

INTERVIEW I

DATE: August 20, 1975

INTERVIEWEE: MARGARET CHASE SMITH

INTERVIEWER: JOE B. FRANTZ

PLACE: Senator Smith's home in Skowhegan, Maine

Tape 1 of 1, Side 1

F: Coming in and out of the interview was General William Lewis, Senator Smith's long-time administrative assistant and a long-time acquaintance of President Johnson's. In the beginning of the interview my machine was not recording properly, so that the first several feet are not recorded. I tinkered with the machine and finally got it to working perfectly, and once the sound comes on it remains through the next fifteen hundred feet without any problem.

The early part of the interview dealt with the usual amenities and with how Senator Smith came to Congress upon the death of her husband, who had been a congressman from Maine. She also told of how she became a member of the Armed Services Committees within Congress and of her early acquaintance therefore with Congressman Johnson, who had similar assignments. In fact, they served together in committee work on the same committees in Congress, and later, when both were in the Senate together, they also served on precisely the same committees again together.

S: So Lyndon Johnson [was] on the Democratic side and I on the Republican side, he just ahead of me by those two years.

F: Did your husband have any dealings with him?

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S: I doubt it very much, because my husband was very active on labor and welfare matters. He was on the Labor Committee and worked very closely with, oh, it doesn't matter. But I think they had no contacts because my husband did not participate in defense matters. This is where Lyndon Johnson and I, I think, were quite in agreement on most of the defense issues, and that brought us a little closer together, perhaps, through the years, officially. I ran for the Senate in 1948, as did he, and of course in the Senate that brought us together a little more closely. I did not get on the Appropriations Committee and the Armed Services Committee in the Senate until four years later. I had to do my apprenticeship.

F: Well now, you were elected by the greatest margin in the history of Maine, I think, in 1948.

S: Yes, that's right.

F: You kept on doing that, but I mean in 1948 you were; Johnson was [elected by] about eighty-seven votes out of a million. Did he ever tease you about that or you tease him?

S: No, I never did, but he used to. He said many times personally and publicly, often in a group around the Senate, that if there was a recount and a contest in the Senate about his election he would be sure of my vote. I never told him what I would do, but he felt that I would be with him.

F: I notice you are on record somewhere as saying that he would never come into Maine to campaign against you.

S: No. I think he never did. I know he never did.

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- L: He offered to either come in to campaign against you--
- S: For me or against me.
- L: --because he thought it would help there.
- S: That's right. Bill, why don't you sit down with us? Don't you think it would be [nice]?
- F: I think it would be nice.
- L: At that particular time I think the division in the Senate was forty-nine to forty-seven.
- F: Right.
- L: Democratic-forty-nine, Republicans-forty-seven. Lyndon Johnson said that if there was any question about whether he was seated or not, in the 49-47 division, that he felt he could count on Margaret Chase Smith to vote to seat him. I'll be back in a bit later.
- F: Good. Did you two work pretty closely together on the congressional Naval Affairs Committee?
- S: Yes.
- F: Those were busy times.
- S: Those were busy times. I think that probably the era that we did serve in will be in history one of the greatest. Wouldn't you say so?
- F: I think so.
- S: With all the wars and all of the presidents that we served with and under and over.
- F: All that took place is just overwhelming.
- S: Yes. Now we had some very, very rough issues in that Naval Affairs Committee. I suppose I got my label as a liberal--I'm a Republican

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and would be expected to be a conservative from the state of Maine, but I've always been considered a great liberal--because of my votes on many of those national issues, defense issues, foreign aid. And he and I, I think our records are pretty close all the way through.

F: He was already back from his tour of naval duty when you went onto the committee?

S: Yes, yes. Oh, let me see. In the House?

F: Yes.

S: Was he?

F: I think Roosevelt called him back in the late summer or early fall of 1942, and he went on in 1943.

S: Yes, that's right.

F: Did Vinson run a sort of an ironclad committee, or was it rather relaxed?

S: It was relaxed as far as he was concerned but he was in control, all right. Yes, Carl Vinson was a great chairman.

F: You mean he was relaxed?

S: He was relaxed. Carl Vinson was a great chairman. I can see that man sitting there now with his glasses down on his nose and looking his committee over. It would get a little heated and he would suddenly have a call back to the office or adjourn, and whoever was making the trouble would find himself on a trip next day, looking for something Mr. Vinson wanted.

F: I see. He wouldn't be there the next day?

S: But by the time he got back he would be all straightened out.

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F: Did you get involved in that bit about checking on navy yards to see that the country was getting its money's worth out of what it was putting into shipbuilding?

S: Yes. I was on the Congested Area Subcommittee. That was an interesting one because I had been a member only a short time. Carl Vinson, I think, was more amused than anything that he would draw me for the committee, because you remember Clare Booth Luce came in about that time. Andy May, who was chairman of the Military Affairs Committee got Clare, and Carl Vinson got Margaret Chase Smith.

When he was called on to name this subcommittee, he looked up and down the rostrum of the members, and he named me and here I'd been on only a few weeks. Of course, it was a great surprise. The press made a great deal of it and called me the "Vice Admiral" because I was going out and investigating vice. But it was a great committee, and it was the subcommittee that Roosevelt commended so highly for the results, the report and the follow-through.

F: In general, there were no strong lines of division in the committee?

S: No.

F: They just disagreed on separate issues?

S: No, it was really pretty much of a--

F: No "we versus they" sort of thing?

S: No. I don't recall. I'd have to check, but I doubt if there were very many party votes during the years that I was on there. But I didn't stay with that very much because I felt so strongly about our national defense, as I have ever since, that I couldn't see that you could make a party issue of it..

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F: Did Johnson show any indication in those days that he was going on to other things?

S: Well, anyone who got very close to Johnson knew that he wasn't going to sit still very long. Yes, he had showed indications of even then being a driver.

F: Did he ever talk to you about any of his troubles with his own constituency that you recall?

S: No, I don't. Perhaps on that eighty-five or eighty-seven vote. I think we've talked about that many times. But I have used that time and time again in my own campaigns, showing my listeners that if just a quarter of a vote had been cast in each area that he could have been defeated.

F: Of course now New Hampshire just has reemphasized it.

S: Yes, I should say so. People don't realize how one vote makes the difference, and I think that Lyndon Johnson's election [in 1948] showed that very clearly.

F: You don't take it for granted.

S: You don't take it for granted. That's what he used to say. You don't take it for granted. But I don't know that he ever took anything for granted. I don't know that he did, did he?

F: I don't think so.

S: I don't think he took that for granted. I think he must have worked very hard.

F: He always ran a little scared, as if he were fighting for his life.

S: Yes. As I did.

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F: Even when he wasn't.

S: Yes, and saying, as I did so often, anything worth wanting was worth fighting for.

F: I know you were an early opponent of Joe McCarthy, and I know also that there is criticism of Johnson as a Senate majority leader for not taking a stronger stand against McCarthy. Did you think he handled that well.

S: Well, it wouldn't be for me to say. Perhaps, from his point of view, he did. But his attitude, as was so clear, was that it was a fight in the Republican Party and let the Republicans fight it out. As I recall, he kept advising his people on that side not to get into the McCarthy fight. Of course, I felt very strongly about it.

F: You made a beautiful speech in there in which you never named McCarthy but everybody knew.

S: Knew who I was talking about.

F: Right.

S: If you study the speech very carefully, I think it would be observed that I was attacking the Democratic side about as much. The press never picked that up. Of course, everything was against them. I'm getting a good many questions from the colleges now about that era. I had a question not long ago about Lyndon Johnson's position on this.

F: Johnson always explained that he was letting McCarthy dig his own grave. The question was, you know, can you afford the time it'll take him to dig it? This was often raised in criticism of him, and I don't know whether his long range strategy--Eisenhower kind of

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followed the same thing, hands off.

S: Yes. I think that Eisenhower was even more so. Because when Eisenhower did what he did to General Marshall, you remember, when he dropped that line about General Marshall, [it] was inexcusable in my opinion. No, I think they both could have done a great deal to have strengthened and hastened the demise of McCarthy.

F: Right. Were you working with Johnson at the time that Sputnik hit the heavens?

S: Working with him in the committee?

F: There was no space committee then.

S: No, there was no space committee. Sputnik is what created the Space Committee, and it was Lyndon Johnson who did it actually. I think that Lyndon Johnson felt that we'd not gone far enough, we'd better get busy. It was then that they set up, as I recall, the temporary committee and got around to how they would make up the full committee. I was an original member of the full committee, not the temporary committee, so I worked very closely with Johnson on the Space Committee. We saw the issue very much the same.

F: What was the issue as you saw it?

S: That it was time for us to act, that whatever it cost we must go on exploring.

F: Did you look on this as a matter primarily of research or of national prestige or defense?

S: Personally, I think I was thinking of it more as a defense matter. Of course, we were never permitted to talk about it by way of defense.

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I think perhaps national prestige meant a great deal to me, but I had a feeling that there was a great deal more that would come of it than the average person wanted to think about. Styles Bridges was the ranking member with Johnson, you remember, and Styles Bridges and I were very far apart in our philosophy. But we worked very closely together on the space matter. He came to me and asked me to be a member of that committee. They were taking the top members from the committees, and he asked me to be a member of the committee and then came to me to talk about how far we would go when the matter of going to the moon was concerned. I felt that the statement of President Kennedy about going to the moon was more to startle the public than anything else, like Sputnik was, that going to the moon meant little; it was the exploration and the findings along the way.

F: Which would lie along the way there.

S: Yes. I remember Bridges came to me one day and talked to me at length and said, "Now, Margaret, we've got to make up our minds how far we're going in this." Because I think perhaps they could see that I was going the Johnson way. He said that going to the moon was going to cost, before we got through, twenty billion dollars, and if we were going to start we must stay with it. I said I had already decided to stay with it and would go along with it. So this is how it came about, and I finally became ranking Republican on that Space Committee and worked with Johnson, worked with Kerr and then with Anderson.

F: In both his Senate majority leader days and then as vice president, he took a really active role with this Space Committee.

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S: I think as majority leader he was one of the most effective of all times.

F: Was he fairly decent toward Republicans? I know he's a Democrat and he is partisan.

S: I was impressed by him because I think Lyndon Johnson had a way of knowing his people, whether they were Democrats or Republicans. He would do everything that he could to find out what they were interested in, what pleased them, what antagonized them, and when the time came he made use of it, which I think is a part of good leadership. I found him very cooperative.

F: Did he treat you any different because you were a lady?

S: I never saw any difference.

F: He had, he could have, a certain courtliness at times.

S: No, I never saw it. In fact, I have never seen that in the Senate anyway, perhaps because I always demanded everything that came to the state of Maine. I was one of two senators; I was not a woman senator. I don't remember that Lyndon Johnson ever gave me any special attention or special courtesy.

F: He would treat you with respect as a good senator.

S: Oh, yes, always with respect and kindly. Oh, we had our disagreements. Lyndon Johnson and I had some disagreements, and we were quite frank in talking them out. One of the last ones was when he was President. He had read something that I had been quoted as saying in the paper. I was down to a bipartisan leadership meeting, and Secretary Rusk was to present us a story on foreign relations. I wasn't late, but

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I was later than some of them. I came in and sat along the wall, as inconspicuous as I could be. I usually didn't do it that way. When he came into that room, so typically Lyndon Johnson, he looked over and spied me--of course I was the only woman, as usual--and he pointed his finger at me and he said, "Margaret, what are you doing over there? Your place is over here." He made whoever was sitting next to him get up and give me that seat. Well, it turned out that he presented the picture for the morning and presented Dean Rusk, Secretary Rusk. Of course, there was a camera there; the boys are always there with cameras. Immediately after presenting Secretary Rusk he turned his chair towards me and began to point his finger at me and talk to me. Well, I was taught to listen to the cabinet members and the President, but he was giving me a talking to.

F: Kind of needed your head on a swivel, didn't you?

S: I should say! He was giving me a talking to about whatever it was I had said. He finished by saying, "Now you come off your high horse, and you go back to the office and tell Bill Lewis to help get you straightened out." I think this was one of the very last--

F: He got to know Bill real well?

S: Well, Bill served as counsel to the Naval Affairs Committee. Yes. I would rather have Bill tell it to you, but I think that Lyndon Johnson offered him quite a good position and Bill liked the legislative rather than the executive and told him that he thought he would prefer to stay with Carl Vinson. Which meant that Bill Lewis was not one of Johnson's boys but one of Vinson's boys.

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But they worked together, and I think during the time that Lyndon Johnson was President he had Bill down, oh, quite a number of times, once on a very confidential matter. He had great respect for Bill and trusted him, which was very good for me.

F: Did he ever treat you like a Republican, or just as a--

S: As a person.

F: --senator whom he liked?

S: No, as a senator. No, I don't recall. But I don't know how he could treat me as a Republican because I don't . . . I just don't know the answer to that.

F: Right. Did you tangle with him on the Passamaquoddy Project?

S: No, I didn't tangle with him. I'll ask Bill to give us something on that because I don't recall. We always got it through the Senate. For instance I had a little bill--going to the Naval Affairs Committee--that would give equal pay for the Portsmouth Kittery Naval Yard to the other yards, Boston for instance. I got it passed by both the House and the Senate, and President Eisenhower vetoed it. I talked to Bill Knowland, who was the minority leader, and he would have nothing to do with it at all. He really was very rough with me on it. I talked with Lyndon Johnson. I knew I could talk with him. I talked with Lyndon Johnson, and Lyndon Johnson was, oh, tremendously helpful to me. I shall always remember the way he acted, because he made it possible for me to get that veto overridden in the Senate. It was the first time Eisenhower had been overridden.

F: What did he do? Did he buttonhole people himself or call them?

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S: I never knew what he did. But he had his people lined up. But more particularly, he set the time for the vote. He talked to me about it, and he said, "Now, Margaret, you're anxious to get going on this"-- we served on Appropriations together--"We're going to be down in Appropriations late." He said, "When I'm all set, I'll give you the sign and you go on up to the floor. I'll be there, and we'll get that thing through." This was the nearest to making a deal, I think, which I don't know much about. But it was very, very helpful, and he had his people lined up very, very well.

F: Where do you think he got his strengths as majority leader?

S: I think he played fairly with the membership, whether it was Republicans or Democrats. As I said earlier, he learned what they wanted, what they were interested in. It might be some little bill that affected their district or their state. It might be some personal thing. It might be of little importance to the Senate generally. But I think that he was cooperative with us. He was rough--he could be, as you know, could be very, very rough--but he was very cooperative. He wanted to get things done. We haven't had any leadership like that for a long time.

F: Right. I often thought what he would have done if he had had a legislative team when he was president like Rayburn and Johnson to carry the ball over in Congress for him. He didn't need it.

S: It would have been quite different.

F: He didn't need it.

S: Yes, it would have been quite different.

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F: It would have been when things began to bog down.

S: Yes.

F: Did you ever get any samples of that explosive temper?

S: I guess probably the nearest was the time that he talked to me so seriously while Dean Rusk was talking. No, I don't think so. I think once or twice he got irritated with me about some little thing and would blow off steam, but it was not very important. He used to quite often come over to my desk and talk to me when the Senate was in session. [When] somebody was speaking at length, he'd come over. I remember on occasion, in fact several times, Mrs. Johnson and the daughters or the daughters would be in the gallery. The family gallery was right back of where I sat. He'd come over and stand over my desk and talk with me and keep his eyes up on the gallery. I would ask him what he was looking at, and he'd say, "Oh, some of the loveliest girls I know." He had a great affection for that family, and I think perhaps that was one thing that helped him help me, because he could see that he would like to have his women, wife and daughters, in the same position. I'm not sure, but I felt that sometimes.

F: Did you get to know Lady Bird fairly well over the years?

S: Yes. I never knew them socially--I didn't go socially much--but I knew her and always had great admiration for her. She will go down in history as one of our great first ladies, I think.

F: I've noticed some things around here in Maine that made me wonder if her hand hadn't been felt, disguised junkyards or that sort of thing, you know.

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S: Oh, I think Maine is a part of it, but I think that was a great program of hers. She did it so quietly and yet so effectively. I sat beside her at lunch one noon, and I said to her half jokingly, "I don't know how you stand that man," meaning the President. "I don't know how you put up with him." Because he was pretty strenuous the way he worked and the way he went, you know. We had more conversation, and she said, "Well, it bothered me a great deal, especially after his heart attack. I used to try to control him and try to get him to do things and not to do things. But I finally made up my mind that it was making it worse for him, and so I went on doing the things that I would ordinarily do." She said, "Not that I was forgetting and he was not on my mind every minute, but I could see that he needed less tension."

F: I think she had really rare understanding of his drives.

S: I'll say she did. I'll say she did. She certainly put up with them, because those hours [are difficult]. I think all the girls, the wives of the senators, have the hard end of it.

F: Did you ever get to observe his relationship with Senator [Estes] Kefauver?

S: Not much. On the committee, but I don't recall anything about it.

F: When anything came up in Maine, you were a member of the opposition party, but did he consult you about appointments of people from Maine? I know when Senator Muskie came down he gave him a choice appointment. Did he talk with you about that?

S: No. No, that was a party affair, and I've always been very understanding

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of the patronage and appointments. I'm not sure that he didn't speak to me occasionally, but I think he did some things for Muskie that were. . . Bill, what was that? I can't remember.

L: He spoke to you about Stanley Tupper when Stanley Tupper was being considered for Ambassador to Expo '67, and Tupper turned out to be quite a political ingrate as far as Senator Smith is concerned. For, after he sought and obtained her clearance for his appointment by President Johnson, he supported both her primary opponent in 1972 and then he supported her opponent in the general election in 1972. Senator Smith, as I recall, told me that she had told President Johnson that she would have no expression one way or the other on it. She told me that President Johnson had said to her that if she had the slightest objection to Mr. Tupper that he would not get the appointment. She said she would not raise any objection, nor would she register any great enthusiasm for it.

S: He would have to take the responsibility.

L: Mr. Tupper was later to embarrass President Johnson and the head of USIA at that particular time, who was Leonard Marks, because Mr. Tupper had a book that was reportedly ghostwritten which was great praise of Canada and great criticism of the United States on the Canadian-American relations. He characterized the American attitude as ignorant and arrogant and said nothing to anyone in the administration at the time. This created a great deal of embarrassment. Leonard Marks called me and said he had recalled that at a dinner party at the Sulgrave Club, oh, some three or four months prior to this time when he asked me about Tupper, and I said, "You had better

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watch him," that little did he realize the seriousness of the warning that I had registered. He said that Tupper had turned out to be not only an ingrate, but had violated all concepts of ethics and responsibility.

F: Where do you suppose Johnson got hold of Tupper?

L: And [Marks said] that President Johnson had called him and in great anger had said, "What about this guy Tupper?" President Johnson got Tupper in the 1964 election when President Johnson was elected. [Tupper] campaigned. He was a Republican nominee for re-election to the House in the First District, and he openly campaigned against Goldwater in the election. Out of some two hundred thousand votes cast, he won by, I believe it was, two hundred and twenty-five votes. Having alienated himself from the Republican Party, it was quite evident to him in 1966 that it was questionable that he would even be renominated again because he had thrown the Republican Party to the wolves when it was evident that this was his way of surviving.

S: I think he was for Johnson in 1964.

L: Yes, he was. That's what I said.

S: Oh, I thought you said he was campaigning against him.

L: He was campaigning against Goldwater. If I said he was campaigning against-- He was campaigning against Goldwater openly and for Johnson.

S: Yes.

L: So he did not seek to run for re-election.

F: Yes.

L: Incidentally, the person he defeated in the 1964 election was Kenneth

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Curtis, who later became governor of Maine. Frankly, the talk was that this was a payoff for Tupper for what he had done for the Democrats. Because Johnson set the all-time record in Maine at that time, which was held up until that time by Margaret Chase Smith. This was considered, certainly by many in Maine, as a payoff. The further rumor was that Tupper had turned over his mailing list in 1966 to the then-chairman of the Democratic State Committee, Peter Kyros, who was running for the House and who was elected in 1966. And great credence was given to this claim because many people who had been on Tupper's mailing list received literature from Kyros with the same label that Tupper had used in his mailing list; you know, where he pasted on the [labels], or something like that.

F: There is some circumstance to that.

S: That was very, very bad. While there were a lot of people who didn't like Goldwater, to be on the ticket with Goldwater, on the same ticket, same party, to be so outspoken was not very good. That's not very good politics.

F: That's not really considered ethical, I don't think.

S: No, I don't think it is either.

F: President Johnson came up here for the Campobello dedication, didn't he?

S: I think he did. I think he did.

F: I think you rode up on Air Force One.

S: Yes, and he came up several times. Let me see, we went up along the coast in a boat, as I recall.

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- F: Yes, you went on the Northampton from Portland.
- S: Yes, yes.
- F: You flew up to Brunswick Air Force Base.
- S: Yes, that's right.
- F: Got off at Lewiston, I think, and went down to Portland.
- S: There's a milkshake place just out of Brunswick in Topsham, across the river, that still has "LBJ ate here." It still has it, in great big letters.
- F: Did he stop for a milkshake?
- S: Stopped for an ice cream cone. I was in the car with them, and yes, sir, he stopped and got out and got his ice cream cone.
- F: The Secret Service is so, I guess necessarily, careful about what a president eats and drinks and so forth. What do they do in a case like that?
- S: I don't know. I was shocked at what he did on that trip and was not approving it. I saw him over in Lewiston, for instance. He kept putting his hand out, and he'd get out of the car. His hands were bleeding from scratches. People are rough at times like that.
- F: Their rings.
- S: Yes, and I didn't think that he should do it. I thought he was asking for trouble, and I so stated. I didn't get very far. (Laughter)
- F: What'd he do, just give you a grin?
- S: Just grinned at me and said he was in a campaign.
- F: Did he campaign much here in 1964?
- S: I don't recall that he did. No, I don't recall that he did.

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- F: That wouldn't have been a year you were running.
- S: No. I ran for President that year, you know.
- F: Right. Did he ever talk to you about that?
- S: No, I don't recall that he ever did.
- L: That's a bad chapter in the relationship; I think that probably was the worst. Senator Smith received the Minuteman Award from the Reserve Officers' Association in February of 1964.
- S: Oh, that's right, I'd forgotten that incident.
- L: Jake Carlton, who was the executive director of ROA, called and asked if President Johnson would come to the banquet and present the Minuteman Award to Senator Smith. As a backup, Senator Richard Russell had agreed to, in the event that anything happened that President Johnson couldn't do it. President Johnson agreed to make the presentation. I've forgotten who was--I think it was Ken O'Donnell--President's Johnson's appointments secretary.
- F: Probably, yes. He was at first.
- L: He was the one who passed the word on. The night of the banquet, no word came from the President. The President did not show up.
- F: Where was the banquet?
- L: It was at the Sheraton Park. President Johnson did not show up, sent no word; there was nothing said even after that. It was snowing that night, and Senator Russell, with his emphysema, was advised not to get out in that kind of weather, so he was not there. At the last minute Jake Carlton asked Senator Ralph Yarborough, who was a nice enough man but had no significance with Senator Smith, to make the

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presentation. It was considered by many people to be: LBJ had snubbed Margaret Chase Smith.

F: What do you think it was, bad staff work?

S: I don't see how you could take it otherwise, because Senator Russell said that he called the White House very late that afternoon and the President said not to worry, he would be there.

L: I don't know that he said the President did, but he said he was assured that the President would be there.

S: No, the White House.

F: You never got any word out of that?

L: No, nothing.

S: He never apologized to me, never mentioned it after that. He hurt my feelings.

L: Senator Russell told Senator Smith later he was shocked at it, and that had he had the slightest idea that the President would not show up, that despite the snow and despite his emphysema he would have been there to make the presentation to Senator Smith and would have been honored to do it.

S: In fact, when they first asked me if I would have any objection to the President, I said, "Of course not. Anyone would be charmed to have the President make the presentation." But I wished they wouldn't ask him, because he was so busy and had so many responsibilities, and Senator Russell and I had worked, as had Mr. Johnson and I, together for so many years. It would be, I thought, a courtesy to the President to have Senator Russell rather than Johnson.

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- F: I rather gather that Senator Russell got his feelings hurt toward Johnson toward the end of the relationship.
- S: It seemed that way, didn't it?
- F: Yes, do you have any insights on that?
- S: No, I do not. But they weren't as close.
- F: No, and so much of what Johnson was was due to Senator Russell.
- S: Rayburn and Russell really made Johnson what he was, plus Johnson's own ambition and [talent].
- F: Given the sort of sponsorship, he knew how to take it and run.
- S: Yes. I used to see Russell guide Johnson, very inconspicuously, but you could see it.
- F: Mainly to sort of tone him down?
- S: Yes, or keep him straight on parliamentary rule around the Senate.
- L: He sat right behind Lyndon Johnson on the Senate floor, and you could see him whispering to him.
- F: Explaining?
- S: Senator Russell was a great man.
- F: You got no sort of indication of interest one way or another in your presidential campaign?
- S: No, no. I don't think there's any question but what he was annoyed.
- F: Oh, you think so?
- S: I think he was annoyed at it.
- F: Well, of course he would like a 100 per cent vote.
- S: Oh, yes, he'd like to have had me out campaigning for him. (Laughter)
I don't blame him for that, I know the feeling.

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F: You supported him on the subject of rent supplements.

S: I don't recall.

F: Yes, you're on record. Did that cause you any problem up here, do you remember?

S: No, I didn't have problems with my votes up here. From the beginning in the House, I tried very hard to prepare the people for whatever might happen in a big issue. For instance, the Lend Lease issue-- well, extension of the draft was the first one, Lend-Lease and some of the rest of those: those were the issues that gave me this liberal label. Those were the issues that did it. But people in Maine who don't approve of my votes would shake their heads and say they couldn't understand why Margaret would vote that way, "But she felt that she was right." They'd rather have someone vote her convictions rather than trying to go along with the wind, as some of the members did. So I didn't have any trouble with that kind of thing. Oh, I got my usual run of mail, but it didn't cause me any trouble in the elections because people took me for what I was. I was very fortunate in that direction.

F: Incidentally, I don't know how many times President Johnson mentioned to me his warm affection for you.

S: Yes.

F: He thought you were one of the great ones.

S: Well, I think we got along. I think we were quite direct with each other. This was why this banquet that we've just been talking about was so shocking, because he wouldn't knowingly hurt my feelings. I

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never felt that he would. I had a big luncheon, in fact, I invited the entire Senate to lunch for Senator Aiken one noon and invited the President, not even feeling that he would come, but he was one of us at one time. He came and Mrs. Johnson came and the older daughter came, all came to the luncheon. I have pictures all over the place. Johnson came and added tremendously to the party and was always very, very kind and generous in his comments and remarks with respect to me. No, I think it was the relationship that I cherished and cherished very much, that was affection in the right way.

F: Right. When he came up here to Campobello, do you have any memory of his working with Prime Minister Lester Pearson of Canada, who was down for the ceremony also?

S: No, I don't have any. I was not close enough to them in that to know how far he went.

F: Well now, when you were on Air Force One, would he call you in and talk with you privately?

S: No, I don't remember. I never was on but . . .

F: Did you ever get down to the Ranch?

S: No. In fact, I never was in their home. I don't remember that I was ever invited to their home.

F: Texas missed a lot.

S: Well, thank you very much. I would like to have gone down, and it's strange because he and I were [friends]. But I think this is a part of perhaps my career, and showed that I was accepted as a senator and not as a socialite.

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F: There was some difficulty, partisanship, in the Kennedy Administration. They would release news of contracts and appointments in Maine through Senator Muskie and not notify your office.

S: That's right.

F: Did Johnson continue this practice?

S: I have to check with Bill on that. I remember when Eisenhower came in-- Bill, will you come in? I remember it was a big issue with us, and it's a long, long story. It's too long for your story today probably.

F: Well, no, not if you want to go into it.

S: Bill?

L: (From a distance). Be right there.

S: That was a very touchy subject. I was on the Defense Committee, worked very closely with Johnson on it. Muskie was not.

F: Right. They'd let a contract to E. W. Bliss down here in Portland for about a million and a half or something.

S: Yes, and they were giving these news releases to Muskie, saying that he had helped do this when actually there was a matter of a hospital over at the Dow Air Force Base at Bangor, and the hospital never would have been if I had not been on that committee and worked so hard. Yet when the release was given out, it was given out as though Muskie had done the whole thing. Of course I had to make a fight on it; I was not opposed to the administration making the releases if they wanted to, but not on the things that I had done.

L: But that was under Kennedy.

S: That's what he was saying. He wanted to know if Johnson continued

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that practice. I couldn't remember when that changed. Was it Eisenhower?

L: Eisenhower did not follow the practice. When Kennedy came in, he had the practice. Eisenhower had the practice of simultaneous notification of all members of the delegation. But Kennedy had an entirely different policy, and it extended essentially from Larry O'Brien, who was the assistant for congressional relations at the White House. Margaret Smith, as a member of the Armed Services Committee, in this particular instance had fought very hard to get authorization for the hospital at the Dow Air Force Base at Bangor, Maine. As a member of the Appropriations Committee she had fought very hard to get the appropriation for it. When the time came and the award was made for the contract, Margaret Smith did not learn of the award until forty-eight hours after Ed Muskie had announced it. All the newspaper readers--

F: She got to read it in the paper like everybody else.

L: --and television listeners knew of it forty-eight hours before Margaret Chase Smith did. She fired off a telegram to Kennedy on that and said, "Stop playing two-bit politics, and remember that you're not merely the head of the Democratic Party, you're the commander-in-chief of the armed forces. You have a responsibility to rise above the level of partisan politics." Larry O'Brien answered the letter and said they were quite sorry about any embarrassment, and that he wanted to have a thorough investigation made of the matter.

A year later their investigation had not been made, and they did

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same thing all over again. This was under the Johnson Administration. It was so bad that a fellow named Bill Beecher, as I recall, of the Wall Street Journal, who later became under Nixon or Ford assistant secretary of defense on public relations or deputy assistant on public information, wrote a story called "The Guided Leak." The policy was quite clear to do this sort of thing. Apparently at the time of this second one a year later, when Margaret Smith then said to O'Brien, "What did you do on the investigation you promised a year ago, I've heard nothing on it?" he tried to lay it off to Elvis Starr, who was the secretary of the army at the time, on the basis that since the army engineers were the construction people rather than the air force that it was under his jurisdiction. Then when Senator Smith wrote Starr about it, in great indignation he said, "Mr. O'Brien, nor anyone else, ever mentioned the matter."

F: It really led back to the White House.

L: Right. It was obvious sophistry on it, blatant. O'Brien wrote in his book that a White House meeting McNamara said, "We've got to do something about Senator Margaret Chase Smith. She's on my back, and she's putting the heat on, and we've got to get away from this policy of favoritism on announcements." O'Brien wrote, as I recall, in his book that President Johnson was considerably receptive to this, but that he, O'Brien, raised such objections to it from the standpoint of the benefit to the party and the party faithful that President Johnson overruled McNamara and they continued that policy. It was a very interesting thing, because there were indications that at times

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President Johnson really had no use for Ed Muskie. He blew hot and cold on it. Bobby Baker once told me of the rather colorful language in which then-Senator Johnson characterized Ed Muskie.

S: Well, Ed Muskie was not very kind to Johnson.

L: Oh no, he defied him right at the beginning. But Lyndon Johnson built Ed Muskie up.

S: He sure did.

F: He moved some people around to get some choice committee assignments for him.

L: He certainly did. Well, I could give you a story of my own later on, when Johnson had me down at the White House to a state dinner in September, 1968, and asked me what I thought of the campaign.

F: I think that would be worth having. Why don't you give it now? You're here.

L: You want it now?

F: Yes.

L: Well, I'll try to shorten this.

F: Not for me.

L: In Lyndon Johnson's last six months as President he had me at the White House five times. Now, I'm only coolie help.

S: Oh, don't call yourself that, Bill.

L: And you know, this is a little unusual. He had me to a state dinner. He had me down to a private meeting one day at noon, asked me to do a confidential mission for him, which I did subsequently. He had me down for evening entertainment. He had me down and gave me a special

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spot for a reception for Carl Vinson on the occasion of his, I think, eightieth or eighty-first or eighty-second birthday. I've forgotten the other occasion. Now in contrast to that, he had a party for Carl Vinson, a reception, earlier, to which Senator Smith was invited, and I drove her to the White House and waited outside in the car for her. She wasn't gone more than five or ten minutes. She was back, and she was fuming. I said, "What's the [matter]?" She said, "I am really shocked." She said, "You should see the staff people there at that reception that Lyndon Johnson is giving for Carl Vinson, staff people who never knew Carl Vinson or had any contact with him."

F: He had the current staff?

L: Current and past. She said, "And yet you were the closest person to Carl Vinson, as far as staff people are concerned, because you were general counsel to the House Naval Affairs Committee. Lyndon Johnson knew that, but he has snubbed you in not inviting you there." So I don't know what happened to Lyndon Johnson in his last six months to have me there that many times.

But on this particular occasion I was leaving about midnight. The Marine Corps had done its marching and done its thing, and I was walking over to my car in the Ellipse there, the circle. One of the young hostesses came up to me and said, "General Lewis, you're not leaving, are you?" I said, "Yes. It is the proper time to leave, and I'm sure that the President and Mrs. Johnson would like to get some rest." She said, "Well, the President wants to see you before you leave. Will you come with me?" So I followed her and we went

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up the steps to the Truman Balcony. He was talking to four or five people there, and as we came up he saw me. He motioned for me to come over, and he excused himself from the people. [He] took hold of my arm and said, "Let's go over here," and walked over.

He said, "Bill, before you leave I wanted to ask you what you thought of the campaign." I said, "Well, Mr. President, after all, I'm a Republican." He said, "Yes, I know, but you can be brutally frank, and I want you to be brutally frank." I said, "Mr. President, I don't like to say this, but you've asked me to." I said, "You made Hubert Humphrey vice president, you selected him. You obtained the Democratic nomination for president for Hubert Humphrey. You built Ed Muskie up to the detriment of Margaret Chase Smith back in Maine." I said, "You are the one who really made Ed Muskie a vice presidential nominee." I said, "If I were you, I would be very unhappy at the present time, because the way in which your two beneficiaries are conducting the campaign, it is giving aid and comfort to the enemy in Vietnam. It is prolonging this warfare over there because of the feeling that the North Vietnamese have that if the Democrats win the election, they'll be [easier to deal with]." (End of Tape 1 of 1, Side 1)

Tape 1 of 1, Side 2

L: I'll go back a little bit. I said, "Mr. President, if I were you I would be very unhappy with the type of campaign that your two beneficiaries are conducting, the two men that you made, the two men that you literally put on the Democratic ticket." I said, "In the first

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place, they are conducting a campaign in the manner to give aid and comfort to the enemy and prolonging the situation over there, because the enemy thinks that if the Democrats win they'll be easier to deal with. So they are delaying their decision until after the election to see what happens, and that is to the detriment of our country. I would think you would be very unhappy with that." I said, "In the second place, personally, I would think you would be very unhappy because both Hubert Humphrey and Ed Muskie are running away from you as fast and as hard as they can. They have not openly disavowed you, but they have made it clear that they want to get rid of you as much as they can with the voters." I said, "An example of that is what Hubert Humphrey said,"--I believe it was in Detroit--"and you had to subsequently come out and correct Hubert on it." I said, "Now that they've gained everything they can from you, they are trying to disassociate themselves from you."

I stopped at that point, and he said, "Those are pretty harsh words, Bill." I said, "Well, you asked me, Mr. President." He said, "Well, I guess I shouldn't comment, but the only thing I can say to you is that I am deeply hurt by what they're doing." I said, "Thank you for a pleasant evening, Mr. President," and I left. I don't recall that I talked with Lyndon Johnson after that. That was the last contact I ever had with him.

F: He was pretty sober and straightforward?

L: To go back as far as I am personally concerned, back when I was general counsel of the House Naval Affairs Committee, Lyndon Johnson

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had his own little subcommittee and his own corps of boys. It was John Connally, there was--

F: Jake Pickle.

L: --and Don Cook, who later became vice chairman of the SEC and then president of American Power and Light. Senator Smith was a member of the subcommittee, was on an investigation of the naval industrial establishment.

S: That's what you were asking.

L: He had his own more or less autonomous unit and his staff. I was general counsel of the committee, and my boss was Carl Vinson. One afternoon around three-thirty, four, quarter to four, I received a call from Lyndon Johnson. He said, "Bill, would you come up to the office." So I went up to the office. He said, "Bill, I have been observing you very closely, I have decided to make you an LBJ boy." He said, "Now, I've got a top spot in Justice set up for you. I put Tom Clark where he is down in Justice, and I have told him that I want you for a top spot. It's all set." I said, "Well, Mr. Johnson, I don't know what to say. This is a great honor, but little did I ever dream of anything like this."

F: You were not a candidate for it.

L: I could tell he was taken aback on it. I said, "Have you said anything to Mr. Vinson about this?" He said, "No, it's just between you and me." I said, "Well, I don't know what to say." He said, "Bill, you come back to the office here tomorrow afternoon at this same time." So I went back, and he said to me, "Bill, are you all set to go?" I said, "I don't know how to say this, Mr. Johnson, but I was

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senior trial attorney at the Securities and Exchange Commission before I went on active duty for the Navy, I've had this experience up here on the Hill, I like the legislative side better than I do the executive side, and I feel an obligation to Mr. Vinson that if I did do this I would be walking out on him. I've said nothing to him about it, and I shall not say anything to him about it."

He looked at me, and he was burned up. He glared at me, and he said, "Remember, you had your chance." I sat there, and there was a dead silence. I said, "Thank you, Mr. Johnson," and I left. From that time on, all during the time that he was in the House, later in the Senate, and when he was vice president--and this would happen quite often in the corridor off of the Senate floor where the wire services machines were, the staff members, certain ones, were permitted privileges of coming in there; I'd be looking at it, and he'd come up--if we talked say for as long as a couple of minutes the conversation always ended in one way. It was Lyndon Johnson leaning over, looking at me and almost rubbing his nose against my nose--

F: Oh, he could get close.

L: --and thumping me on the chest and saying, "Remember, Bill, you had your chance." He never got over the fact that I said no.

F: He remembered that for twenty-five years.

S: He was pretty much of a dictator. He wanted his way, but still he was a good leader.

L: In 1966, when I made major general, he called the office, called me. I'd just come in from the Air University at Maxwell [Air Force Base]

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because I'd been down there for a week at General Officers' Conference. He said, "Bill, this is the President." I said, "Mr. President, this is a great honor." He said, "Bill, I've got a piece of paper here in front of me, and I'm delighted to sign it, making you a major general." He said, "Old Howard Cannon is in that same group, and I'm signing it for him. I want you to know, I want to congratulate you and tell you how happy I am that you're a two-star general now. It's a great pleasure for me to sign the confirmation and that was it. I told Senator Smith about it, and I said, "You know, really, this was Lyndon Johnson's way of saying to me, 'Bill, I could've stopped it if I'd wanted to, and don't you forget it!'" (Laughter)

F: You can never forget where your manna comes from.

S: He was a great man, a great guy.

F: Did he persuade you to change from Military Affairs to the Space Committee?

S: No, I did not. I stayed on Armed Services. I stayed on. That was an interesting one, because I had stayed on Government Operations Committee. Going back a bit, in 1950, of course, when I made my speech, I antagonized some people. In 1950, when Richard Nixon was elected to the Senate, I was I think second ranking on the Government Operations Committee on the Republican side. McClellan was chairman and McCarthy was vice-chairman, and they are ranking. Of course, McCarthy had been wanting to get rid of me, and I didn't move. Much as I hated serving on that committee with him, I still stayed right there.

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F: Was McCarthy personally ingratiating in his manner towards you?

S: No. Of course, there are several stories on that that I can give you, but no, we never had any, any very

F: Not much warmth.

S: No, no warmth at all. When the new committees were set up, in an unprecedented way I was dropped from the investigating committee and Nixon was placed in that position.

F: Really.

S: The people have forgotten that, but of course you don't drop anyone from a committee without notifying them. I was not dropped from the full committee, but I was dropped from the Investigating Committee. I took it to the committee and made quite a fight and thought that McClellan should intervene and say that this was against the rules and shouldn't be. But he didn't; he let McCarthy make his own assignments for the Republican side. So I stayed on the full committee just the same. Of course, McCarthy [said] to the press that he was promoting me by putting me on the reorganization subcommittee. But he was getting rid of me because he wanted Nixon, because he and Nixon were very close friends. I stayed on that committee until I went on the Space Committee, and it was then that Bridges came to me and asked me to change. I have always said that Joe McCarthy made me a member of the Space Committee because had I left the Government Operations [Committee] I would not have been in a position to move.

F: Was there a feeling in the early days of the Space Committee that this was just a little bit far-out and celestial?

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S: Oh yes, not so much in the committee as there was in the Senate. There still is, I think.

F: I remember a Herblock cartoon that goes back there, you know. The Democratic candidates are all lining up for 1960. It shows Kennedy identifying with labor and Humphrey identifying with civil rights and so on, and here is Lyndon Johnson out here with space, which is nowhere, you know.

S: (Laughter) Outer space.

F: Nobody can argue.

S: That's right, in outer space. They said he was doing it to show off. Well, he was disturbed, I think. Sputnik had some of us pretty much upset because we had always been the first in everything, and all of a sudden the Soviet Union comes in and shows us up because we had been so slow and dragging our feet so long.

F: Did you get involved in this missile gap controversy that Kennedy charged in the 1960 campaign and later proved to be a spurious issue?

S: Yes, I did. I think I made a speech on that. I think I made a couple of speeches on that.

F: Did you have the facts at the time, or was this a matter of misinformation, or what?

S: I don't recall that. I'd have to think about that before I give you a story on that because I've kind of forgotten.

F: Well now, after Johnson became president you were in a particularly powerful position to assist, with your position on Defense and your position in Appropriations which, you know, dovetail.

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S: Yes.

F: Did the White House sort of court you?

S: No, I think they pretty much took me for granted. I think this was why I didn't get the releases, because they knew I felt so strongly about both issues that they didn't have to [court me].

F: "We can depend on her."

S: "We can depend on her. We don't have to worry about her." I think that was their attitude. This is why I made such a fight, because I didn't feel that I could vote against the defense or the space. I felt so strongly about both, and ordinarily I would say, "Well, that's all right, I'll just vote against you." There were some people on the committee who followed me pretty well. Through the years I had not great influence, but a little influence.

F: Was John Tower on that committee with you?

S: Yes.

F: Did you get to know him fairly well?

S: Officially; not socially, no.

F: I've known him since he was a college professor, and we've always stayed in touch.

S: I think he's number two on that committee now. He's for Texas.

F: Oh yes, indeed, very much.

S: About the only time he ever showed was when it was something for Texas.

F: When this matter of placing the Manned Space Center came up, was that placed in Houston, do you think, largely because of Johnson's influence

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or Albert Thomas'?

S: I think it was a combination. I think it was a combination. I think they were both powerful men, and I would give Johnson the greater credit for it.

F: Do you run into a conflict between your views on Defense and your views on appropriations? To some extent, you know, in Defense your problem is to get money and spend it; in Appropriations it is to hold it within certain lines. I wondered if those two contradict each other at times.

S: You mean between the Armed Services authorizations and the Defense appropriations?

F: Right.

S: I think there is a great need for more coordination between those two committees. In fact, I'm not sure but what we were wrong when we set up the separate committee. The Armed Services used to authorize and appropriate, as you remember, and then they went over to Appropriations. It's too easy now for people to vote for authorizations and then show how economy-minded they are by voting against appropriations, and I did not approve of this.

F: Did Johnson give you pretty good support on your military authorizations?

S: Yes, oh yes. I think he did, as I recall.

F: Within the committee, was there much talk between members of the way the war was going in Vietnam?

S: Yes. Not among the members so much--
(Interruption)

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F: We were talking about Defense and about Appropriations, and we were talking about Vietnam.

S: Oh, yes. I think this is the sad part, in my opinion, of the Lyndon Johnson story. I talked with him in 1964; I think it was early in 1964. I talked with him personally, and then I talked with him through a speech in the Senate, on the Senate floor. I tried to get him to declare a limited national emergency, which would include wage and price controls and rationing if it was necessary, to call out the Reserve and the National Guard instead of relying on the draft, and [I] couldn't seem to do it. I couldn't seem to get anywhere with him on it. I think that he had changed from the bold leader that he was to the reluctant leader. I think that perhaps it was because he had never been quite sure--as vice president, of course, he didn't have much of a chance with Kennedy, and as president he kept the Kennedy people around. He seemed to be trying to emulate Kennedy rather than being Johnson. What I was hoping he would do, and what I was trying to indicate in my talk, was that he should be the same old Lyndon Johnson and do these things, get the war over with rather than prolonging it, because it would simply undermine his credibility and would weaken him.

F: You made a speech, I remember, in late spring or early summer of 1965, approving what he had done in the Dominican crisis.

S: Yes. He did a good job. He did an excellent job.

F: Decisive.

S: Yes, very, very, and that was Lyndon Johnson. But Vietnam was not

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Lyndon Johnson. In my opinion Lyndon Johnson was not himself in that.

F: Did he ever talk about his Vietnam problems?

S: No, other than in 1964 when I talked with him. I was unhappy about it and I'm still unhappy about it, because I think that he took a lot of blame and was unhappy himself for that which he could have changed. Had he gone along, as I had hoped he would, he would have gone down in history as a great president and as one of the greatest Presidents, I think. As it is he was a good president, but not as good a president as he was majority leader. In my opinion he was the majority leader of all times, but he was not the president of all times. He could have been, because he had the background, he had the experience, he had the temperament, and I think he had the backing if he had taken a bold stand.

F: Do you think that his commitment to civil rights was real, profound?

S: Yes, I do. I've always felt that it was. I think there's a great question on it in many people's minds, but no, I think he was sincere in that.

F: How about women's rights?

S: I think he was sincere in his feeling about women. I think he's shown that. Again, I think his wife and daughters had a great--I think Mrs. Johnson had a great influence over him.

F: Incidentally, when General Lewis was talking, I wondered: did you ever have any opportunity to observe his relationship with Senator Nixon? They weren't close, I don't think.

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- S: No. No, they weren't close. They were entirely different men. No, I don't know that I ever did. I don't recall. Of course, I worked so much more closely with Johnson than I ever did with Nixon, because Nixon and I have little in common other than being Republicans.
- F: Yes. (Laughter). You lived under the same roof but in different parts of the house.
- S: That's exactly right. I'm not sure we're in the house at all. (Laughter).
- F: Did Johnson ever say anything to you about his not running again? Were you surprised by that March 31 speech when he said he would not run?
- S: No, I was not surprised. He did not talk with me at all about it. In fact, I had very little talk with him after he was president.
- F: I was doing some research on you, and I noticed that mainly when you went to the White House it was for congressional briefings of leader groups.
- S: Bipartisan, yes. I was chairman of the All Republican Senatorial Conference, so I went to all of the Republican conferences. As the ranking member of Armed Services I went to all of the Johnson bipartisan sessions, because Stennis would go as the chairman. They never omitted me. They always called me on those meetings. But other than that, I saw very little of him.
- F: I gather that President Johnson's relationship with Senator Stennis was quite good.
- S: Apparently it was, better than I perhaps would have thought it would

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have been. Of course, he and Russell were so close for a long time.

F: At the bipartisan meetings, did Johnson tend to introduce the speaker who was going to give the briefing for the day and then step aside, or did he definitely run it?

S: Oh, Johnson ran it. I used to come back from the two meetings, the bipartisan meetings and then later the Republican meetings, and I would tell Bill Lewis "They certainly are different!" When we went down to Johnson's meetings we listened to Mr. Johnson. When we went to Nixon's meetings we listened to Nixon briefly and then to whatever program he had set up. But Johnson controlled those meetings. They were very pleasant. I enjoyed them very much.

F: Was Johnson active in trying to promote the nuclear submarine?

S: Yes. Yes, I think he was.

F: Was that much of a chore?

S: Oh, yes. Yes, yes. Oh, yes, I was always a great nuclear submarine [advocate]. I was for the nuclear aircraft carrier and stayed with it.

F: Where did the opposition come from, cost, or fear of any kind of nuclear involvement or what?

S: I think it was cost, largely; I think just cost. I know the year that there was such great question about a nuclear carrier Admiral Beakley came in to see me. We were friends of long standing. I told him that I couldn't understand the Navy giving in to conventional aircraft carriers when I knew that they wanted nuclear. At that time, as I recall, he said, "The facts are that we would like the nuclear carrier, but what we want is enough carriers to make a showing over

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in the Far East. If we can have a few conventional carriers, it would make a greater show than one nuclear one."

F: Do you think Johnson grasped the sort of total defense posture of what made a balanced defense group and a balanced attack group and so on, or was that sort of beyond his depth?

S: No, I don't think so. I think he was very knowledgeable on defense. I don't know that I ever heard that he wasn't. No, I think that was his field. Of course, I served with him on many of those subcommittees on Appropriations. I think we served on pretty much the same subcommittees.

F: You've been quite interested through the years in the direct primary. Did you ever have any relationship with Johnson on that?

S: No, I never did.

F: Did he ever tease you or otherwise refer to the fact that you were not a great one for raising money for your own campaigns?

S: No, he never did. (Laughter). He used to joke about [how] he wished he could get by as I did in Maine. Bill mentioned it while he was talking. I remember Lyndon Johnson would always say, "Now, Margaret, remember, I'll do whatever you want me to do in Maine. I'll either come in against you or for you. But you can be damned sure I won't come in unless you want me to." In fact, I think during my many years until my last campaign, through my many years, the only Democratic senator who ever came into Maine against me was first, Jack Kennedy, and second, Ted Kennedy--the only Democratic senators that ever came in here against me. Jack Kennedy, the year he was so

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ill, was convalescing over in the Bar Harbor area. He got up from his sick bed and did a half-hour telecast against me, and that was the first time that any senator had come in here to oppose me.

F: On what grounds, just the fact that you were a Republican?

S: I guess so. I'll never know.

F: He just did it? You were responsible for delaying the actor Jimmy Stewart's promotion to brigadier general by a year. Did Johnson pay any attention to that kind of thing?

S: Oh, yes, he was very active on committees. He was very active on the committee. I think that they didn't think much of what I was doing to Jimmy Stewart. They thought it was more personal. It was not personal, because I was friendly with Jimmy Stewart.

F: He just hadn't qualified.

S: Yes, but he hadn't qualified. I didn't see how I could possibly make the grade, but I kept at it and Johnson supported me; in fact, everybody supported me on the committee on the final vote. That was unfortunate, very unfortunate, except I think it perhaps had its value. It pointed up some things about the Reserve. You know, it was surprising how few of those committee members knew and understood the Reserve. Of course Johnson did because he was one, but, for instance, Senator Stennis knew very little about the Reserve. I'm not sure that Russell did. I don't know. I was a great Reserve advocate and always have been.

F: How did you get interested in the Reserve?

S: I presume through Bill Lewis. I was always interested in defense. I

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voted for the extension of the draft, and [I was] on the Naval Affairs Committee. I knew his parents; his father was very active in the Reserve. The more I could see of it, the more I could see the good from it. I still think I was right.

F: Did Senator Goldwater give you pretty good support?

S: Yes and no.

F: I'll have to tell you something about that man when I interviewed him, because it's interesting.

S: He's a charming man, but he was not too dependable. His letter to me on a proxy would be one thing, and his vote would be another.

F: Did you ever observe President Johnson's relationship with Senator [Everett] Dirksen?

S: Yes, I think they got along beautifully. I think that was the best team that the Senate has had for a good many years. They were both able to give and take.

F: A couple of real professionals.

S: Ah, they certainly were. They could get whatever they wanted around there. When they got their heads together, you might as well give up. No, they were a great team.

F: You read in the paper about this terrific White House pressure on such-and-such a measure. Did you get White House pressure, or was this just a matter of reminding you that the White House was interested in the vote?

S: I never got much pressure. I got very little pressure.

F: Well now, do you think you were unique?

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S: Yes, from the conversation, I would say I was unique. But people soon learned that pressure was not the way to convince me. I was always pleased to talk with them. I would listen, and I could gain a great deal. If someone came in with the facts about an issue that I was not completely knowledgeable about, I felt that in a half-an-hour, three-quarters of an hour, I could get a great deal more than I could in weeks of study. But I didn't get pressure. Oh, I did at the beginning, but I didn't get pressure from the pressure groups outside, very, very, very little pressure. They'd come in. Some people would say, "Let her alone because. . . ."

F: Once they saw you were decisive and had your own mind.

S: Yes. One thing was that I did not announce my intentions ahead of time. I didn't for various reasons, because on two or three occasions I could see that I was wrong and changed my mind before I voted. Had I committed myself to a numbered bill I couldn't change, or I felt that I couldn't. Also, the minute I made a commitment and it was announced the opposition would start pressuring, and so I didn't. I didn't get much [pressure]. There was a great deal of talk about the Nixon pressure on me in the Haynesworth and Carswell cases and with the SST and some of those things, but it was not what I call pressure. Maybe I didn't recognize pressure.

F: There was no great pressure--of course it never got to the full Senate--on something like Fortas' appointment to the Supreme Court under Johnson?

S: Not with me, no.

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- F: Can you think of anything else we ought to talk about?
- S: No.
- F: It's been a remarkable career you've had.
- S: Yes, it's been an interesting one, hasn't it? I've been very fortunate.
- F: I think the country has been fortunate.
- S: Well, thank you very much. Someone asked me about it the other day and said didn't I often think about what a great woman I was, and I said no, had I stopped to think that I was great I wouldn't have done the things that I did.
- F: Right.
- S: Of course, I often give Bill Lewis credit for much of what I've done. He'd always say, "Well, I helped, but it took your courage and your position to follow through."
- F: I think you can give credit to someone like that. On the other hand, there is bound to be something about someone like you that makes him stay with you.
- S: That's what he said. He said he could see from the beginning that I had strong convictions and that I would follow through on anything that I started. This was something that he liked and he felt that he could put the time into. I think that's what kept him with me. I don't know why a man of his background would have stayed otherwise.
- F: Well, thank you very much.
- S: You're entirely welcome. Thank you.
(Interruption).
- L: His basic weaknesses as president were the opposite of his basic

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strengths as Senate majority leader.

S: I think that I pointed that up.

F: His indecisiveness the Senator pointed out in Vietnam was--

L: Well, I'm more blunt. I call it lack of political courage. As a reservist I wasn't anxious to be called up, but the Reserve and the National Guard should have been called up before the draftees were poured in there. But Lyndon Johnson simply didn't have the political courage, because the Reserve and the National Guard to a great extent were community leaders.

F: Right.

L: He feared it politically, no question in my mind. He didn't have the courage to do the hard things that should have been done. I'm sure Senator Smith probably said that. His failure to do that, and also I would fault him, well, in living under the shadow of Jack Kennedy. He should have cleaned house of all the Kennedy people. They were knifing him in the back. I had so much more admiration for Lyndon Johnson than [for] Jack Kennedy. I think Jack Kennedy was a disaster to our country. And Bobby.

But I also fault Lyndon Johnson with respect to the United States Senate. The only basic thing that I fault him with respect to the United States Senate was when he broke down the system by appointing freshman senators to key committees, Gale McGee to the Appropriations Committee right at the outset. That planted the seed for the situation we have now where literally there is anarchy within the Congress.. More in the House than in the Senate, but there has been a milder

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form of anarchy in the Senate for some time. Because the freshman senators come in, they did not work and earn their way, and Lyndon Johnson started this by giving them these key committee assignments at the outset instead of making them prove themselves. They can fault the seniority system all they want to, but by it you have to work and prove yourself on it. And they don't do enough. What you have now in the Senate is too much a bunch of moonlighters. They don't have to work hard on it. They don't have to prove themselves.

F: They've got the power without the responsibility.

L: They've got the power without the responsibility, and instead they go out and moonlight. Ed Muskie made eighty-five thousand dollars one year on lecture fees in 1969. In Mike Mansfield you've got a nice, sweet guy, but he's a sorry leader. Lyndon Johnson is responsible for Mike Mansfield simply because he chose Mike Mansfield as his whip because he knew Mike would not be ambitious and wouldn't give him any trouble.

F: Johnson paid for it, because Mike didn't always give him the support that [he wanted].

L: That's right. So I fault Lyndon Johnson greatly. That's the only thing I fault him with in the Senate.

F: Thank you.

[End of Tape 1 of 1, Side 2, and Interview I]

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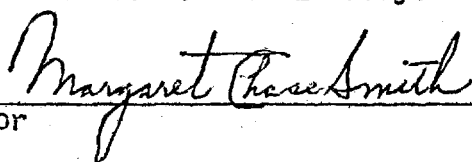
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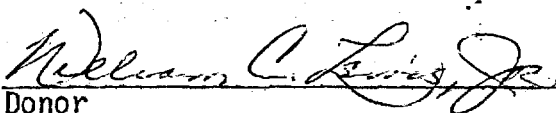
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