to be like and what it would do and so on. There were a considerable number of women there, of whom Jeanne Noble was one. And that occurred in the task force days.

I tell you who would remember that quite well, I think, would be a man named Vernon Alden. Vernon Alden is a Boston businessman. Vernon Alden was the chairman of the task force group which I had advising me about what the Job Corps should be like. Why was he the head of it? Well, first of all, he had been president of Ohio University out in the depressed area of Ohio, the Appalachian part, you might say, of Ohio. Secondly, he was the former associate dean of the Harvard Business School. And third, he was a businessman from Boston. It seemed to me that a person who knew about education in a depressed part of the United States, economically depressed, who was also a businessman, would have a breadth of vision about the Job Corps which would enable us to construct it or to conceive of it and construct it properly from the beginning. Now, Vernon Alden is still in Boston. He is concerned now primarily with developing business for the city of Boston, that geographical area there. My secretary can give you his phone number. But I know he was at this meeting I was just trying to remember. I know he will tell you all about Jeanne Noble and Bennetta Washington and so on. All of that, in my memory at least, predates ever going to Congress.

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G: He's on my list. Why didn't he stay on as head of the Job Corps, do you recall?

S: I can't remember precisely. But for one thing, he had another job. You couldn't always get everybody, whom you might otherwise have wanted, to quit the job they had. It seems to me at that time he was head of something called the Boston Company. That's a big investment company.

G: I think now it's First Boston Corporation or something.

S: That's a different company. The First Boston Corporation is an investment-banking firm like Morgan Stanley or Lehman Brothers Kuhn Loeb. The Boston Company is a holding company. One of its principal holdings is the State Street Bank. It's like saying the Citicorp. Walter Wriston is head of the Citicorp, the City Corporation, and it owns, among other things, the National City Bank. But he sits up here in a holding company at the top called the Citicorp. The Boston Company is a holding company. It's what they call a bank-holding company. Vernon Alden was the president of that. He resigned from that job a few years ago. But when you say, "Why didn't he take the job as head of the Job Corps?" I can't remember specifically, but I think he was busy doing something else.

G: Did Don Carmichael play a role also in the development of the Job Corps?

S: Yes. Don Carmichael was a businessman from Cleveland. He had been active, it seems to me, if I remember correctly, he had been interested in the early days even of the Peace Corps. He ran that chain of restaurants called Stouffers out of Cleveland. He was a socially conscious, energetic person, with business credentials. He still is. He now runs something called Sports Service, Inc., which is a Buffalo-based company that supplies food and beverages and services at sporting events. Well, now you say to me, "What did he do specifically?" I can't remember. Vernon Alden could tell you.

G: Is there anyone else who contributed something unique in the planning of the Job Corps that you recall? How about John Rubel, is that his name, R-U-B-E-L?

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S: Yes. Well, John Rubel would be worth speaking to from your point of view, I think, although I can't tell you right now precisely what his contribution to your research on the subject would be. There are a number of other people I think you should talk to, especially people from American industry. But the truth of the matter is, my memory is not good enough to just tick those names out for you. But Vernon Alden would give you some good suggestions.

There was a fellow also, a psychologist named Joseph Colmen, C-O-L-M-E-N, Colmen, who used to be working for me in the Peace Corps, in the area of selecting people to be in the Peace Corps and developing tests, that kind of stuff. He was helpful in the early days of the Job Corps. There were people who were good on the development of textbooks and the creation of teaching materials, as they call them in that business; publishers, that is, of teaching materials who were helpful, and helped us to create the kind of teaching materials that the Job Corps people needed. There were businessmen: Harold Geneen of IT&T was interested in this. IT&T put up one of the first centers.

The General Electric Corporation, IBM, others like that, big companies were very much interested in running those centers, and they ran them. We used to get criticism--I guess you remember that. Some guys would write articles saying that big business was making profits out of poverty, which only goes to prove you can't win. If big business tries to take an interest in running something for poor people--and they all agreed that they'd run it at practically a break-even figure, so they were making practically no money out of it--all they did was get shafted by tinhorn characters who were condemning their motives and saying they were making profits out of poverty. They still do, incidentally, run some of those centers, businesses do.

G: There's some indication that the business-run centers were some of the best ones. Is that your position?

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S: Look, I don't know. But my guess is that it would be true. But I don't have any proof of that. Kelly again would know more and remember more about that.

G: You evidently struck a compromise with the conservation groups on the Hill to include more conservation Job Corps projects. Do you recall that?

S: We struck a compromise with them and with the Agriculture Department.

G: Can you recall the circumstances here?

S: Not with great accuracy, but in general I think I can. The Department of Interior and the Department of Agriculture had in the days of the thirties run all those CCC [Civilian Conservation Corps] camps around the country--excuse me, had run a lot of those CCC camps. There was a great deal of work that needed to be done in our country on lands owned by the United States government--forest lands, Department of Interior lands, public parks, public lands in the United States--and it wasn't getting done. Anybody who was old enough to remember the CCC camps or had their eyes open enough and driving through a national park could see all these things that had been built back there in the thirties by the CCC camp fellows.

So the departments wanted to create a new CCC. And I don't blame them. I was for it. I'm not against that. But I also had come--as I told you earlier--from the city of Chicago. I had been on the Board of Education in Chicago. I had seen the youngsters who didn't have jobs today standing around on the city streets of Chicago, and those youngsters were different people than the youngsters or the people who went into the CCC camps back in the thirties. In the thirties most of the people in the CCC program were white people, they were either middle-class, lower middle-class, or middle-middle class--whatever that is--people from the mainstream of American life. For them to go to a rural camp to learn about the great outdoors and the national wonders and to build benches and parks and so on, was not very much of a transition. Moreover, once they got

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a chance to earn some money and the economy began to get going again, they were easy to employ when they came out of a CCC camp.

The difference in 1964 or 1965 was that a huge proportion of the people who were unemployed were urban dwellers rather than rural people; they were minority people rather than white people; they were uneducated people rather than the youngsters who went to the CCC camps, *et cetera*. So I was very much interested in not having the Job Corps exclusively like or a mere imitation of the CCC camps, because I didn't think it was appropriate to the problem of unemployment in the sixties. I still think that today; I still think I was right.

So the compromise that you alluded to was simply to say to the Agriculture Department and the Interior Department, "Yes, we agree with you, you should have some of these Job Corps Centers. But your camps shouldn't be the only centers." Again, you see, it's like who is going to recruit for the Job Corps. Government people want to have an exclusive franchise. Let's say employment: If it's in employment and it's a government program then the Labor Department wants to run it. That's just a natural reflex reaction of government bureaucrats. If it's CCC camps or something that's like CCC camps, that rings certain bells in the minds and hearts of people in Interior and Agriculture and they visualize it, they conceptualize it just like it was in the thirties. But the problem was different. So sure, I compromised. I said fine, we'll have X number of camps run by Agriculture, X number of camps run by Interior, but we're going to have some other kinds of camps. We're going to have camps that will be for urban kids and the purpose of it will be to prepare those kids for jobs in urban society, because that's where today in the United States most of the people have to find jobs.

G: Did President Johnson ever express to you his view of what the Job Corps should be?

S: The truth of the matter is, I don't really think he ever sat down and gave me any directions about the Job Corps.

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G: He must have been interested in the Gary Job Corps Center in San Marcos.

S: Sure he was. Well, he was interested in the Job Corps in general. I don't mean to pay any disrespect to him at all, but I will say I think he thought of the Job Corps more in terms of the CCC than he did in terms of what the Job Corps actually became in the sixties or the seventies or the eighties.

G: He himself had been an NYA state director.

S: That's right. So what he thought of was what I just tried to describe, that the people who were unemployed were going to be very much like everybody else. But the people in fact who were unemployed were not very much like everyone else. They came from what, as I said, we now describe as the culture of poverty. They were from families that had been one, two, three generations in poverty, whereas Lyndon Johnson and John Connally and Jake Pickle and Sargent Shriver, all of whom were in NYA getting government handout programs, which everybody dislikes--all of us were getting government handouts, including Big John Connally--we were not trapped in the permanent culture of poverty. So the Job Corps in 1960 or 1970 or 1980, right now, has got to be different to meet the needs of the youngsters unemployed today.

G: One is a social problem to be solved, and the other one is more of an economic problem, I suppose, just getting money into the hands of kids that are out of work.

S: It's that, plus the fact that a lot of people didn't realize--excuse me, a number, I won't say a lot of people--but a number of people in government positions didn't realize that the people who were unemployed then, and many people who are unemployed today, are not employable in the industrialized society of the United States today. You don't make them employable simply by giving them a job. You give them a job, they come to the job, they don't perform. You give them the job, they're there for three days a week, and they don't show up for the next two. You give them a job and they have no idea of time, they don't have any idea that during a two-hour period you're supposed to produce X amount of

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product. That's not their fault. They've never lived in an economy where time is important, production is important, showing up regularly is important, keeping to a schedule is important; all those things are bourgeois, middle-class ideas.

Just like Shakespeare wrote the English language, he didn't write every word spelled the same way. It didn't make any difference. It wasn't until Samuel Johnson invented a dictionary in the eighteenth century that people began to spell English the same way. So what difference does spelling make? Well, Shakespeare didn't have to spell every word right and he communicated rather reasonably well, better than 98 per cent of us who can win the national spelling bee contest. [But] these people who can't spell or who can't write can't get jobs. I read recently, you know Charlemagne, the great emperor of France and of Europe, the Holy Roman emperor, he couldn't read or write! That didn't mean he wasn't an extremely competent emperor. But you can't get a job today in America if you can't read or write.

G: Let's talk about VISTA.

S: VISTA. Good.

G: Did the Peace Corps fear competition from VISTA, do you think?

S: I'm sure there were some people in the Peace Corps who did. Again, why? Well, because that's human nature. I surely did not personally, just as one human being, fear it.

G: You didn't feel that you were taking on a liability in making VISTA part of the legislative program, since it had been defeated before in the National Service Corps?

S: No, I didn't think so. But then you're talking to a special person with respect to that issue, and therefore my testimony may not be particularly typical of others. When I say special person I mean this: The idea of having a domestic peace corps or service corps originated in my house in my wife's head, not mine. When President Kennedy first announced the Peace Corps to work abroad, my wife started agitating with me about the fact that we ought to have the same thing at home. So that goes back to whenever that

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was, 1961. And subsequently, I'd say about 1964, Ken Galbraith was in my house and there was a certain amount of talk then about a teacher corps, and considerable amount of talk about a domestic peace corps. He was agitating with me that I ought to reach out and make that a part of the general Peace Corps effort. I was saying, "No, it's a different thing. The Peace Corps is working very well in the area for which it is structured to work, and it's a success. What we don't want to do," I said to Ken Galbraith, "is to attach to it something that looks the same but is different, and injures the success of the Peace Corps by attaching to it something which is not the same thing except superficially."

I remember Ken Galbraith stomping around the living room of my house saying, "Shriver, you're great, but what we have to do is develop in you a lust for power. Your biggest problem is you have no lust for power and in Washington you have to have a lust for power." I just laughed, but he was right in a way. If I had been, how shall I say, the sort of regular government person, I would have wanted to get that domestic version of the Peace Corps for my domain. You understand, that would increase my jurisdiction or bureaucracy. But I wasn't interested in it as part of the existing, successful Peace Corps. So it got started in a different area.

However, when we started to organize the War on Poverty, the domestic voluntary movement was germane to that. It was smack dab on the point, you might say. As a part of the War on Poverty, it was like hitting the nail on the head with a hammer. So I didn't have any inhibition whatsoever about putting it into the War on Poverty.

G: There was a congressional rider that prohibited the use of funds within the departments to plan a National Service Corps thing. How did you get around that?

S: I've forgotten. I've forgotten that there was such a prohibition. Yes. Well, I think it was when we got the Rules Committee to let VISTA, as we called it, be a part of the War on Poverty. I think that rider may well have been only applicable to efforts to start what I think they were then calling--what were they calling it?

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G: National Service Corps.

S: National Service Corps. When we called it VISTA you can say it was the same thing with just a different name. The truth is, I don't remember how we got around it, but that's why I had a very good lawyer named Don Baker figuring out how to. . . .

G: I guess it started out with the name Volunteers for America, or something very similar to the volunteer group that picks up old clothes, and soon changed it to VISTA.

S: Oh, that's right. The reason for that is that I was always interested in that organization called--I think it's called Volunteers for America or Volunteers of America, which is affiliated indirectly I think with the Salvation Army. In fact, I've been to a number of their meetings. I gave a speech at one of them, and I liked that organization. So when the idea came in along the lines you just described with that title I immediately said, "You can't use that because that's the name of a large, private-sector effort." So they went back to the drawing boards and came up with VISTA. I think the first name, however, that they had was VISA, V-I-S-A, and that sounded too much like a visa for traveling. And then is when they put the T in it. But then I didn't like that one so much at the beginning either, VISTA, because there was a floor wax or a furniture wax being produced by the Johnson Wax Company, which was on sale in grocery stores and places like that, hardware stores, and I think it was called Vista. I said, "God, everybody will think this is just Johnson's floor wax." Glenn Ferguson particularly, he was the first head of VISTA, ultimately convinced me to go along with the title VISTA. I think it turned out good, I mean it turned out well.

But the programs I started were never acronyms like VISTA, Volunteers in Service to America. The programs I started all had titles which were--I don't know whether you call them generic or what the right word is--but like Peace Corps, Job Corps, Head Start, Upward Bound; none of those titles were acronyms. I didn't really like acronyms too much because they were very governmentalese. Everything that gets

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started in Washington is an acronym. Not everything, but many things that get started in Washington are the result of acronyms and I was just prejudiced against them. I didn't really think they were genuinely descriptive.

G: They didn't carry as much promotional effect, either.

S: Well, that's why I liked the others . . . *one* of the reasons why I liked the others.

G: Did you consider the impact that the VISTA experience would have on the volunteer himself?

S: Oh, yes. Oh, yes. I felt the same way about the Peace Corps.

G: How did you feel about this? What did you think the result would be, the impact on the volunteer?

S: I felt since I was fifteen years old--that's a long time, I'm sorry to say now--that theorizing about problems or discussing problems, staffing out problems, to use a good Washington phrase, is never the same as actually being involved in them. You learn, human beings learn, more by involvement than by reading books about subjects. The best person to tell you about what a war is like is the somebody who has spent a considerable amount of time in a trench, not some general. And the same thing about poverty; the people who learn the most and are affected the most and change the most are the people who are exposed to poverty physically. They're in it with the poor. They're in the soup kitchen. Therefore I have always been in favor of trying to get the maximum number of well-to-do people exposed, physically exposed, to the problems of poverty.

Or in the Peace Corps, since I was very much in favor of understanding other cultures better, that is for Americans to understand other cultures better, I was always in favor of getting young Americans to go out there into those other cultures. Because there's no education that you can get at Harvard or Yale or University of California or anyplace else, the Institute for Advanced Studies, it's nothing comparable to the education you get by exposure, participation. Seeing other human beings who are

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Muslims or Confucianists or Taoists or Marxists, it takes it all out of the realm of theory and embodies it in a human being. So I've always felt, with the Peace Corps and before I ever came to Washington, and with VISTA, that the biggest effect, the most beneficial effect to the United States would be changing the Americans or the well-to-do who were participating, rather than the huge benefits that we would bring to India or Brazil through the Peace Corps, or to the poor through VISTA.

G: Did you intend for the volunteers to engage in community organization type activities rather than casework?

S: Yes, sure. Both.

G: Can you elaborate on this?

S: Well, you have to understand that in the Peace Corps, which I was running at the same time as OEO, we had a large, large number of volunteers engaged in what we called community development. Now community development is no different than community action. So I had spent the previous five years, 1961-65, trying to get community spirit, community action, community development going in Lima, Peru, or up in the Andes Mountains or in the slums outside of Rio de Janeiro or Jakarta or wherever it might be.

So the work we did in community development for five years with the Peace Corps was a complete preparation, so far as I was concerned, for the same kind of work which would be done by VISTA volunteers within the United States. So if a VISTA volunteer were sent to an Indian reservation or sent to Phoenix, Arizona, I'd expect him to go out there and become a social action worker. We were not training caseworkers; we were training people who would go out there and assist the people, mobilize the people, encourage, inspire, kick them in the fanny, do whatever was necessary to get them into action to help themselves. We had this slogan: "The War on Poverty is a hand up, not a handout." The idea was to energize people to take care of their own problems. So when

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we sent VISTA volunteers into the hollows of Kentucky or West Virginia or into Harlem, sure we expected them to try to get the people organized.

Now let me tell you something. It's amusing really about us--it's amusing about all of us--that it was much easier for us to send volunteers to Lima, Peru, or to Rio, to do community development in Rio de Janeiro or in Lima, Peru, than it was to send volunteers to Phoenix, Arizona, and do it in the hometown of Senator Goldwater. The reason for that, I guess, is also somewhat obvious; but nevertheless, it was always an amusing thing to me that the people who would vote enthusiastically for us North Americans to take Yankee know-how and sense of working together to overcome problems, the real frontier spirit, barn-building, all that old John Wayne-type stuff--it was fine for us to take that, as I say, to Mexico or to Africa but we better not take it into Arizona, into *your* congressional district.

The reason some politicians didn't want it to be taken into their congressional districts was very simple. It meant that if we organized the people in their congressional district, it might mean that somewhere in there there would be a potential candidate that would run against them as a congressman. Want to know something? That actually happened, exactly happened. So the congressmen were smart. But it was the most ironic denial of the so-called free, private enterprise system, the American pioneering system, everybody gives these Fourth of July speeches about. It was the most blatant denial of our theories when you were empowering American Indians or poor white people, or you were empowering black people and they get into some position where they can become publicly known, and then they run for office and then the existing political leaders say, "My God, that's not right, you can't do that!"

G: During the first week in April, I suppose, you made a trip around the country, went to Chicago and visited Mayor [Richard] Daley, went to Louisville, Lubbock, Little Rock--met with [Governor Orval] Faubus--and Philadelphia. Do you remember that?

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S: Yes.

G: What was the purpose of this trip? Were you generating support?

S: Sure.

G: Anything significant in any of the meetings that you had, say with Mayor Daley?

S: Well, there was always something significant when you met with Orval Faubus or Mayor Daley or any of those other political leaders you mentioned. Sure. I haven't really taken the time out to recall in each case what was the most important aspect of a particular visit, but I can remember some generalities.

For example in Chicago, in that city the political structure was such that the Democratic Party there was extremely interested in advancing the black people because they wanted to get all those black people as Democratic Party voters. Consequently you could work with the Democratic organization up to a point. Mayor Daley didn't want you to exceed that point, namely, the point where you were working with quote, "black people," or Spanish-speaking people, who wanted to progress in the accepted Chicago style of progress. He didn't want you financing persons who were opposed to the Chicago structural system or, quote, "outsiders," agitators, *et cetera*. Well, that's a completely normal political reaction. Anybody who's not on your side is a subversive agitator or a dissident or a terrorist. You see that all over the world. Therefore, Mayor Daley is not exceptional. But that was the situation, let's say, let's just take it in Chicago. Down in Arkansas it was quite different. We were very lucky in that when we started Head Start we got Mrs. Orval Faubus to come up to Washington. She was sitting in the front row when we announced Head Start in the White House. It was because of her great interest over a long period of time in the problems of children. So when I went down to Arkansas, with Mrs. Faubus' help I was extremely well received by the Governor, who was very much against mixing of the races, but who was very much in favor of what we were trying to do with respect, let's say, to the Job Corps or Head Start.

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And believe it or not, I spoke to a joint session of the state legislature of Arkansas. I'm sure I was the first quote, "Yankee," first government bureaucrat if you will, representative of that behemoth up there on the Potomac that was forcing the mixing of the races and so on, I was the first one ever to speak to a joint session of the legislature down there in Little Rock. The reason why was that I was representing something that was understandable and local and human in scale, not something distant and abstract. It was fantastic. I can remember as if it were fifteen minutes ago. They received me very well. They were exceptionally hospitable, kind and responsive.

G: But don't you think that the success of the Peace Corps also had something to do with the way they received you in the War on Poverty?

S: Well, sure. Yes, I do. I think that's one of the reasons why I got the job. I think it's one of the reasons why Johnson refused to take my suggestion and give the job of running the War on Poverty to somebody else.

G: Who decided to ask Phillip Landrum to sponsor the bill in the House?

S: I don't know; I think maybe it was Larry O'Brien's idea. I don't know whose it was. It may have been Lyndon Johnson's for all I know.

G: Do you remember who approached him?

S: Yes, I did.

G: Did you?

S: Yes. I approached him, however, only after he had been tested out, you might say, by the White House as to whether or not he would be willing to consider it.

G: What was his response? Do you recall the conversation you had with him?

S: I don't remember it in any detail, no, but his response to it was very positive. It was positive. His response was positive.

G: Was this do you think due to poverty in his own state?

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S: Yes, but it's also due to what I consider to be a great historical tradition in the South. I don't mean it doesn't exist anywhere else, but it does exist in the South among people like Landrum. That tradition is that programs the purpose of which is to benefit people are well received by old-fashioned, if you will, regular Democratic politicians from the South. Their prejudice is in favor of helping people. I think it may come from the fact that the South for so long as a whole region was, as Roosevelt said, ill-fed, ill-clad, ill-clothed, ill-housed and so on. So they were accustomed to largesse, if you will, from the federal government. They knew, the best of them, about the poverty in their own states and the needs of the people, and the best politicians were very humanistic. Landrum was one of them, one of the best of them in my book.

G: Did you approach Lister Hill to try to get him to sponsor the bill in the Senate?

S: I didn't, but I think Larry or somebody on Larry's staff did. But Mr. Hill didn't want to do it.

G: I wonder, was the program too--?

S: I don't know.

G: And so you ended up with McNamara, getting McNamara to sponsor it.

S: Pat McNamara. He was very good.

G: President Johnson seems to have been in a great hurry to get the message and the legislation up to Congress. Why was this?

S: That was typical of him with respect to everything.

G: Did he feel that he needed to get it up there quickly in order to get it passed, or did he just want to have something to show for it? What arguments did he use, do you remember?

S: Well, [that's true of] any chief executive, anybody who is very much typified by being the chief executive officer of any program, I don't care whether you're talking about General Motors or putting a man in space or in the vacuum cleaner business or the hotel business. If a decision is made to build a hotel, a decision is made to bring out a new automobile or

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a decision is made to start a war against poverty and you're the chief executive officer, you want to know when is it going to get done and why wasn't it done yesterday? That's just typical of any executive who's responsible for bringing things into existence.

Jack Kennedy was the same way about the Peace Corps. I came down here with the task of organizing the Peace Corps, and we worked on it for about thirty days to try to get the legislation correct and get the message correct and get it established on the right basis, with the right objectives and the right criteria and everything else. And every week he would call me and say, "My God, why can't we get that Peace Corps legislation up to Congress? What are you doing? What's taking so long? I don't understand why it takes all this time. It shouldn't be that difficult. Will it be over here next week? Will it be over here the next week?" It's got nothing to do with Johnson; it's got to do with the fact that a person who becomes chief executive of the United States is no different than a person who becomes chief executive of any large enterprise. They want their orders to be carried out and done quickly. And they should. I'm not arguing against that; they should. I'm in favor of that attitude.

G: One of the chief reasons we've discussed that you were chosen was because President Johnson knew you could sell the program on the Hill. How did you do that?

S: How did I convince him that I could sell it or how did I sell it?

G: How did you sell the program on the Hill?

S: I don't know that I can answer that in a sentence. But you do it--

G: Take as many sentences as you wish.

S: Well, selling the Peace Corps, or selling the War on Poverty, or selling anything else to Congress is no different than trying to sell many other things in the private sector of American life. If you have a certain product, what you do is you go to a potential purchaser, so to speak, in the commercial end of our national life, and you try to figure out what that potential customer needs or wants or what will appeal to that potential

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customer. When you go to that customer you emphasize what it is about your product that appeals to that particular customer.

So you do the same thing with Congress. It isn't as if it was some giant secret. So if you are talking to a particular--let's say a congressman from a northern industrial state or from a big city, you talk about the Job Corps and the fact this is going to do something for the kids on the streets of New York or Chicago or wherever it is. You talk about the other things that are relevant to that man's problems as a congressman. If you're from the South maybe, and you know the congressman you're talking to is from the South, and perhaps like Jake Pickle he was in the CCC, you talk about the part of the Job Corps that's going to be in the CCC tradition. It's like anything else in life. You have to get some subject that is of mutual interest between the person whose vote you're trying to get for a particular program, and the program that you're trying to get that guy to support. Now, the War on Poverty legislation was very broad scale and therefore it had many things which interested a great variety of people. The principal argument against the War on Poverty in the Congress was, first of all, you couldn't win, you can't get rid of poverty. Secondly, it was too vague, the legislation. Third, the man who would run it, the ultimate director, was being given too much authority.

G: A czar.

S: A czar. *Et cetera*, arguments like that. Just to take that one thing about being a czar: I was always able to say to people, "Look, you may be right to a certain extent, but you don't have to worry about it. I'm not going to run it! I'm not the person. That's up to the President, and you guys are going to have to decide ultimately since it's going to be a presidential appointment. You decide if you don't like the guy."

One of the big aspects of it that made it relatively easy to sell was the fact that it was a new initiative by a new president, who was trying to follow in the footsteps of a legendary figure who had been assassinated. And specifically, let's just say with

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Democrats, it was rather difficult for Democratic politicians to say to President Johnson, who had just come in, who was doing his best under a situation of national--you might almost say emergency, national dismay, national psychological upset--to say to him, "No, we won't do what you want us to do." He could say, "Look, I'm trying to carry out all of Kennedy's programs," which he was, "and now I'd like to do this, and this is a program which Kennedy had proposed himself. It was in embryo, but he had started it, and we want to carry on this great tradition." Well, I tell you, in the psychological atmosphere of that year with President Kennedy so recently dead, it was kind of tough for a congressman or senator to say, "Oh, no, I'm not going to do it."

So all of those things are factors, and when you say how did you sell the war against poverty to Congress, or how do you sell anything to the Congress, I think over and above all the things I've said about. . . .

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S: Over and above all that, I think a very intangible quality is extremely helpful in dealing with the Congress, and that is the intangible quality of trust. Do the congressmen trust you, or do they distrust you? I honestly believe that the principal reason why President Johnson wanted me to do it was that a large proportion of the congressmen and senators trusted me. I'm trying to analogize that to a man going into business, and he goes to the bank and he gets his first loan. Well, he gets his first loan and it's probably pretty tough to get his first loan. But then he executes that loan well and he pays it back and he goes back for a second loan, and a third loan and a fourth loan and a fifth loan, et cetera. After he's been in business for a while and he's successfully conducted his business with the bank, they get to a point where they trust him.

I was at that point with the Congress, at least Johnson thought so. I had been to the Congress four or five times. Because the Peace Corps had to get passed by Congress every year, and they reviewed it every year and I had to go over there every year. After

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doing that five times I would say there wasn't a senator or congressman who didn't know me. There wasn't one guy over there that I had not at least talked to, and I had testified before many, many, many of them. And you get a reputation as to whether or not you actually do what you say you're going to do, whether you live up to what you've told the congressmen you will do.

In the Congress, in politics, in Washington at least, nearly everything depends on the estimate of you as a person. Congressmen can't know all the details about all the various governmental programs. It's a total impossibility. But if they get the idea that you are trustworthy, that what you say is honest and accurate and that you will do what you say you will do; and secondly, if they get the idea that you're competent, that you know how to do what you say you will do, then you can get almost anything from them. The reason for that is that they've been deceived so many times and disappointed so many times that, like most human beings, they're extremely happy when they find some justification based on experience to trust you and believe you and to think that you're actually going to do what you say you're going to do.

I think that's why Johnson insisted on my taking that job, as compared to bringing in somebody who was not experienced in the government. He told me one time if he brought in X or Y or Z, no matter how qualified they would be--let's just say they were more qualified by far than I was--it would take them six months or eighteen months, he used to say, to establish the relationships with individual members of the Senate or the House that I already had. So he wanted to capitalize on that reputation which I had gained, thank God, for the benefit of the War on Poverty.

G: Various members had particular problems with aspects of the legislation, say Hugh Carey and the church and state issue in a large Catholic district. Do you recall any of these particular problems and how you dealt with them, how you resolved them to make the program more palatable to the particular members?

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S: That's been written about, that particular problem you allude to. Either Yarmolinsky or somebody else wrote the history about that and I'm sure what they wrote was accurate. But the theoretical or philosophical approach one takes is also interesting. General George Marshall described the right approach when he was secretary of state. I never forgot his concept; I've used it many times. At State Department meetings when the bureaucrats would complain about their problems in foreign affairs, General Marshall said, "Don't fight the problem." What you do is to figure out how to overcome the problem, how you go around the problem, or how you resolve the problem. Don't fight it. A lot of people fight problems. They will say, "So-and-so doesn't like this," and then they have a fight with that guy about his position. You understand? Well, you don't get far that way. I don't think you get very far that way.

So in the case of, let's say, the church-state problem, first of all you have to understand it, you have to respect it. You can't say it's just a chimera of somebody's imagination or a vestigial remainder from the medieval ages or some papist plot or something else objectionable *per se*. You just can't dismiss or depreciate people's genuine worries or concerns or problems. But once you've got a grip on what the problem really is, most problems--a lot of problems, put it that way--a lot of problems can be resolved by people bringing intelligence and good will to bear on them. That's what happened in that case with Hugh Carey.

(Interruption)

G: This was President Johnson's first new piece of legislation really his own, a significant legislative program; and as I said earlier, it's regarded as one of the great legislative feats, getting this program passed. I'd like for you to remember as much of the specifics as you can in terms of how you went about generating the support for it. Let me ask you first about Adam Clayton Powell. How did he figure into the process here? I know he chaired the committee. He must have been a factor to be reckoned with.

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(Interruption)

S: He was a factor to be reckoned with, no question about that. But my memory leads me to believe that he was favorably disposed toward the legislation from the beginning. I think that he was not only favorably disposed but quite active in getting support for it. And he continued to be favorably disposed toward the legislation until the second or third year, when he found out that he couldn't dictate where the money was to be spent or how it would be spent, and that some monies would be spent in New York City and even in Harlem which he wouldn't have total control over. Then he became less supportive and about that time he started calling for the President to dismiss me as the director. But he and I, so far as I was concerned at least, never had any personal animosity or bitterness or anything like that. I always found him a very interesting and dynamic, charismatic personality. I was very sorry when his career ended on such an unpleasant note, even in a disgraceful way.

G: He seems to have run that committee with an iron hand.

S: Yes, and he was a very flamboyant personality. As the only black man serving as chairman of an important congressional committee he had great political leverage, deservedly so, I think. He used to brag, properly I think, about the number of pieces of legislation that had passed through his committee, some of which he and his colleagues originated, during the time he was chairman. And the record was dramatically good.

G: Now, this was a program that cut across the jurisdiction of many committees, and yet it ended up in his House Education and Labor Committee. Some of the Republicans protested that it should have gone to a select committee instead. Do you know how the decision was made to send it to that committee?

S: No, sorry. But again, I recommend that you talk to Gillis Long, who would have been very well acquainted with that question, and to Larry O'Brien, who would know about that, and Phil Landrum, who would know about that.

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G: What sort of support did you get from the Republican side of the aisle, particularly on the committee?

S: The people I can remember on the Republican side were Albert Quie, Charlie Goodell, Peter Frelinghuysen, and there was a constructive member from California; those are the ones quickly that come to my mind. At least at the outset they were not stridently opposed to what we were attempting to do. But the politics of it got to them. Quie and Goodell together became the leaders of a faction which tried to make political capital out of being against the War on Poverty. The Republican congressional committee actually rented an office or assigned an office and established a press person there. They would put out a press release practically every day attacking something that we were doing. They, of course, attributed these quotations with justification to Charlie Goodell and Albert Quie, so that Quie and Goodell became a duo leading the attack against OEO. Peter Frelinghuysen was much more moderate. His position was that much of what we were doing should be done at the state level, and he was loath to add more activity and power to the federal government and therefore tip the balance even more towards Washington than toward state power. I'm trying to remember other Republicans who were on the committee then, but I'm sorry to say that without a chance to refresh my recollection I don't remember.

G: They seem to have tried to use the strategy of interrogating the cabinet officers along the lines that you would be taking programs away from them.

S: Yes, sure. Divide and conquer.

G: Did you have any strategy of rebutting this?

S: No, I wouldn't say we had a strategy. There's only two ways to rebut that. One way is as follows: How a program is administered is a responsibility of the executive branch. It's up to the president to decide how he wants to execute the laws and it's not up to Congress to tell him how to execute them. He's the chief executive. They pass the legislation. He

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structures it for execution in a way in which he as the chief executive thinks will best bring about the results which the Congress wants. That's constitutional; I think it's rational; and I think it's practical. So that argument was made.

Secondly, the fact is that only the president can crack the whip over the vying bureaucratic forces in the executive branch. If the secretary of labor or the secretary of HEW feels aggrieved about a program like OEO or the director of OEO, the only place the cabinet officer can have his grievance taken care of is in the president's office. I guess it's obvious that most secretaries don't want to take problems to the president. So in fact in the executive branch there can be a lot of grumbling, and friends of various cabinet officers in the Congress can make a lot of trouble; but when it really gets down to the final vote they can't get anywhere against a smart, politically determined president. He has too much power for them.

G: Did the President help you at all on the legislation with any particular congressmen or senators?

S: Oh, I'm sure he did.

G: Do you recall that?

S: I'm sure he did, but I don't recall any specific instances.

G: Say, George Mahon on Appropriations?

S: Well, look, I'm just as sure as I'm sitting in this chair that the President did get involved, did help, but on the other hand I can't say oh, yes, I remember him calling George Mahon, and doing this or doing that. The reality is I'm sure he did, and I'm sure that you could get the answers to that question from Bill Moyers. There was another fellow in the White House who worked a lot on this legislation--Wilson McCarthy. He would know a lot about that question. And of course Larry O'Brien. But Johnson worked twenty-four hours a day, and whether or not he did or didn't speak to George Mahon or somebody

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else was a matter that I would not be fully familiar with. In fact, the truth of the matter is I don't think anybody would know all the things that Johnson did or didn't do.

G: Were there any congressmen or senators who privately expressed more doubts to you about the program than they indicated publicly?

S: Oh, sure. But when you say who were they--that's your next question--I don't know from memory. But you know a lot of congressmen were disquieted by what they called an unprecedented grant of unrestricted authority. I guess they probably were right in saying that it was an unprecedented grant of unrestricted authority. I'm not a student of government personally able to tell you yes, it was unprecedented or no, it wasn't. But it was unusual, I know that.

G: And you wanted the flexibility, I suppose?

S: It wasn't that I wanted the flexibility personally. It was more a practical reaction to a practical problem. The practical problem was this: How do you get rid of poverty? That's the question. The answer is nobody knows now or knew then *exactly* how to do that. The next reality was that everybody thought that some different way of dealing with poverty would be beneficial. Some people were devotees of giving people jobs; others of providing them with an education; others saying it was all a question of health; or another one saying it was all a question of whether they could speak English or not; another would say it was simply a question of "unleashing the free enterprise system." So the immediate reality was if you asked ten people how to go about eliminating poverty, you'd get ten different answers. So for a "war," a total comprehensive effort to be waged, a variety of different--how shall I say?--initiatives, a variety of different initiatives had to be attempted. Nobody was able to say at the start which initiative would or would not produce results.

I used to call these various initiatives--since the terminology was all to do with a war, the war against poverty, and it was very shortly after World War II--I used to

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describe them as being "probes" in the military sense. Or like two boxers. In the early round, each boxer probes the other fellow's defenses to see where he's weak or strong. So in fact a lot of the initiatives we tried were probes. We'd try this probe in education, or that probe with respect to justice, or this probe with respect to health, or this probe with respect to jobs, not knowing for sure which probe would produce the maximum result. It was somewhat like wildcatting for oil.

Well, since nobody knew precisely how to eliminate poverty, somebody had to have the authority to try a variety of efforts. That person happened to be me, but it could just as easily have been someone else. I'm pragmatic; and therefore I used to take the position that we would try things that looked as if they had the potential for producing results, and be prepared to admit that some of them would fail. And that's exactly what we did do.

G: You brought in a lot of businessmen to testify.

S: That's right.

G: Was this designed to blunt Republican criticisms?

S: Only partially. It wasn't a defensive move on my part. It was a manifestation of a deeply held conviction of mine, namely that in order to accomplish results in our mixed, capitalistic economy you need to mobilize not just government forces and not just the private voluntary sector's abilities, but also the energy and imagination, competence of the business community. I had learned that in Chicago, where we built a big, new vocational high school when I was there, at a cost of about ten million dollars. We were training youngsters in this vocational high school to get jobs in the Chicago community. The reality was that while we were training people in that school at public expense, half of the corporations in Chicago were also training people in their corporations to take jobs in the corporations. Now, they were training people just to take a job with Whirlpool or a job with General Electric or a job with Bell Telephone. They didn't train persons so that

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they would be able to take a job with a variety of enterprises. They trained them specifically for Bell Telephone. Well, that's fine, that's good for them to do that. And in doing that training they learned a lot about how to train people. It was a matter of dollars and cents; they had to do it efficiently. So that if you were hired and you were a trainee at Western Electric, the management at Western Electric had to make sure that you were going to be a productive worker when they got finished training you. So they knew a lot about training and they were tough.

So I said to myself, why not use that ability that those industrial concerns had? So we opened up the running of the Job Corps training centers to participation by private industry. To me that wasn't to blunt some political charge that might be levied. It had that effect, in part. But the principal objective was to tap the intelligence, imagination, initiative, planning ability, *et cetera*, of the private business system. We followed the same approach when we invited businessmen to assist in designing the War on Poverty, to assist in managing it, and to assist in testifying for it, to assist in conducting certain parts of it.

G: A man named William Patrick, who was with the phone company in Michigan, was one who testified. Do you remember him?

S: That's right, Bill Patrick. He was the special assistant to the chairman of Detroit Edison. Or excuse me, maybe it was Detroit Telephone. He was a leading black businessman, or at least he was a black man who had progressed quite high in American business, much higher than most black people at that time had progressed. Consequently I felt that he could explain perhaps better than I could to a congressman what it meant to have the Detroit telephone company involved, or the other corporations.

G: Do you recall the support of any key congressmen or senators being linked to projects or their support on other pieces of legislation? In other words, "I'll support the War on Poverty if you will help me with such-and-such legislation."

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S: I don't think any of them ever made such a proposal to me; but on the other hand, maybe they did speak to others. If somebody came in here and refreshed my memory about a specific person I might very well have to say yes, that's true. But I don't remember that myself offhand.

G: [Harold D.] Cooley and Bob [W. R. Poage] were very interested in FHA [Federal Housing Administration] funds. One of the memos indicates that they would be amenable to supporting the Economic Opportunity Act if there would be--

S: More money were appropriated?

G: Right, for FHA.

S: Well, that could have been, but I didn't do that. I wouldn't have had the authority to do that anyhow. They might have made a request like that to Larry O'Brien or somebody else in the administration. Mike Manatos used to cover the Senate, and there were other guys; Wilson McCarthy. They could have processed that item around in the White House and never said anything to me about it at all.

G: Was Edith Green a problem?

S: She wasn't at the beginning, for a number of reasons. One, I was very enthusiastic about her. You may not know it, but when Jack Kennedy ran for president she was a big early booster for Jack Kennedy. I had known Edith Green for at least four, five, six, seven years before I ever came to Washington working for Kennedy. Edith Green was also a supporter of Adlai Stevenson. I used to see her in Chicago because I was a friend of and supporter of Governor Stevenson. So I always had a very positive attitude about Edith Green. I always thought she was terrific. Having her as a second-ranking person on the committee right after Adam Clayton Powell, so far as I was concerned, that was a big boost for us.

Edith Green never, that I remember, got into any altercation with me or with OEO until after we had been under way for a little while, I would say five or six months. She

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became querulous about various things that we were doing. For example, she didn't think we were actively seeking enough women for the Job Corps. She believed we were being rather autocratic, I think, in terms of what we did or did not do in her home state of Oregon. I think she didn't believe that we were paying enough attention to what *she* thought ought to be done. And maybe we weren't, don't misunderstand me. I'm not trying to smear her at all; I'm not really doing that. I want to conclude by saying that I never really found out what it was that we were really doing which was irritating her so deeply. But it ended up, no doubt about it, that she was not just irritated, she became an ardent critic, to put it mildly. She became a person who really was against me personally and against OEO. I don't know what it was caused by. She really ended up by distrusting, I think, me. I think she felt I was a smoothie or a trickster or that I had misled her.

G: There was some suggestion that she felt disappointed because she had not been given a cabinet post in the Kennedy Administration, and she held you responsible: HEW secretary.

S: Now listen, that's the first time I ever heard that, but that makes sense. It makes sense that she would think that; it doesn't make any sense if you know the facts. I had nothing to do with her not getting a cabinet position; but that makes sense, because she might have figured that since I was in charge of seeking people and making the recommendations to President Kennedy, and that since she didn't get a post, it must have been my fault. It must have been my fault that I didn't recommend her. She could have thought that. Well, what's the truth?

G: Of course that would assume that she wanted the post to begin with.

S: Or she wanted the post to be offered to her so that she could turn it down even if she didn't want it. But the truth of the matter is, to the best of my memory--and again there are persons who could either say I'm wrong or substantiate this opinion--Mrs. Green was

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not a prime candidate for the job of secretary of HEW. That's fact number one. Number two, Abe Ribicoff was one of the men in the entire Kennedy electoral effort who had a prime claim on President Kennedy, and a person for whom President Kennedy himself had a great deal of affection and respect. And without any regard to me or anybody else, Abe Ribicoff and Jack Kennedy would have discussed between the two of them what Abe Ribicoff wanted, and Jack Kennedy would have decided what he was going to offer to Ribicoff.

Now my own belief is--and I don't know this for a fact; this is nothing but rumor--my own belief is that Abe Ribicoff would have preferred to have been named attorney general of the United States. My own belief is that Kennedy gave some consideration to that possibility and decided to offer him instead the job as secretary of HEW. I also believe that Abe was not overjoyed about being named secretary of HEW. He was not insulted, don't misunderstand me. But it wasn't his first choice. He accepted it.

But I had no part, truthfully, in selecting him for that position, although, I will also add, he was a good friend of mine. We had a little bit of a mutual admiration society. In fact Abe Ribicoff did ask Kennedy to appoint me as under secretary of HEW with Abe Ribicoff. So I obviously got along with Abe Ribicoff pretty well, and he specifically asked Kennedy to appoint me to that second highest position in HEW. Kennedy, Ribicoff, and I discussed that specific issue sitting in the Gold Room of the White House one night. So there's no question about the fact that Edith Green could have seen in a sense, or perceived, that Abe Ribicoff and I were good friends, and she could have held that against me. But it's not true that I prevented her from getting a high position in Kennedy's Administration.

G: Why didn't you go in as under secretary?

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S: The answer is very simple. It's this: President Kennedy had been getting a terrific amount of criticism for making his brother, Bobby Kennedy, attorney general. There was all this hue and cry about nepotism. What was it they used to call it? The Kennedy Mafia or the Kennedy clique or something like that. He had made his brother-in-law, Steve Smith, director of low interest loans, soft money loans, within AID. I can't remember what the precise job title was.

(Interruption)

What were we talking about?

G: You were saying that Steve Smith had been--

S: Either Steve had been or was about to be appointed to some position within AID. So when Abe Ribicoff said to President Kennedy that he would like to have me as his under secretary, the President turned right to me and said, "Well, Sarg, what do you think?" and I said, "I think it would be a mistake." He said, "Why?" and I said to him, "You've already taken a lot of political heat for the family appointments you've made. I don't need the job, although I'd love to be with Abe Ribicoff at HEW." Frankly, I thought I was qualified for that particular job in HEW. "But my own belief is that you would be better off politically starting your administration if you didn't give me the job." He looked at me and he said, "Yes, you're right. Abe, we'll have to think of something else." And that was the end of that.

So Mrs. Green might have concluded, looking at the situation externally, that I had scotched her chances for that position, or for some other position. The fact is I didn't have a thing to do with her selection or non-selection at HEW.

G: What sort of support did you get from Carl Perkins?

S: Terrific. He's great. Carl is great. He was with us all the way, still is. His constituents need the War on Poverty. Down there in eastern Kentucky there was and is hardly a program of OEO that isn't of some value to the people who live in eastern Kentucky.

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- G: While the legislation was being considered, opponents attacked the Job Corps on the basis that the camps would be integrated.
- S: Yes, that's true.
- G: Do you recall that? Of course, you met it head on. You said--
- S: Yes, they will be integrated. Do I recall it as being a matter of great contention?
- G: Yes.
- S: Well, the truth is I don't remember it as being a matter of *great* contention. I guess it wasn't too great a matter of contention because I think most people in the Congress would have known that argument wouldn't get anywhere with me. The reason they would have known that is that I faced the same kind of arguments and contentions, running the Peace Corps. I faced those arguments down with respect to the Peace Corps on a half a dozen different occasions, both overseas and internally in the United States, with respect to blacks and whites, and with respect to Jews and Arabs and all different kinds of racial issues, including racial issues in foreign policy. I believe that by the time I got into running the OEO everybody, for better or for worse, knew where I stood.
- G: Another criticism was that regarding the cost of the Job Corps training, per student it cost more to go to the Job Corps than to go to Harvard. It led to the enlargement of the program beyond the size that sound planning could accommodate the first year.
- S: Are you saying that as a fact, that it did?
- G: I'm saying this as a criticism that has been raised that I want you to respond to.
- S: Well, there's no question about the fact that it was a criticism. Charlie Bartlett wrote that column that said it cost more to send somebody through the Job Corps than to send somebody to Harvard. That's one of those facile, completely empty comparisons which catch the public attention and are worthless, really. The ridiculous thing is, of course, that what it costs to send your son to Harvard does not include sending your son or daughter there for a full year. It does not include taking care of him, so to speak, or

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monitoring or working with him twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week, for a year at a time. It doesn't take into consideration anything about the son or daughter who goes to Harvard and his or her capacity to take care of themselves, their own independent capacity as a human being versus the dependent, pitifully weak--by comparison--condition of the person who joins the Job Corps. The comparison is just absurd. It's almost like saying it costs a million times more per hour to keep a man in space than it does to educate somebody for a whole year at Harvard. It does cost a million times more per hour to keep a man in space, because one puts the whole cost of the space program on the little pinpoint of one man zipping around outer space in a capsule. So if the space program costs ten billion dollars and you get one person up there for ten hours, it cost you a billion dollars an hour. What is the relevance of that comparison? It's completely irrelevant. But the superficial comparison caught on. It was a catchy thing.

G: The other thing of course [was] the figures used for Harvard were only tuition costs. It didn't consider the size of the Harvard endowment and how much the education was supported by private gifts.

S: That's right. We said all those things, but it didn't make any difference. It was one of those empty comparisons which was good politically.

G: But did arguments like this compel you to enlarge the Job Corps numbers in order to reduce the cost per recruit?

S: So far as I know, that's not true. The reality is that the Job Corps was never as big as I wanted it to be. It's not as big now as I would like it to be.

G: But do you think you could accommodate the numbers that you had with Job Corps?

S: Sure. Sure, we could accommodate them. We could have accommodated more. It wasn't that we couldn't accommodate them, it was that a great number of those Job Corps centers became bones of contention, not because of what was going on in the Job Corps

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center but because of the ghosts and hobgoblins in people's minds who lived around and near those centers.

For example, let me go to a different area. If today the state of Ohio wants to finance the opening up of a foster home for the mentally retarded, where six mentally retarded people will live in a regular house in a reasonably decent neighborhood of Cleveland, pandemonium will break loose among many of the people in that reasonably decent neighborhood of Cleveland. Because people have the bugaboo in their minds that if a foster home with mentally retarded persons opens up down the block from them, a) real estate values will plummet; b) peculiar people will begin frequenting their nice neighborhood; c) their children will be catching some disease that the retarded have; d) *et cetera*. You can compile a long list of incredible misinformation and fears that are attendant upon the arrival in a community of a home for the mentally retarded. Everybody in the home for the mentally retarded can be white and it can be a white neighborhood, and all those white people will get all excited about the mentally retarded. That happens right now, today.

So turn it around. Let's say the neighborhood where we're going to open up a Job Corps center is an attractive middle-class suburban area, and the people who are going to come to the Job Corps center are either black, or they speak Spanish, or they're poor white people with their teeth in bad shape and no education. A terrific commotion will develop in that neighborhood.

So we had the experience all over; Camp Atterbury, which was in Indiana. There was another one--I can't remember the name of it--in Kentucky. We opened up a Job Corps Center at an abandoned veterans' hospital in Iowa. All these places, you have to understand, were closed. They were all closed. They were not producing anything for the local economy, and the people in those areas had been agitating the federal government to open up Camp Atterbury, or open up Camp Gary, or open up camp this or

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camp that, or reactivate the empty veterans hospital in order to generate business. Then we would open up the Job Corps under the aegis of General Electric and all hell would break loose. Why? Because we were bringing in a lot of weird, poor people. And a lot of them were black. My God, I mean it was terrible!

If you want to get a good idea of what it's all about, Charles Lamb--he was that great essayist in England back in the eighteenth century, or nineteenth century--Charles Lamb wrote an essay more than a hundred years ago called "Poor Relations." It had to do with the way people treat their relatives who are poor. It's so funny. What it really does is to show that even in your own--not your own family, but most families--people brag about their relatives who are rich or who are famous, and they love to have their relatives around who are rich or who are famous; but they don't like to talk about their relatives who are poor, or their relatives who are drunks, or their relatives who are psychotic and in a mental institution. That's a source of embarrassment. So if some household full of mentally retarded people or poor people opens up in your vicinity, you have this terrible feeling suddenly that your whole world is collapsing. People won't think you're living in the nice neighborhood any longer. So all of that was and is involved in the Job Corps, sad to say.

G: Another issue that you had to confront was the question of family planning, in connection with the Community Action Program.

S: Yes, sure.

G: Do you recall this?

S: Yes, there was a big hassle about that, whether federal money could be used to pay for contraceptive devices and information and so on. The way we solved that one, you might say, was by saying this: We said that the provision of contraceptive information or contraceptive materials was a question to be decided locally. The first case came out of Philadelphia. Therefore if the Community Action agency in Philadelphia, composed of

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the private sector, the governmental sector, and the poor, decided that they wanted to have a program which called for the giving of information about use of contraceptives or the provision of contraceptive materials, if they decided that locally and allocated the money to do it and it was part of the Community Action Program, the program initiated at the community level, not at the federal level, we would finance it. We also said, however, that we would not finance requests, if any came, for money to perform abortions. We also said we would not provide any money for programs to finance sterilization operations, even if the local community wanted it. We would not finance them, that is sterilizations and abortions.

G: One former Senate aide observed at the time that, "If Congress understands community action it will never get through."

S: I remember [that]. I've forgotten who said that, but that fellow, he was right. I think he probably was right. Who said that, do you know?

G: I'd have to check.

S: I think that fellow was smart.

G: Did Congress understand community action?

S: Well, yes and no. They understood it up to a point. But I guess a lot of them never understood that it would be a new source of political influence and power in their own areas. I used to analogize a community action agency--I really think the analogy isn't too bad--to a local board of education. In our country education is primarily a local responsibility, and therefore in nearly every city or town or county there is a local board of education composed of local citizens. They determine what is going to be done about public education in their jurisdiction. Most of them are elected. Most board of education members are elected, but not all of them. Some of them are appointed by, let's say, the mayor. To a great extent, in the area where they are, that is within a city or within a county, they have the ultimate responsibility about what's going to be done in the schools:

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what the salaries are going to be, how many schools there will be, where the schools will be, what's to be taught in the schools, what kind of books they're to use, what the hours are, vacation periods. They actually run it. It's local government, you might say. I used to try to say that the Community Action agencies had the same objective: that is, that we would establish hundreds of Community Action agencies financed from Washington for work with the poor or for the poor, or work about poverty. They would conduct the same kind of local supervisory and decision-making process that a local board of education does.

I still think the analogy isn't too bad, truthfully. The principal difference, of course, is that a larger proportion of the money for the local Community Action agency comes from the federal government than comes to the local board of education. Secondly, the money for the local Community Action agency went directly from Washington to the Community Action agency, and did not go from Washington to the state government, to the city government, and finally to the local board of education. But why didn't it? Well, it didn't because it was much cheaper and quicker to go direct. If you don't have to pass it through a whole lot of levels of bureaucrats, it's much more efficient. The money gets more quickly and directly from the source of the money to the victim who needs the help which the money can give. That's efficiency, but it's not in accord with the traditional way in which public monies are distributed in our American system. So when you cut through the state government bureaucracy, and then you cut through the city government bureaucracy, and money--federal taxpayers' money--goes directly from Washington, zip, right smack down to the Community Action agency on the West Side of Chicago or to East St. Louis, and there's no intervening bureaucratic group passing on it, that's somewhat revolutionary. It's efficient, but revolutionary.

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G: Another issue that came up in the discussion of the legislation was the question of governors' veto over the Community Action Programs. And you didn't yield on this; you managed to defeat the governors' veto [in the Senate version]. Do you recall that battle?

S: Oh, yes, I recall it very well. That came up principally when we were trying to get the OEO legislation through the Senate. I was having a very difficult time, especially with Senator Richard Russell of Georgia. Richard Russell was one of the behemoths, one of the giants of the Senate, and normally wouldn't even have concerned himself with a peripheral thing like the War on Poverty. He was a big man dealing with big defense issues, and geopolitical issues, and huge national political issues. He had been a candidate for president of the United States, and all that kind of thing. So this really wasn't a matter of great concern to him. But it was to his constituents, because Richard Russell and many others from the South were traditional believers in the doctrine of states' rights. Well, I was not unsympathetic to that doctrine, truthfully, because I came from the state of Maryland, and in the state of Maryland when I grew up one of the absolute cardinal principles of the Democratic Party was our belief in states' rights. So I think I understood the philosophical and political milieu out of which Richard Russell came.

Similarly, I was rather close at that time to Herman Talmadge, the senator from Georgia. Talmadge was and still is an extremely astute southern politician. One day I was talking to him and I said, "Look, this is the problem, Senator. We can't allow all this money to become bogged down in the state and local government apparatus, and we cannot allow a system to be established whereby the purposes of the legislation can be frustrated totally by the clique that might be hanging around a particular governor. How in the name of God can we get around that problem? Moreover, I think that's the problem that is preventing Senator Russell from supporting us. He is being badgered by some of his constituents from Georgia," which is where Talmadge is from.

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Talmadge looked at me--I remember it very well. He had a big cigar he used to smoke and he flipped the ashes in a spittoon in his office. And he said, "Well, Sargent, have you ever considered a veto by the governor?" He used to be a governor, Talmadge. I said, "Well, no, I never have. What do you mean?" He said, "Why don't you consider the possibility that you will allow the governor to veto any program that is going to take place in his state if he disapproves of it. Now first of all, they're not going to disapprove of many of them because the governors all want to have the money come into their states. Secondly, the governor politically doesn't want to be in the position of being *the* person who is preventing a certain program from taking place in his state. "My guess, Sargent," he said to me, "is that you will get very, very few vetoes from governors. But if you put it in the legislation that the governor has the veto, then Senator Russell will be able to say that the doctrine, the principle of states' rights, state authority, has been maintained." I said, "Thank you, Senator. That's all I want to know." I got up and walked out of the office. That's where the governors' veto came from.

G: But the veto was very limited, as I understand it, at first.

S: That's right. He had proposed it broadly, but in our discussions we were able to narrow it and Senator Russell bought it.

G: They were able to veto Job Corps sites, I understand, and only--

S: They could veto other things, too. They could, for example, veto the introduction of certain types of legal service programs in their state. But I can't remember the dimensions precisely. I'm sorry.

G: But the Prouty Amendment, that would give them a blanket veto over Community Action Programs, was defeated [in the Senate version].

S: That's right. Once we agreed with Talmadge about the veto then [Winston L.] Prouty, who was a senator from Vermont, he wanted to extend it. That's normal politics. If you get something, then you want something more. But with the help--

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G: That was a terribly close vote.

S: That's right.

G: I think it was defeated by maybe one vote.

S: That's right.

G: And [Barry] Goldwater abstained.

S: Yes.

G: Why did he abstain?

S: I don't know. You'd have to ask Goldwater. I don't know why he abstained. You see, you have both the--it's interesting, that's why the study of Congress is interesting. You have people who really believe in states' rights, and see that as a bulwark against the increasing aggression by the federal government. You also have people who are in the Alexander Hamilton tradition, who are strong federalists. The Republican Party is more in the Hamiltonian tradition; it has been more Hamiltonian than the Democratic Party. But in the last thirty or forty years there has been something of a flip-flop so far as the parties are concerned. But in an individual human being the philosophical differences continue, between the Jeffersonian-local responsibility versus the centralized government-Hamiltonian thesis. That's going on inside of each one of those people, whether it's Prouty or Talmadge or Richard Russell or Barry Goldwater. It's like the Supreme Court; they don't come down the same way on every case. Now why didn't Goldwater vote with Prouty? I don't know. I'm sorry. But he, obviously, [?] could tell you.

G: One program that Congress defeated was the so-called land reform provision. Do you remember that?

S: I remember. That was another good idea, but they didn't like it. I can't remember exactly how it worked. It seemed to me that you could get a loan from the federal government if land which had been either in, let's say, some big corporation or federal land--I can't

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remember exactly how it was that that got turned over to an individual entrepreneur, so the guy would actually run it himself, the objective being to make it easier for people to have family farms. I can't remember actually what happened about that. What was that provision? Do you remember what it was?

G: I think it would allow for a corporation to purchase and resell farm land to the rural poor. Some sort of aid program that would--

S: Yes. On the surface I still think that's a good idea. A large federal corporation like the RFC could buy one hundred thousand acres and then sell it off in smaller plots to poor people, and the poor people would get loans to buy the farms, is that it?

G: I suppose.

S: Something like that. Well, it's one of those things they dream up in Washington, as the critics always say. The idea was to diffuse ownership of the land and give poor people who were farmers a chance to become independent in rural America; that's what it was for.

G: The legislative report, the report on the enrolled bill, states that Congress watered down the original Community Action Program by allowing assistance to either local public or private groups for non-comprehensive, non-coordinated programs and piecemeal grants. Do you recall that change? Perhaps that was one that the Democratic Caucus made?

S: Maybe it was. But again, you see, that--I don't remember it, first. But regardless of whether I remember it or not, the reality is that that would have been a typical conflict between the theoreticians of community action, who would argue that everything had to be comprehensive and pure and totally under control of the poor--sort of absolutists of community action--versus more pragmatic people who would say, "Well, yes, we're going to try and have it comprehensive wherever we can, but there will be places where it can't be truly comprehensive, and other places where even though it can't be truly

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comprehensive to begin with, we can get started and it can move upward toward total comprehensiveness."

G: The records show that you were over there the night the 1964 Civil Rights Bill passed.

S: Over where?

G: On the Hill, I think it was Humphrey's office or one of the senators' offices, and [it was] decided at that point to shorten the hearings in order to move the bill more quickly. Do you recall that meeting?

S: Only vaguely. I never would have thought of it if you hadn't brought it up. But somewhere or other I have a vague memory that when the Civil Rights Bill passed, we felt that psychologically it would then be easier to ride through in the wake and on the euphoria, to a certain extent, that that bill produced. But my memory of that is extremely vague, which is very clear from the way I'm talking to you about it.

That again is an issue where Larry O'Brien and Bill Moyers would be helpful.

G: How did you get around Howard Smith, who would not issue a rule?

S: I'm not absolutely sure. My memory isn't good enough on that, but I do know that Howard Smith and I, Judge Smith and I, we really had a very agreeable relationship. I actually liked him a lot, and I think he felt favorably disposed toward me. One bit of proof, you might say, or one indication about that, I can describe to you.

When we put the Peace Corps before the Congress, Judge Smith was against the Peace Corps. Many other southern congressmen were. But I had called on him I suppose a half a dozen times during the course of the time when the Peace Corps legislation was *en route* to the floor. Of course, he had given us a rule to get it out of the Rules Committee. But then the day it was actually on the floor of the Congress--let's say it was scheduled to be on Tuesday on the floor. On Monday his office called me and advised me that Judge Smith had asked them to tell me that if it would be of any help to me that he would be very happy for me to use his office in the Capitol, which was right off of the

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House of Representatives, that I could use his office with my staff to facilitate my work with the congressmen in getting the bill through. Well, I can remember that as if it happened five minutes ago. I couldn't believe it! In fact, nobody at the Peace Corps could believe it.

We went over and I sat at Howard Smith's desk--I can remember it just as well as if it were yesterday--and the various people who were working for me, like Bill Moyers and others, all were walking in and out of his office and talking to congressmen. And let me tell you something, every person in the Congress knew within fifteen minutes that Judge Smith had turned over his office to us to serve as our headquarters to put a piece of legislation through the Congress. Well, I won't say it was unprecedented, because I don't know. But I'm telling you what, it was unusual. It was a terrific mark or sign of friendship or something for us working on the Peace Corps.

G: Probably worth a lot of votes, too.

S: I don't think there's any question about it. So then when we went over there on the War on Poverty, Judge Smith, despite his differences of opinion with me on a lot of legislation and philosophically on a number of issues, I think I could fairly say that he was a friend. I won't say he was a booster, but he was certainly not a critic.

G: How much time did you spend on the Hill during this period that the legislation was being considered?

S: I don't know. I spent a lot of time. That's one of the principal jobs of the director. Anybody charged with putting a new piece of legislation through the Congress, to be effective, has to spend a lot of time there. It's not something you can turn over exclusively to a congressional liaison office. And the truth of the matter is, I liked it. I like the Congress. The House, I love the House. You see, both the War on Poverty legislation and the Peace Corps legislation were never authorized for more than one year, and every year we had to go before the authorizing committees and the Appropriations

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Committees; every year, in both bodies. So that meant that every year you were before Appropriations and authorizations, subcommittees and full committees on both sides. As soon as you finished one go-around, you had to start the next go-around. I used to say to the staff, it was always possible that the whole effort would be terminated. By comparison, let's say you're a secretary of commerce or labor or defense, there's no possibility that they're going to close down the Defense Department; I don't care if you're the worst secretary of defense in history. The worst thing that can happen to the Defense Department is, let's say, you get fired. But the Defense Department goes on, or the Attorney General's Office, the Department of Justice goes on. But with respect to Peace Corps or the War on Poverty, if you are running it and you're a disaster, they close down the whole effort.

I used to say at the beginning of the Peace Corps that it's like a parachute jump; you only get one chance. You jump and the chute opens or it doesn't open. With the Peace Corps particularly, and with the War on Poverty, the chute had to open up the first time. We weren't going to get a second chance with either one of those programs. In fact, the truth of the matter is that with the Peace Corps it got easier and easier as the years went on to get through. But with the War on Poverty it got harder and harder.

G: While the legislation was being considered, President Johnson went to Appalachia and sort of highlighted poverty there. You were originally scheduled to go, but I gather did not go with him. Do you recall the purpose of his trip and why you didn't go?

S: Well, two reasons: One, he went on trips like that to dramatize his own personal interest in the problem, his own support for the idea and for the legislation. He was rallying his own troops; he was flaunting the opposition. He was doing what he wanted to do. In fact, also, he was out, as he used to say, pressing the flesh, getting a feel for it himself, identifying himself with the program, picking up information. He was terrific that way, really gutty. My own theory always was that if the President is going to take a trip like

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that--and this applied to Kennedy or anybody else--there's no damn reason for me to be going there.

Like when Jack Kennedy went to Europe. He made a trip at one point, among other places, to Germany. The reality is, I would rather have gone with Jack Kennedy to Germany than most places in the world. I had been to Germany three or four times as a student. I was a huge admirer of Konrad Adenauer. I had read everything Adenauer wrote. I thought he was a fantastic human being. I wanted to meet him, and my wife was going to go with Kennedy. I don't know whether Jackie went on that trip. I'm not sure. But anyhow, my wife, Eunice, was going, and Jack said to me, President Kennedy said, "Well, Sarge, would you like to go along on this trip?" I remember it very well. I said, "The truth is, there's nothing I'd rather do in the world than go along on this trip," because one of the parts of this trip was going to be to discuss with the Germans starting a German Peace Corps. But I also said, "But I really don't think it's right. I have the responsibility to do other things; and if *you're* there and *you're* going to talk to them about the German Peace Corps, it's damn sure *I* don't have to be there to discuss the German Peace Corps. You can sell the Germans on the Peace Corps much better than I can. So if you're going I really ought to stay home." He said, "You're right, that's correct." So my wife went with him. I've got pictures of it even now . . . I took the same attitude when President Johnson went to West Virginia.

G: The House, of course, was where the vote was really close, and you had still a large undecided group of southerners. In the process Adam Yarmolinsky was lost to the program. Can you recall the events that happened here?

S: Well, I do. I talked to one of my colleagues about that--Don Baker--and he refreshed my memory on it when you were up here the last time; but you know something? I've already almost forgotten the details. But either he or somebody else wrote it up, and it's accurate.

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G: There was the question of the North Carolina delegation.

S: Well, there's no question about it, I can tell you all that. We were meeting in John McCormack's office and Cooley was there, the chairman of the North Carolina delegation and chairman of the Agriculture Committee, and some other congressmen, and all the whips. The Speaker had all the whips in. These people, led by Cooley, said that if Adam Yarmolinsky was in the program they would not vote for it to pass the Congress. The Democratic whips said that if they did not have the votes of these congressmen, this particular group--I can't remember whether it was fifteen or twenty-five votes that Cooley and his supporters had gotten together--that they couldn't get the legislation through the Congress without those votes. There was a terrific harangue and argument.

G: Was Powell there, do you recall?

S: I don't recall. They wanted me to say that I could guarantee them that Adam Yarmolinsky was not going to be in the program. My position was very complicated, but it was also straightforward. I told them that I did not intend to be in the program myself, which was true. I didn't want to be the director of it. I had told Johnson that I would organize it and try to get it through the Congress, but I wanted to go back and run the Peace Corps. So I said, "I'm not going to be the director of it. I have no desire to be, and I'm going to propose people to the President who can run it. Therefore, I'm not going to say a thing about this. Adam Yarmolinsky is an extremely competent person. I think he would be great in the program. But I do not have the right to put him in or put him out. That position will be a presidential appointment, just like the director's is, and that's for the President to say."

So they said, "Well then, get the President on the phone." I said, "Well, that's not my business." The Speaker of the House told me to go get the President on the phone. When the Speaker instructed me to do so, I stepped into a little room adjoining the Speaker's office, and I called the White House. I got the President on the phone, and I

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told him what the problem was. I said, "From what our friends over here tell us, you can have the War on Poverty bill through the Congress. But the price of it is that you would agree not to appoint Adam Yarmolinsky."

The President wasn't going to sit still for that, because he wasn't going to have people in the Congress tell him in the executive branch whom he could appoint and whom he could not appoint. So in his typical imaginative and artful way, Johnson said to me, "Well, you tell them that you won't recommend that I appoint him." I said, "Well, that won't make any difference, Mr. President, because I've already told them that as far as I'm concerned I won't even be in there to make a recommendation one way or the other." He said, "Well, all the easier then. If you're not even going to be there, then you don't have to worry about making the recommendation." I said, "Yes, but I don't want to do that because Adam Yarmolinsky is my friend, and I don't want to say that to these particular congressmen because"--they were anti-Jewish and they were anti-liberals and they were anti-anybody named Yarmolinsky. It was just real, lowdown racial bigotry and political venom and all kinds of odious hatred. I said, "I don't want to kowtow to these guys." He said, "That's okay. Don't you worry about them. You just tell them that the President will act on these matters in his own judgment, and that in that process that he will consider recommendations from everybody, and that nobody's recommendations are going to be controlling and so on." I went back, and that wasn't satisfactory. They said, "No, we have to have an assurance that Adam Yarmolinsky will not be named as a deputy director," or as a matter of fact that his name will not be sent to the Congress.

(Interruption)

G: They were saying he won't get any appointment requiring--

S: Requiring congressional confirmation.

G: So did you call the President back?

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S: I called the President back, yes. Here's where, in fact, the actual wording of what I was then authorized to say by Johnson skips my memory. But I thought I recorded this when we were together before.

(Interruption)

That was the most unpleasant experience I ever had in the Government of the United States. In fact, despite the fact that I didn't think I had any choice--and I'll explain to you what I mean--I felt then as if I ought to just go out and vomit, it was such a despicable proceeding. And in fact, I didn't admire myself for the role I had to play in it.

(Interruption)

And I felt like somebody must feel if they've been on some kind of a debauch, and I went back to my office and I was disgusted. The first thing I did was I called in Adam, and I said, "Adam, I've got very bad and very disappointing news for you." He said, "What do you mean?" I said, "This is what's happened. You're not going to be named as the deputy director of the War on Poverty." I won't say that he blanched, but it seemed to me that some of the blood ran out of his face. I said, "I don't blame you for feeling utterly disgusted. I'm disgusted with myself. But the reality was very simple in my judgment. It was a question of whether we have this bill and the benefits which it will bring to hundreds of thousands or maybe millions of poor people, or you."

It was similar again to real warfare, where many generals, every general I suppose who's ever been in a war, has to decide that if he's going to get to Warsaw or Vienna or wherever he's trying to get, and it means launching an attack on the left wing in order to make a detour around the right wing, then he's going to send ten thousand men out there on the left wing, and he's going to suffer five thousand casualties. And he has to say, "That's the price we have to pay to get to Vienna." In those cases, and that happens in every war, people get killed in order to get to a particular objective. Normally you don't

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have to go through that in politics, but this was a case where we did. Adam Yarmolinsky was one of the first heroes to fall in the war against poverty.

G: Did you have any warning that they were holding out for this, or was this real sudden?

S: No, I didn't. No, it was quite sudden. It was for me quite sudden.

(Interruption)

The reality is that the only justification--and it is a genuine valid explanation of what I did--was exactly what I got through saying a minute ago. I felt that I had the responsibility to get that bill through, and if it meant that Adam Yarmolinsky had to be sacrificed in order to get it through, then I, much as I disliked it--because Adam Yarmolinsky was my closest associate in the development of it, and he also was a person for whom I had a great friendship and respect--if he had to be sacrificed to get it through I didn't feel that I had any alternative except to make that sacrifice.

Now sure, I could have quit. I could have walked out and said, "Fine. If that's the price you want, you get somebody else to come in here and, quote, 'do your dirty work for you.'" I could have said that to Lyndon Johnson, I suppose, or I could have just refused to participate in the discussion. I could have just stalked out of the room and said, "I won't have anything to do with this ungodly, corrupt process."

G: I gather Johnson took essentially the same position that you did, if that was the price for saving the program, then it had to be done.

S: Well, let's just say that's the position he did take. But the fact is he wasn't as close to or as friendly as I was with Adam Yarmolinsky. It's easier for him to say that that's the price. He'll sacrifice my friend. But it's a big difference between that and me being called upon to be the executioner.

G: Sure. But can you recall if that essentially was what LBJ came down to?

S: Well, he never would have been caught dead, so to speak, being that explicit. I mean, he was too--how shall I say--crafty to be caught on the record making such an explicit

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decision. No. So I can't testify to you and say, "Yes, that's true," but I can say what I think, and what I think is that you're right.

G: When Landrum announced on the floor, "I have it on the highest authority that Adam Yarmolinsky will not be associated with the program," did he mean that he had it on your authority or on President Johnson's authority?

S: He meant he had it on Johnson's authority, because I didn't have any authority, let alone the highest authority.

G: Would Adam Yarmolinsky have been the deputy director if this hadn't happened?

S: Well, he certainly would have been somebody that I would have proposed, yes. Would he have been the only person that I would have proposed? Probably no, and let me tell you why. Adam Yarmolinsky and I had worked on the business of finding a cabinet for Kennedy, and with very rare exceptions we always proposed more than one person for a particular position. Adam Yarmolinsky would have been, I think, among the first to propose not only alternatives to be the director of OEO, but alternatives for the President to consider as deputy director. You don't serve the president's interests, in my judgment, if you present him with a list of proposals and give him only one choice for a particular position. That is as much as to say, you have to nominate my recommendation, because you only gave him one suggestion. That's presumptuous to begin with, and it's egregious egotism, I also think. I never would have done that.

G: Of course, he was to be your assistant, though.

S: Well, he wasn't, because I was not going to be the director. Everybody finds it very hard to believe but I did not want to run OEO. I don't know why everybody finds it hard to believe, but that's true. And it's also true I didn't want to run the Peace Corps. One of the strange things about me just personally is, I didn't want any of these jobs. I wanted to be in Chicago with the Board of Education. At that time my personal ambition was to stay in Chicago, be president of the Board of Education, and run for governor of Illinois.

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That's what I wanted to do. So I literally was dragged down here to Washington against my desires and against my will and against my own personal ambition. Nobody believes that. But that happens to be the truth. So when I came down here to put the Peace Corps together I had no ambition to be the director of the Peace Corps. Now these statements may prove to you that I was very shortsighted and that I wasn't very astute in not wanting to get these jobs, but that's the truth.

You see, for example, as I told you a minute ago, Kennedy discussed with Abe Ribicoff my becoming under secretary or deputy secretary, whatever they called it, of HEW. I would have liked that job, because I thought a) I was qualified for it; b) I thought it was a rather prestigious job in Washington; c) I thought it couldn't help but advance my possibilities politically even back in Illinois, which were factors that were of interest to me. But you have to remember that when Kennedy asked me to run the Peace Corps, the Peace Corps was exactly the opposite in many ways of being under secretary of HEW. The Peace Corps was a headache; the Peace Corps didn't even exist; the Peace Corps had no status; the Peace Corps directorship was a very low-level position. It wasn't even planned to be a presidential appointment. So coming down here to organize the Peace Corps was anything but, how shall I say, a compliment or a great--what do I call [it]?--reward. It was nothing like that. It was a pain in the neck, that's what it was.

G: It didn't really have a constituency either, a power base.

S: It had nothing. It had nothing. When I came to Washington to organize the Peace Corps, I took a room in the Mayflower Hotel. There was no office in the federal government for me to work in. I held all the initial meetings of the Peace Corps in the Mayflower Hotel in--what do they call those?--suites, in suites which I paid the rent for myself. The Peace Corps was organized at my expense. I didn't have a government secretary, I didn't have a government telephone, I didn't have a government room, I didn't have a government office, I was welcome in no building in Washington. I didn't have anything, let alone

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something in the White House. So I sat in the Mayflower Hotel and I paid for the whole thing myself. I don't want to make a big issue out of that, but unlike President Kennedy or my wife, I was not personally wealthy. I didn't have the money to be expending for this purpose. But I did it. Yes.

And I did it willingly, because the President asked me to. But getting to be the director of the Peace Corps was not exactly like being asked to visit heaven or something of the kind. I'm not trying to say I was against the Peace Corps. I was *for* the Peace Corps. But I didn't want to be head of the Peace Corps. So after the formative period in getting the Peace Corps together, I presented Kennedy with three or four names, five names maybe, of people to be the head of the Peace Corps. Kennedy, in a sense like Johnson, wouldn't pick any of these people, and they were good people. I can't remember frankly who they were offhand, but they were very good. He said, "No, you've got to stay here." Look, I said, my wife and my family are in Chicago. I never got a place to live in Washington until July 30, about, of 1961. My wife and kids moved down here one month later, thirty days later, and my secretary and myself--she was a terrific woman named Mary Anne Orlando--we got the painters and the furniture and everything put into this house for my family to come here. I had to select schools for my kids. I didn't want to do it. I had a terrific place in Chicago; I was very happy in Chicago; I had a lot of friends in Chicago, and I didn't want to come to Washington.

Now the same thing is true of the war against poverty. Finally after being in Washington for whatever it was, three years, four years, I was reasonably happy with the Peace Corps. The Peace Corps was a success. I had busted my back to make it work successfully, and I was beginning to sit back and have a nice lazy life, enjoying the sweet smell of success, as Jack Kennedy used to call it, when Johnson came in and said, "Run this war against poverty." Well, it's a joke in a way, but I didn't know a thing about poverty, and I told him so. I didn't want the job and I didn't want the job before this thing

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came up about Yarmolinsky. I didn't want the job after the thing came up about Yarmolinsky.

Now both of the jobs turned out to be great jobs. I'm not criticizing the jobs or the work. I learned a huge amount from those jobs. I personally think that when I had the Peace Corps job and the War on Poverty job at the same time--I had both those jobs simultaneously--I think I had the best job probably in the history of Washington, I mean going back to George Washington. Because right today, I believe I am the only person who ever held a job which was operational, actively operational, in every state, in every county, in every town of the United States, and at the same time was operating in fifty or sixty foreign countries in at least five hundred different locations around the world. For example, if you're the secretary of state you will have your embassy in the capital of a foreign country, and you will have maybe one or two, maybe three consulates in a foreign country, especially if it's a big country. So you may have on the average maybe two or three places per country worldwide. So you might have your employees, so to speak, State Department employees, let's say there's a hundred and fifty countries, you might have three hundred locations. Maybe you got four hundred locations around the world where you have your people working. Well, I had a hundred locations in the Philippine Islands alone. Instead of four hundred locations, I must have had four thousand locations where Peace Corps volunteers were working.

Nobody has ever had a job like that. Nobody has ever had a better job, or jobs, simultaneously. The consequence was that I had information flowing into me and interest in, a personal interest in, all of the slums of the United States, all the barrios of Central and South America, all the rural areas of Tanzania or Kenya or places like that. At the same time I was interested in what was going on in Washington, in Congress, in all the prisons of the United States. It was a fantastic job. It was the best Ph.D. course anybody ever had. So I'm not criticizing the jobs. But it's hard for people to believe me

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when I say that I didn't want to be head of the War on Poverty. I wasn't going to have anything to do about who the deputy director was. It's hard for them to believe that. In fact, I don't think many of the congressmen believed it.

G: They seemed to assume that you would be the director.

S: That's right, they did. Because they just thought that I was a great favorite of Johnson's. I'm sure that's what they thought. They didn't think that Johnson was--knowing Johnson, they knew Johnson better than I did--that he was going to let me get away because of . . .

G: You didn't get quite as much money as you wanted that first year. Do you think it was enough to do what you needed to do?

S: Yes, the first year. Yes. We got \$789 million, and we asked for, I think, \$1.1 billion. Well, we got \$800 million out of a request for a \$1.1 billion.

G: One thing though: the fact that the legislative process dragged on. Did it make it difficult for you to plan the program when you didn't have the legislation and you didn't have the appropriation until August, September?

S: No. I tell you why, and that is because the people who were actually operational people were planning it on the theory and with the belief that we would have it. To plan it all during the summer, to get started in the fall, was a Herculean task, regardless of whether we had the money. So we were working as if we would have the money, and the fact that we didn't get it to dispense until after the election was frustrating, it was irritating, but it wasn't as if it were a deathblow.

G: We've come to the end of my questions on the legislation. Is there anything else on this phase, the planning of the program or the legislation in 1964 that we haven't covered that you feel is important?

S: Well, you've done a lot of work on this. If you've overlooked something, I don't think I'll remember it now, whatever it is, quarter past six or six-thirty.

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G: I certainly thank you for your time and I hope we can come back and talk about the implementation of the program.

S: Sure, thank you.

End of Tape 2 of 2 and Interview II

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Agreement Pertaining to the Oral History Interview of

SARGENT SHRIVER

I, Sargent Shriver, of Potomac, Maryland, or my authorized agent, William Josephson, do hereby, except as provided in paragraph two below, give to the United States of America for deposit in the Lyndon Baines Johnson Presidential Library, the content of the tape recordings and transcripts of the interviews conducted with me on August 20, and October 23, 1980, July 1, 1982, February 7, 1986, and November 29, 1990.

This assignment is subject to the following terms and conditions:

- (1) The tape recordings and transcripts shall be available for listening and researching, respectively, by researchers authorized by the Library.
- (2) During my lifetime I retain all copyright in the tape recordings and transcripts.
- (3) During my lifetime researchers wishing to copy the tape recordings or transcripts or any part thereof, other than for short "fair use" quotations from the transcript, must first obtain my express consent or that of my authorized agent, William Josephson, in each case.
- (4) Copies of the transcripts and the tape recordings shall be deposited by the Library with my papers in the John Fitzgerald Kennedy Library where they shall be subject to the terms and conditions as are applicable to those papers.

Sargent Shriver
Sargent Shriver or Authorized Agent

A. M. Weinstein
Archivist of the United States

4/26/05
Date

5/19/05
Date

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April 29, 2005

Ms. Linda M. Seelke
Archivist
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Austin, TX 78705-5702

Dear Ms. Seelke:

This is in partial response to your letter of March 29, 2005.

Please include this letter in the Shriver oral history. There are a number of errors in Sarge's recollection as recorded in his oral history that I know from my own knowledge. For example, on pages 15-20 of the August 20, 1980 transcript he describes conversations he had with President Kennedy and Vice President Johnson about the independence of the Peace Corps. I am quite certain that he never took part in those conversations, if only because at the relevant time he was out of the country in India. So far as I know, the meeting between President Kennedy and Vice President Johnson, where President Kennedy overruled the White House staff recommendation from Mr. Ralph Dungan and the position of Budget Director David Bell, Civil Service Commission Chair John Macy and International Cooperation Administration Administrator Henry Labouisse, was entirely between the President and the Vice President with no one else in attendance. The story is well told in Gerry Rice's *The Bold Experiment* pages 65-66 and Scott Stossel's *Sarge* pages 223 to 225.

The long descriptions on pages 23-28 of the August 20, 1980 transcript of Sarge's conversations with President Johnson about the beginnings of Sarge's War on Poverty are probably extremely exaggerated, if not entirely wrong. The story, from my point-of-view, is told in my July 12, 2003 letter to Scott, copy enclosed. Scott tells the story on pages 343-45 of *Sarge*.

In the August 20, 1980 transcript, page 81, I don't think that Sarge's statements are correct about some presidential contingency fund and the amount of money he got out of that for the OEO start-up, compared to the amount of money the President allocated out of the Mutual Security Act contingency fund for the Peace Corps start-up. But I do not remember what the facts were.

Ms. Linda M. Seelke

April 29, 2005
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In the October 23, 1980 transcript, page 66, if the Steven Smith is Jean Kennedy Smith's husband, that he was in, or even considered for, the Agency for International Development, is certainly news to me. I am not saying it is wrong or right, but I do think it is highly unlikely.

In the July 1, 1982 transcript on page 14, there is a little bit of confusion at the outset about Bill Kelly and Community Action and Bill Kelly and the Job Corps, but I think it gets straightened out.

In the November 29, 1990 transcript on page 19, Sarge has the so-called five-year flush wrong. There was never a Civil Service Commission vote, let alone agreement. John Macy, then Chair of the Civil Service Commission, was opposed to the legislation, as was whoever was then Director of the Bureau of the Budget, probably Kermit Gordon, possibly Charles Schultze. What happened legislatively was that the Peace Corps was taken out of Civil Service, and its personnel system was based instead on the Foreign Service personnel system which was not inconsistent with the so-called five-year flush which was also specifically authorized.

Also in the November 29, 1990 transcript beginning on page 19 and continuing on page 20, there is a little initial confusion about Sarge staying on the Peace Corps and OEO until he went to France in 1968, but the confusion straightens itself out on page 20. Sarge gave up the Peace Corps directorship in the Spring of 1966, but continued as Director of OEO until 1968 when he left for France.

Sincerely,



William Josephson

/jl
Encls.