INTERVIEW I

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INTERVIEWEE: CHRISTOPHER WEEKS

INTERVIEWER: MICHAEL L. GILLETTE

PLACE: Cosmos Club, Washington, D.C.

Tape 1 of 2

G: Mr. Weeks, let's start with your involvement in the War on Poverty Task Force. I'd like to ask you to trace your earlier involvement in the Peace Corps development and indicate how you got into Sargent Shriver's orbit to begin with.

W: Well, at the time President Kennedy was elected in November of 1960 I was working in the International Division of the Budget Bureau as what is called the senior examiner on foreign aid and international economic programs and questions and issues. Clearly one of the major issues that President Kennedy wanted to deal with when he came in were issues of international relationships, and particularly issues of foreign aid, and along with those of course was the Peace Corps.

Because of my position I was involved very, very early on in a series of meetings that Sargent Shriver was asked to chair beginning in December of 1960 which were held up at the Mayflower Hotel, in which people were brought in from all over the country to try to talk about what the Peace Corps should be and how it should be organized, what it should do and so on. Also, since the Budget Bureau had at that time a responsibility for assisting in the preparation of legislation and the clearance of that legislation before it

went to Congress, I was part of the group that drafted the Peace Corps legislation. During that time I also sat in fairly frequently on meetings having to do with various policy issues, how the Peace Corps should operate. The major issues [were] whether it should be a part of the State Department or whether it should be independent. Questions like that were major policy questions at the time.

Following the establishment of the Peace Corps I continued to review its budget and also to deal with a number of policy questions that came up during this time, most of which put me in direct contact with either Sargent Shriver or Bill Moyers, Bill Josephson, who was then the legal counsel for the Peace Corps, Warren Wiggins, who was the director of program operations, other people who worked at the top of the Peace Corps.

I remember one of those [questions] specifically was when the Peace Corps came through in their first budget with a plan for where they wanted to put volunteers around the world. It appeared very likely that their operations, if they went according to plan, would put very, very few volunteers in Latin America, and yet President Kennedy had just made his speech about the Alliance for Progress. So I sort of tagged that and got that up to Dave Bell, who was then at the Budget Bureau, and I said, "Hey, I think there's an issue here about whether the Peace Corps is going in the same direction as the President." Dave Bell went over and talked to President Kennedy, and within about two hours Kennedy had called Shriver and there was a total redirection of the geographical plans for

distributing Peace Corps volunteers very early on. So it was being involved in a way in roles like that.

Over the next couple of years while on overseas trips for a variety of reasons I had an opportunity to see Peace Corps volunteers and I would always come back and talk with Shriver about how they were doing. I was also pulled in to talk with various people at the Peace Corps about organizational issues and budget issues and things like that. So I had a fairly close working relationship from 1961 through 1964 with Sargent Shriver and particularly with many of the people who were involved in the Peace Corps.

In 1962 I was selected from the Budget Bureau to attend Harvard for a year, so that there was a year's interstice there while I was at Harvard on a government-sponsored fellowship. I returned from that in June of 1963 to my former position in the Budget Bureau, and was working in the Budget Bureau at the time that the first stages of the War on Poverty were starting to fall into place. Being in the Budget Bureau, of course, I also had fairly good connections with the folks at the Council of Economic Advisers. The Budget Bureau kind of sits atop government operations and you're able to be on top of a great deal of information about what's going on in government that is not available to most people at lower levels. You're in on a lot of pipelines that are not available in the public newspapers, for example.

G: The Budget Bureau was charged with the task of sifting through a lot of different proposals for a war on poverty from various agencies

and departments and coming up with a community action program concept. Were you at all involved in this stage?

W: No, I wasn't involved in it at that time although I was generally aware that something like that was going on. And the Budget Bureau did play a role. It's my understanding--even though I was not involved, but from talking with a number of people--that the Council of Economic Advisers and the early people that had been involved in trying to pull together the skeleton of a possible poverty program beginning in December of 1963 had essentially gone out to the various government agencies that might be involved--Health, Education and Welfare, Labor, Commerce, through the Economic Development Administration and the Appalachia program, the Justice Department through its juvenile delinquency program and so on--and had asked for suggestions about what might be done to put together a package for a war on poverty. And [they] had gotten back what typically comes back when you go out to a series of government agencies like that, which is pretty much a rehash of a lot of program ideas that have been kicking around for a long time and have never really gotten very far, often for rather good reasons. In other words, what came back--and I'm going partly here on hearsay and partly on pretty good first-hand information--was a mishmash of ideas that when Walter Heller and the others who were involved at that time looked at them they sort of said, "Ick. This doesn't seem to fit together and doesn't seem to be going anywhere."

To step back from that a little bit, again partly through hearsay, my understanding is that after President Kennedy's assassination, several weeks later when Walter Heller and others were sitting down with President Johnson to try to bring him up to date on the entire scheme of government operations and the various issues that had been going on, one of Walter's points to the President was that President Kennedy had been intrigued with Michael Harrington's book and had asked people to do some head scratching about what might be done on the issue of poverty. And Walter essentially said, "Mr. President, what do you think about this? Is this something that you want to see move ahead, or is this something that we should just put on the shelf for a while?" My understanding is that the President said, "No, this is something I would like to see move ahead and I would appreciate it if you would go ahead and start pulling together some things that might take place."

My understanding is that that conversation took place in early December of 1963 or two or three weeks after the assassination, and that the process for going out to various agencies that I've just described, getting some ideas, coming back in, took place in December and early January. It was in early to mid-January that the President and his various advisers, particularly the various advisers, sat there and looked at what they had and decided that it was pretty much a mess of pottage and that it looked as though there was going to have to be some more specific leadership for this whole thing if

it was ever going to get anywhere. And that it was out of that [the task force was formed].

Again, I don't have firsthand knowledge of specific meetings or telephone calls, but I was always very, very aware that Bill Moyers was a crucial link between the President and Sargent Shriver, Bill Moyers having always been very close to President Johnson, coming from Texas and having worked with the President when he was in the Senate, and Bill Moyers also having worked very closely with Sargent Shriver in the Peace Corps, and because he was simply very, very good, having been elevated to deputy director of the Peace Corps. At that time I think he was the youngest individual ever to receive an appointment which required congressional approval. He was under thirty; I think he was twenty-seven or twenty-eight at the time, something like that.

But at any case, I think it doesn't take much to assume that Bill Moyers must have been a very important link in both talking with the President. Because Bill Moyers right after the assassination had gone over to the White House, yet obviously still had close relationships with Shriver and the Peace Corps. Somehow Bill Moyers was part of the linkage that resulted in the President turning to Shriver, who was overseas on some kind of international trip in January. As I understand it, when he came back he had a message that said the President would like to see him. This was in the first couple of days of February, I've forgotten the exact date. That

essentially the President asked Shriver to take charge of pulling together something called the War on Poverty.

G: When did you become involved in it? When did Shriver call you?

W: Well, that appointment by the President was announced in the newspapers. I almost immediately contacted Shriver because of my working relationships with him, and I said, "Look, if there's any way that you think I might be helpful to you, I'd be glad to. I'd just like to let you know I would like to throw my oar in with you if I could be helpful to you in some way." I guess part of that was more than anything else a feeling that I liked to be involved in major new initiatives. I had been involved in a lot of them since Kennedy had come in. Not only the Peace Corps, but I had been involved in the task force that rewrote the foreign aid act and had been pretty much involved in a lot of major policy questions of one sort or another dealing with international financial institutions. While I didn't have a deep background on the domestic side, I was just very excited by the people who were involved and saw an opportunity and decided to see whether there was anything there for me to pursue.

I guess I made that call on a Thursday or a Friday and Shriver said to come out to his house on Sunday, which I did, which would have been I think the second Sunday in February, whatever that is. It would have been about the ninth or tenth, something like that. Because I had been involved in pulling together the congressional presentation for the Peace Corps, which meant not simply writing the legislation but preparing a document which described the program and

how it would operate and what it would do in layman's terms rather than in the complex legalese that's required of a piece of legislation, he said, "We need someone to come over here and put together a congressional presentation and to try to structure this program and to try to prepare the initial budget for it and to do all the things that are involved in deciding and writing the program and preparing the budget." That meeting occurred on Sunday and I reported to work at nine o'clock on Monday morning at Shriver's office and called the Budget Bureau and told them what had happened. I mean, I obviously knew that the Budget Bureau wasn't going to put up a big fight because this was the President's priority, it wasn't some lower priority.

By chance I had happened to complete negotiations to hire Annie Oppenheimer, who is now Ann Hamilton, to come to work in the Budget Bureau for me, who had worked in the Peace Corps from the very, very early days. She was supposed to report for work that same Monday morning at the Budget Bureau, and she just stayed where she was over in the Peace Corps building, which was the building at the corner of Connecticut and H Street, I guess, known as the Maiatico Building, M-A-I-A-T-I-C-O. She stayed there and continued for about a year as-- well, the two of us really worked pretty closely as the program development team. We worked very, very closely together during that year, I would say as much almost as alter egos than as one being the superior, one being the inferior or the assistant or something like that. I guess in a sense I was perhaps more equal than Ann was, but

I certainly didn't regard the working relationship as being superior and deputy or assistant, but rather as both of us trying to figure out how on earth we were going to get done three or four times as much work as two people could possibly do.

G: Was there anyone else from the Budget Bureau that was involved with the task force?

W: In the early days of the task force there were a couple of other people involved. There was a fellow named Bill Cannon who was, I think, a sociologist who then worked in the part of the Budget Bureau that handled the Labor Department, but particularly the employment aspects I believe. But Bill was a thinker about community planning and community development, and he was quite deeply involved in thinking about the community action piece of the program in the early days. Although I must say that his involvement was primarily as I guess what I would call a thinker and a theorizer rather than from a practical standpoint in terms of literally writing the legislation or figuring out precisely how the program would work. Of course, later on after Dave Bell left as director of the Budget Bureau and was succeeded by Kermit Gordon, Kermit played a very extensive role. But that really came to play somewhat later on rather than right at the front end.

G: What about Charlie Schultze? Was he involved in the task force?

W: Charlie Schultze was also involved. But as soon as the task force started to get organized--and certainly by mid-February there were a fairly substantial number of people working on the task force, and

the task force had essentially taken the bit in its teeth by mid-February. I would say that the role of the Budget Bureau from that time on, particularly during the preparation of the legislation, was fairly peripheral and that the major job was done by the task force itself. The Budget Bureau was trying hard to look over our shoulders and see what was going on.

G: Did the Budget Bureau have a philosophy or a prevailing view of what the War on Poverty should be?

W: I don't think anybody to begin with had a philosophy that was firmly agreed upon as to what the War on Poverty should be. As a matter of fact, the fact that the legislation was an omnibus piece of legislation with a variety of different pieces patched together--

(Interruption)

The fact that the legislation was an omnibus legislation comprised of a lot of different pieces I think reflected the fact that even well into the poverty program, while there was a sense that poverty was very, very complex and presented many different faces in many different parts of the country, that there was nothing that really I would call as an essential philosophy of an approach to poverty other than that it had to be varied and have a lot of different tools which it could apply in different situations, if that's a philosophy. I'm not sure that it is.

G: It's my understanding that when the task force was first assembled the only set idea in the package was community action, and that these

others were contributed as the task force went into operation. Of course, maybe by February 20. . . .

W: Well, certainly by February 20 three or four other pieces had been put into action. Certainly community action, which evolved directly out of the Justice Department's juvenile delinquency program, came to the forefront very, very quickly for two reasons: one was because the head of the Justice Department was the President's brother, Bobby Kennedy. And Dave Hackett and Dick Boone, who were then the chief organizers of the juvenile delinquency program, were both very aggressive proponents of expanding the JD program into something much bigger. Dave Hackett was also influential because he was Bobby Kennedy's, I think, roommate in college, and there was a very close personal relationship there. So there's no question that the community action program was one of the things that clearly was going to be one of the major components right from the beginning.

G: Was there any tie between the community action program and the Peace Corps experience?

W: Certainly to me there wasn't any great visible tie between the Peace Corps and the community action experience. There might have been some very subtle relationships. A number of the Peace Corps volunteers overseas were involved in doing something called community development work. This was primarily in smaller villages in the boondocks in underdeveloped countries. Frankly I don't think that there are very many parallels between that and carrying out community action programs where most of the dollars were in fact being spent

through rather complex and sophisticated organizations in big American cities.

G: So the precedent that the task force people were looking at was not so much the Peace Corps but the President's Commission on--

W: On Juvenile Delinquency. Yes, absolutely. And the specific theses that came from the juvenile delinquency program were first that the local organizations, concerned in the initial instance of course with juvenile delinquency, had to get together. The juvenile delinquency program found that the employment agencies and the probation agencies and the police agencies and so on in cities quite frequently were completely separate and not only didn't work together but were sometimes warring with each other to see who could get responsibility. Before a juvenile delinquency grant could be made, the groups had to get together and form an umbrella organization to demonstrate that they would in some way work cooperatively together to eliminate juvenile delinquency, supposedly. That thesis, the umbrella thesis, a collective action thesis, carried specifically over into community action.

The maximum feasible participation thesis was a little less present in the juvenile delinquency program and came more out of the specific feelings of Dick Boone and others in the government at the time--Sandy Kravitz, Sanford Kravitz, being another major thinker--who felt that one of the major problems with government programs oriented toward the poor, urban redevelopment and so on, was that most of the planning had been done by agencies in Washington or by

city bureaucrats sitting in city offices. That in a lot of cases things had been done that simply didn't make sense in light of what was going on in a particular neighborhood. Everything was characteristic of planning from the top down, and they felt that there should also be a process for planning from the bottom up, which obviously calls for something called maximum feasible participation.

G: Did they have in mind any formula, like one-third, one-third and one-third?

W: No. As a matter of fact, one of the things that surprised me was that in the very earliest days of the planning and in the writing of the legislation--I'm talking about the crash six-weeks period between approximately the second week of February and the end of March. As I recall the congressional presentation document was dated April 3 or something like that, or March 23. I think it was the last week of March. There was a six-week period there. During that period there the phrase "maximum feasible participation" was put in the legislation with very, very little thought about what it really meant, about how it would be implemented, about what its impact might be, and nobody really focused, in my opinion, on that particular question as being a significant issue. It was rather put in there more because it seemed like something that was logical to do, but there was not a tremendous amount of forethought. As a matter of fact, in the process of the hearings, while there were occasional questions about what it meant and so on, but in the initial hearings on the legislation itself you will find that the maximum feasible participation

question was really not a major focus during the first year of hearings. Now during the second year of hearings when OEO started to try to implement it, everybody all of a sudden realized that they had a bear by the tail and that here was a real hot one. But nobody in the early days really focused on that and got in there.

G: Well, if not the term "maximum feasible participation," did the task force focus in any depth on the question of involvement of the poor and the planning and implementation of the program?

W: No, not really. Not in the early days. Certainly not in my area. Now I can't say that I believe that at that time Dick Boone was involved in thinking about how community action would operate and what its policies would be, and I'm sure that in Dick Boone's thinking and in his documentation that question would have been addressed. But from the point of view of myself, that is preparing a package of programs that in some way interlock or made sense together and that had budget numbers that in some sense related to some set of priorities, the question of maximum feasible participation really never arose.

G: What did it mean to you at the time?

W: It really didn't mean anything to me at the time, during the first six weeks. Because it would have had the same meaning that thirty or forty or fifty other phrases that were stuck in the legislation meant at the time. When you're putting together a very, very complex program and a very complex piece of legislation in a period of six weeks, with a lot of part-time people coming from other agencies, many of

whom are representing particular, personal or agency viewpoints rather than War on Poverty viewpoints--we had maybe eight or ten people who were really working on the poverty program full-time during this time and who had the fundamental substantive responsibility for trying to package this whole thing together. Furthermore, during this time the leadership of course was being put together in trying to figure out a way to work with one another, because you had a bunch of people who had not worked closely together before.

It was my view that during the early days, particularly during the six-weeks process, Shriver was very much concerned about what I would call the political problems of trying to sell a program on Capitol Hill. He was spending quite a bit of time talking with congressmen and senators trying to figure out what a package would have to contain in order to be able to get through up there. Of course as various proposals from the poverty program leaked out from time to time, congressmen, senators and one person or another would call up and yell and scream about some aspect of it and Shriver would immediately react to that. Shriver was not at all involved in any of the substance of putting the program together. Under Shriver you had Adam Yarmolinsky, who was the primary person who was involved in trying to put this kind of [program together] and trying to pay attention to what I would call interior substance as opposed to political salability.

G: I want to go into some detail on how the task force operated here, but as long as we've been talking about community action let me go

ahead and ask you a few more questions there. Did the task force assess these antecedents of community action, the Justice Department programs, the HARYOU program, the MAP program? Did you look at how these programs had worked and whether or not they had been successful?

W: Well, the quick and brief answer is no, because nobody had time to really sit down and do any kind of sensible, logical thinking. For example, I know that the first eight weeks after I went to work on the poverty program, I had dinner at home twice. Seven days a week I worked from nine in the morning until midnight or one o'clock, seven days a week. So did Annie Oppenheimer. So did Frank Mankiewicz and so did Adam Yarmolinsky and the other folks who were involved at the top in trying to put this thing together.

One other thing that happened, of course, was that even during these very, very early days there was a great deal of bureaucratic or inter-agency pushing and shoving. I mean very clearly one thing that was happening was the juvenile delinquency program was looking at this as a way in which they could run something that would have a budget of eight or ten or fifteen times as much as the juvenile delinquency program and could have a much broader application.

G: Did they see it as being run in the Justice Department?

W: Not necessarily in the Justice Department, but they very clearly saw the juvenile delinquency agencies that had been set up, like the ones that you mentioned, like HARYOU, like the ABCD in Boston, and so on, as being <u>the</u> community action groups. This was a very, very early and major issue, and I can clearly remember, it must have been about

the end of March when I went over to meet with Dave Hackett and Dick Boone, along with myself, Annie Oppenheimer, and a guy I had working with me that I had borrowed from the State Department named Barry Passett, to try to come up with examples of community action programs that could be mounted.

It was one of those meetings in which there is a surface agenda and then there is a subsurface agenda. I remember very clearly that as we walked out of the room we all looked at each other and we said, "We lost both the surface agenda and the subsurface agenda." Because what was going on was that the juvenile delinquency program at that time was trying to create a role for itself as the community action agency in each of the cities in which these organizations had been set up. They were doing that by trying to give as illustrations of community action programs that might be done what ABCD was doing in Boston, what HARYOU-Act was doing in New York, and what such and such other agency was doing in Chicago and so on.

So the bureaucratic rivalry was very, very evident right from the beginning. And that was clear not only on community action and juvenile delinquency--because of course the other side of the juvenile delinquency claim was if the community action program really got under way, there would hardly be any use for a juvenile delinquency program. It would be kind of subsumed in the whole thing. So that they were looking at this not only as a matter of being able to expand their purview, but also as the alternative then simply being absorbed into something larger and losing their role.

G: So how was this resolved? Did you agree that they would. . . ?

W: It was essentially resolved because as Jack Conway came in and took over--Jack Conway was a powerful and influential person, and he was powerful enough and influential enough to be able to bring Dick Boone over. Dick Boone came over as one of the principal thinkers and planners, director of policy and programming for community action. That happened with Jack Conway's coming over. What essentially happened was that the juvenile delinquency program thinking was subsumed into community action thinking by subsuming the main thinkers of the juvenile delinquency program. So what could have started out as a rivalry in fact turned out not to be so much of a rivalry simply because--

G: Of course, it could mean now that the rivalry was internal rather than a rivalry between bureaucracies.

W: Yes, but I think Jack Conway and Dick Boone thought along similar lines, so that the conflict never really came to a head, if there was a conflict, simply because the guy who was selected, had community action, was very receptive to Dick Boone's thinking.

G: But did Sargent Shriver share the same philosophies of community action that Dick Boone did?

W: I would say that Dick Boone was very, very smart but also a very, very crafty thinker and activator in government, and Dick Boone was careful not to raise with Shriver issues in which he felt that he would get the wrong answer from Shriver. Again, during this time period and even later on Shriver's role on what I would call substantive

issues in the poverty program was quite minimal. As a matter of fact, the whole poverty program, one of the things that affected it--and this was not so much community action but the program as a whole--was that Yarmolinsky between mid-February and mid-April was the primary person who was focusing on what I would call program issues, substantive issues. Then I believe it was in mid-April that Adam had an extremely serious automobile accident and was out of commission for a couple of months, and during that time we were essentially operating headless.

G: You made that point in your book, that there was a failure of communication between the highest levels and the people trying to make the decisions.

W: You also have to realize that simply logistically the problems of operating were enormous. When I reported for work in early February I went to work in an office on the fifth floor of the Maiatico Building. Within two or three weeks I moved to the twelfth floor in a completely new set of offices. Within about sixty days after that we moved to the Court of Claims Building. That would have been in roughly June, I would guess. By the end of July the Court of Claims Building became--well, they were building a building next door to it and one of the pile drivers hit one of the foundation stones of the Court of Claims Building and knocked a big crack in the wall, and it's a hundred-and-thirty-year-old building I guess. It was structurally unsound. We had parts of the ceiling falling down, and the ceilings in that building are a good thirty feet high, and we had two-hundred-pound chunks falling on the

floor. So at one point in time we were told to evacuate the building, because it was dangerous. And it was.

And we moved from the Court of Claims Building to an old hospital building about two blocks away. So in a period of three or four months, on top of the tremendous substantive problems we had to deal with, we were moving continuously, and every time we moved we had a complete new set of telephone numbers so you couldn't even call anybody. Every time you moved you couldn't call anybody, because you didn't know what anybody's telephone number was. That meant, for example, that you couldn't get stationery, you couldn't get paper clips, you couldn't get any of the other kinds of things either because they weren't available. You know, we had to raid other agencies in order to get operating supplies. You couldn't even figure out what the telephone number was of the guy to call and get stationery and things like that. So just the simple problems of day-to-day functioning were pretty enormous, aside from the pretty awesome problems of trying to put the overall program package together.

But I would say that once Jack Conway came aboard that the planning for the community action program essentially took off on its own. And that from that point on, we, that is the program development group which was kind of sitting on top of everything, basically did not give primary attention to what I would call planning the major issues of community action. We left those to Dick Boone and Jack Conway and so on in working out the major problems of that. We, of course, had a lot of meetings on budget. The way we would get

involved then in program issues was through the preparation of testimony before House and Senate committees and responding to questions that came out in testimony, that is, responding to the major issues that were raised by various congressmen.

G: In the files there are a lot of questions that you drafted for Shriver to answer.

W: That's right. And we did a lot of the typical kinds of things. The role that we would play with respect to community action would be to try to go over the legislation and try to foresee the kinds of questions that would be asked and then to either prepare a response ourselves or to get to Dick Boone or to Jack Conway and find out what the right response would be to a particular question. One of those questions obviously was maximum feasible participation: What does this mean and how will it operate and so on? The other kinds of questions were things like: Does the federal government now have the right to bypass local government and to select a community action agency in which local government hasn't been involved? All sorts of questions like that.

G: What was the response to that? I've seen that question in there, but in your own mind, what did you feel?

W: Well, at that time there was a fairly pat response and that was that local government had to be involved in selecting the community action program and therefore there was no question that the local government could be bypassed. In fact, in a lot of areas, particularly in the South in the early days, and later on in the North even in big cities

in later days, that came to be a much more complex question. One of the major questions where this arose was Fayette County, Tennessee, where the local government wanted to establish a community action organization that was quite clearly a representation of the old style, white-dominated, very, very poor, substantially black county. In that area the blacks were politically well organized and they established a rival community action proposal. Therefore you had two proposals in front of you, one specifically that was not local government, but that obviously had maximum feasible participation; one that was local government, but that had only superficial feasible participation. And you had a very, very difficult choice between the two. I don't know exactly what happened in that case, but as an example that is a very specific one which I remember, which made some decisions quite difficult.

G: Did Sargent Shriver favor community action right off the bat? There's some suggestion that Robert Kennedy persuaded Shriver to favor the program.

W: I would say that Shriver specifically was suspicious of community action from the beginning.

G: Why? Do you recall anything in particular that would lead you to believe that?

W: Oh, yes. For one thing, Shriver is a doer. He's a man who likes to be able to say, "This is what I'm going to do," and to be able to document numbers to say that he's done it. I don't want to say that he just is a bean counter, but he likes to see things get done. He

was always suspicious of community action because he viewed it as something which could achieve results only very slowly over a long period of time, because it clearly was dealing with at least some basic social changes, and these are not things that occur quickly. This in turn made him interested in the Job Corps and in the volunteer program which became VISTA. He viewed the Job Corps as being extremely important, again, not because of its substance but because it was the only way in which he felt within two or three or four months we could get a lot of people involved and document impact and numbers and show at least some results in terms of people being directly involved and things happening that people could go and look at and touch and see.

It's another example of why I say that Shriver's specific impact in the early days was more oriented towards the overall presentation of the program and how it would sell politically and how it would sell to the American public, rather than to its internal operating characteristics. Now later on, beginning in about August or September, with a great deal of pushing and shoving from me and four or five other people, we started to get Shriver much more deeply involved in the operating program. This was after the legislation had passed and we had to set up a going program, and we had about a million issues, I mean a million things on which to make decisions. And we pulled Shriver into involvement in that, literally kicking and screaming, because he is not a man who likes to be involved in day-to-day operating administrative decisions. I don't want to say day-to-day

because we were setting up things like the selection process for the Job Corps and how it would work. But he did get involved in that, and he played a major role later on in some of these questions and in questions about how to handle specific operating problems in Community Action as they arose.

But in the early days I think it's important to point out he was running the Peace Corps. He was traveling rather extensively overseas. I know that he was overseas in January for a couple of weeks. I know that in approximately May he was overseas for another week or ten days, at a time when Yarmolinsky was in the hospital. I remember because we were going back for a second round of hearings before the House Education and Labor Committee, and he had just flown in the previous night from Belgium I think. I think he had been over there to receive an award of some sort. We were trying to brief him on the way up in the car on everything that had gone on, and he was really angry because we hadn't resolved all the issues in the legislation. And we said, "For Christ's sake, Sarge, you're dealing with a church-state issue, with every inter-agency rivalry question that there is in the federal government and so on, and you don't solve these things in three or four or five weeks!"

G: Was he also spending a lot of time up on the Hill?

W: He was spending some time up on the Hill. He was spending a lot of time on the phone talking with congressmen and senators about specific issues that arose, and he had a big impact in some areas there. I'll use one that applies to the Job Corps as an example. One of the

earliest proposals for the Job Corps was that it would be run primarily by the Defense Department, and that we would use the army to set up training camps and we would use military bulldozers and spades and shovels and drill presses and so on as the equipment, and we would use the army training manuals, and that this was an effective way to move. In other words, there was a great deal of precedent for that. When the Civilian Conservation Corps was organized in 1933 it was organized by the military, and it was organized with astounding speed after the legislation was passed. If my memory serves me correctly the legislation was passed about the third week in March of 1933, and I think by the second or third week in April there were already ten or twenty thousand people in CCC camps, and by the end of June there were already a couple of hundred thousand people in Civilian Conservation Corps camps across the countryside. So within three months you had [a] tremendous number of people involved.

Shriver's thinking was that this is what the Job Corps can do, this is something that we can do to make a big impact quickly. There were a couple of newspaper articles very early on that said to the effect that it is rumored that part of the new poverty program will have the Defense Department running training camps and so on. I would say that there was a rain of telephone calls to the President and to Shriver on this question, and even more so because Adam Yarmolinsky, who had come to us from the Defense Department, even intensified this. By certainly sometime during the second week of February the decision was made that the Defense Department would not be involved in any way

in running the Job Corps, that this would have to be a completely separate operation.

G: Was this something that was decided at the White House level, or was this something that was decided within the task force?

W: I can't say that from any firsthand knowledge, or even secondhand knowledge. I don't know whether it was the President who got this and called Shriver, or whether they both got it and talked on the phone or precisely what happened, but I know that the decision was I guess what I would call a political decision with a small p. Because what even the President's best friends were telling him in Congress was that "If you come up here with a poverty bill that has the Defense Department getting a big piece of it, you don't have a chance in the world."

G: I gather a lot of the old-line liberals were opposed to this concept. They didn't want a military tone to the [program].

W: That's right. That's right. I would say that the new liberals, the old liberals--you would have been hard put to find anybody who wanted to see the military involved in the poverty program, particularly in the Job Corps aspect, which was the place where their capabilities could have been most directly employed.

Let's go back to community action, though, because there's another question that arose very early on there that was an intriguing one and that got a lot more attention than maximum feasible participation of the poor, and that was the church-state question. The question specifically was, "Would we make grants to religious organizations?"

Because obviously there are Jewish organizations, Catholic organizations, Protestant organizations and all sorts of organizations who would be delighted to be able to get poverty program funds to run day-care centers, to do all sorts of things. This sprang off all sorts of side issues: Would we rent space in churches or synagogues? Could overall community action organizations use religious organizations as delegate agencies? I remember very clearly that the legislation simply fuzzed this issue specifically, and this was one of the major questions that came up in the first day of hearings when--

G: [Anthony] Celebrezze was really hit with that.

W: That's right. When Mayor Celebrezze, who has a very short fuse, started to get questioned during his testimony about how they would operate I guess it was Title V, the work-study program, but got into broader questions of the church-state issue. Obviously he's an Italian-Catholic mayor. I've forgotten which congressman it was.

G: Goodell, I think.

W: Goodell. Goodell. I will say this, I think a match of wits between Goodell and Celebrezze leaves Goodell on the winning side by a large margin. Charlie Goodell was a very bright congressman.

G: [Willard] Wirtz seems to have fared much better in those hearings on the same questions.

W: Yes, well, Wirtz has a brilliant mind. His testimony before the House Education and Labor Committee on all sorts of questions was just a terrific testimony. I remember at one point in time one of the Republicans asked Wirtz a question about the Job Corps and whether

there wasn't something that was basically wrong about taking young men out of their homes and putting them in camps. Wirtz' question, well, he said, "Don't you realize that that is specifically what Plato proposed in the Republic as the ideal way to organize young men into the kind of strength that's needed in order to defend the country?" I mean, the poor guy just sat there--the questioner just sat back in his chair and kept his mouth shut after that. He was a very intimidating testifier in the sense that his answers are so good that it discourages probing.

G: They seemed to have treated him with a lot more deference than they did Celebrezze.

W: Oh, yes. Yes. Celebrezze, you have a guy with a quick temper who you can bait pretty easily and get him to blow off.

G: On church and state, was there in some of the government education programs a formula that you could apply?

W: No. No, as a matter of fact, at the time we really didn't have a good answer for the whole church-state question. The answer evolved out of approving specific applications for the Community Action Program over time. I can remember one of the first things that Shriver wanted publicized, that one of the very first Community Action grants was to a Jewish group to run a program for Spanish-American kids in a Protestant church in a white Catholic neighborhood or something like that. He said, "If you want to talk about church-state issues, this is what it's all about." Well, it was one of Shriver's wonderful ways of answering an issue with a specific case

which tended to block further questioning, but the answer that he gave really was not an answer to the issue in a broad sense. And in a broad sense there really is not [an answer]. The church-state question is so involved and complex that it's not a question which in any sense you can answer definitively. It's one which you deal with over time in all its variations.

G: But wasn't the formula or something along the lines of nonsecular activities as long as it's been--

W: Yes. Yes. It was very clear that we would not make a grant directly to a religious organization. The whole question was, "Well, then, what is the role of religious organizations under community action programs?" When the Head Start program started, this became even more poignant because most or a great many day-care centers are run either in churches or by religious organizations or in some way under religious affiliations. It comes down to all the questions of: If you're going to run a day-care center in a Catholic church do you have to get them to take down all the Christs that are hanging on all the walls of the building? It gets really convoluted very quickly when you get to the particulars.

G: Another issue was the issue of family planning and whether or not community action programs should give out birth control information, et cetera? Do you recall how that was handled?

W: It never came up to my knowledge in the very early days, particularly--

G: Well, these are hearings. I mean, it seems like it came up once or twice in the hearings.

W: It may have, but it certainly never arose in my memory as a major or significant issue.

G: Did you see the Community Action Program as a way to bypass segregated structures in the South?

W: I'll give you two answers. First, the answer at the time was that it was very clear that in a program which was to operate in big cities, small cities, counties and rural areas through a whole variety of different local political entities ranging all the way from mayors, to county commissions, to township boards of supervisors, to county supervisors, and in a tremendous variety of different situations, you obviously had to have an extremely flexible instrument. And Community Action was thought of as an extremely flexible instrument which could be used in a variety of different ways in a variety of different situations.

I think looking back what one can also say is that certainly one of the problems and contradictions of the War on Poverty, most basic contradictions . . . and I remember Shriver's opening day testimony--I don't want to pin this on Shriver personally, but the testimony said, "We have the resources and the know-how to deal with poverty. We only have to have the resolve to use them." In fact, when we got down to trying to figure out what on earth to do, we found out that we didn't have the know-how. We didn't have the know-how in the Job Corps, and the Community Action Program was really not a program, it was a whole lot of local activities, many of those representing what somebody at the local level thought might be useful.

But there was no basic core of knowledge that suggested that we had the know-how in fact.

I'll give you one very specific example of that in the Job Corps, because in the Job Corps there were two theses about how to operate a training center from the point of view of integrating discipline and learning and so on. One was that the training should be highly disciplined and skill-centered, because the basic objective is to teach a kid a specific job skill and what he has to do in order to get a job and behave on the job. And if you do all of those things, then his social life and his emotional life and everything else will fall into line. That led to one rather specific pattern of organizing a Job Corps center, which is a fairly disciplined, structured skill-centered process.

There was an entirely different thesis that said that these kids can go out and get a job skill any time they want. What they lack are people skills. What they lack is the ability to get along in a world other than the little world which they grew up in. Therefore what they have to learn are all the skills that will help them become people who can operate in a completely different environment. You can't just focus on job skills, because the rest of those things simply won't follow along, and therefore we have to deal with the whole person. When you follow this thesis through to a program, it ends in a program which has a lot of motivation counseling, a lot of peer group interaction, and which has relatively little skills centered.

[It] focuses on reading, writing, arithmetic and broad personal development. Both of these theses were used for Job Corps centers.

G: Which one was the most effective?

W: I don't think anybody can answer that question. I'm not sure either one of them is the right answer. But all I'm saying is that if you compare the operation of those two theses to the initial statement that says that we have the know-how, what we found out in the Job Corps in my opinion is that the problem was far more complicated, and we had a great shortage of know-how as to exactly what to do with these kids once we got them into the program.

G: The other part of the testimony [was that] you had the resources. As it turned out, did you have the resources? Were you limited by the available fund? Would other programs or other ideas have been adopted if you'd had more money to deal with?

W: No. I honestly can't say that we were limited. I think, if anything in the first year or two, if there was a fault--and I guess perhaps I'm getting more conservative in my old age, I'm not in favor of demonstration programs because I don't think demonstration programs ever demonstrate anything. But the poverty program was put together so rapidly with so many basic questions of operation pushed under the rug during the time while it was being put together and gotten through Congress, and then after that there was such pressure to get the program into operation that the program suffered deeply from administrative problems. More money would have meant more administrative problems, not fewer. We were already at the outer edges of our ability

to use funds with any degree of intelligence. I don't mean to say that we were running around throwing money out the window, but hard-nosed budgeting was not a major factor in the early days of the poverty program.

G: Well, there was one suggestion that the task force considered and rejected a massive jobs program because of lack of funds. Do you think that's accurate?

W: I don't think that's accurate. I believe that that proposal was one that was made before the task force was organized and that it was one which was disposed of within the first couple of weeks after the task force was organized. Very, very quickly. And of course it would harken back to the question of the public works program similar to the thirties. It was certainly rejected to my knowledge, and in the meetings which I dealt with it was already water over the dam. From my knowledge one of the major reasons that it would have been rejected was that it didn't fit in with the kind of program that Shriver would have had in mind. I suspect, although I don't know this for sure, that perhaps Shriver and the President might have differed somewhat in this respect, because I think the President might very well have thought more kindly towards a public works kind of program than perhaps Shriver did. I believe the President at one time was associated with the public works operations in Texas.

G: NYA [National Youth Administration].

W. But I think that to Shriver a public works kind of program would have been anathema and completely out of tone with the kind of philosophy

that he would have wanted to display or to show as part of the poverty program. The kinds of things and the way Shriver impacted the early planning on the poverty program from a substantive point of view were the kinds of things where there would be no handouts, there would only be hand-ups, so to speak. We would concentrate heavily on education and training and community development and things that could be pointed to which would specifically help a person to get ahead. There would be no just temporary jobs for people to stand around leaning on shovels. I know exactly how he would have reacted to something like that. It would have been totally out of character for Shriver.

I'll give you a comparable [example] in the Peace Corps that gives you some of the kind of personality flavor in a way that Shriver would relate to this. I remember in the very early days of the Peace Corps while we were going over a budget--and part of the budget for the Peace Corps, of course, was how many cars they were going to buy. One thing the Budget Bureau does outside of missing all the major issues, you've got to focus on how many cars an agency buys. The Peace Corps budget office had prepared a budget for so many type-3 cars, which are regular cars for Peace Corps directors overseas, and then so many type-4 economy sedans for the staff overseas, and then a couple of jeepsters or something like that. And Shriver said, "No. There will be no cars bought in the Peace Corps. We will only buy jeeps. The Peace Corps director will drive a jeep overseas, or a land rover or some other kind of field vehicle. When he goes to visit

the prime minister, he will arrive in a jeep." And he was very, very conscious of things that set the tone for a program.

In the long run I think he was right in that, because doggone it, all that did make a difference overseas, and I saw it. He also said, "Peace Corps directors will not live in government furnished housing. They're going to go out and find their own house. They're not going to have an office in the Embassy; they're going to go out and find an office out in some other house somewhere, and it had better be a pretty modest building. None of this palacial places with fancy architecture and everything else like that. We're going to be an ordinary folks operation." He would have reacted precisely the same way to a kind of public works program.

G: There was also a proposed cigarette tax that was to finance a jobs program. Do you recall that?

W: Well, there were a lot of kind of screwy ideas that were floating around in the very earliest days, almost all of which got thrown out right away. We very quickly, in a matter of six weeks--it doesn't give you a lot of time to consider lots of alternatives and to carefully screen them. What you do is, basically you grab. What we did was we put together programs which seem to be oriented toward major groups or major pieces. We had one through the Farmers Home Administration for rural areas. We had the Community Action Program for cities. We had the Job Corps for high school dropouts. We had a work-study program through HEW. We had the VISTA program, the volunteer program. We had an SBA program which got thrown out in

terms of going through legislation, as I recall. Basically these were winnowed out very, very quickly. Most of the five weeks was spent on trying to figure out what on earth these were really going to be and how they were going to be run and in trying to come up with some sensible mixes between what the Office of Economic Opportunity was going to be and how it was going to operate and what programs it was going to operate and what programs other agencies were going to operate, in trying to resolve the inter-agency problems that resulted from a rather complex operating system.

G: What was the rush in getting the program developed and up to the Hill and set in motion?

W: If my legislative calendar is correct, there was an election. The Congress would have been adjourning in November of 1964, or December. So that quite clearly if something was going to be done in terms of a major piece of legislation, it had to be gotten in in the spring, because major legislation like this doesn't go through and go in in thirty or sixty days. As a matter of fact, it went in in late March. The first hearings were in April, I guess. And it was passed in the third week of August as I recall. Is that right, the third week?

G: I think it was early August, wasn't it?

W: Early August. August 9. Maybe it was August 9. Well, it was passed in August and we got our first appropriation in October. And even that was a pretty crash schedule because there was an awful lot of other very, very important legislation that was also going through. Certainly one of the motivators in this direction would have been

taking advantage of the feeling of the country following the President's assassination.

But there was a counter-balance to that, because the War on Poverty was really thought of as a Johnson program, not as a Kennedy program. Johnson was very conscious of the fact that all the legislation that was pending before Congress--all the major civil rights legislation, I've forgotten what the other major pieces of legislation [were]; I guess there was Appalachia, there was major tax reform legislation that was passed in June--was all clearly Kennedy legislation. There was nothing pending before Congress which had the Johnson imprimatur and which reflected something that President Johnson could say, "This is something that I did." So while certainly part of it would have been to take advantage of the mood of the Congress, a major piece of it was to establish an initiative which the President could clearly take credit for as a piece of legislation that he initiated as opposed to legislation that he inherited.

G: A couple more questions on community action: Did the task force visualize the conflict that would take place between residents of poverty neighborhoods and city officials and organization officials?

W. Yes. Certainly Dick Boone was well aware that this was an issue which was going to be a serious problem.

G: I mean, it was discussed in the task force.

W: To say that it was discussed in the task force, it very clearly was discussed within the Community Action group. And again, by the time Jack Conway came in--Jack Conway, Dick Boone, Sandy Kravitz and so

on--basically that group together with a couple of other guys from the JD program took over the planning for Community Action. The group that I ran, which was the program development group, the kind of umbrella group who was looking across the whole skein of programs, were not so much involved in the internal policy questions of the programs unless they became policy questions which were raised by the Hill and were raised in testimony. Then it became important to us, because we were also the group which was responsible for coordinating all the testimony and for dealing with all the questions having to do with revising the legislation in order to get it through. But the operating questions about maximum feasible participation of the poor, for example, were something which we were aware of, but weren't really dealing with because they were not legislative questions and we had so many other questions to deal with that dealt with the organization of the OEO as a whole and how it would be structured and what its relationships would be with all the other delegate agencies and so on, that we just didn't have time to deal with the internal questions.

You had three task forces operating at that time. You had the Job Corps task force under Vernon Alden; you had the Community Action task force under Jack Conway, and then you had the VISTA task force under Glen Olds. Also, we were also trying to keep track of what progress was being made by each one of these task forces. We were acting as the primary I guess what you would call management arm of the nascent OEO, whatever it was at that time.

Jack Conway was on full time and he was a very decisive, action-minded guy.

G: Was there organization structure here? Was Conway generally in charge of that subgroup?

W: Oh, yes. Conway was head of the Community Action task force and was clearly selected to be head of Community Action if he wanted it, when it became reality. He was the only one of those guys who was full time.

The Job Corps task force was an absolute disaster area because you had Vernon Alden, who Sarge picked because he was the head of a university and was a Harvard MBA, I guess, and he looked good and he presented well and he could talk. But Vernon Alden was an absolute disaster in terms of doing anything for the Job Corps.

G: Is that why he didn't stay on as head of the Job Corps?

W: He never had any intention of staying on from the beginning. He never really had any intention of being anything except a figurehead. He would show up on Saturday morning from time to time, but we couldn't even get him into town to attend meetings. To say that he was there 10 per cent of the time would have been very generous on his behalf. Even when he was there he was more interested in being interviewed and in being available for talking about things than he was with getting in there and wrestling with any of the basic program questions in the Job Corps. As a result the planning for the Job Corps was a disaster. It just floundered for about three or four or five months.

Beginning in April and May, the basic task forces, that is VISTA, the Job Corps and CAP, were in place and the assumption was that the

legislation was going to pass and that we had to organize these programs so that they could get going. The Job Corps was just a disaster area. Community Action took off like a bird, and they got their act together very quickly, although they're dealing with the most complex, from a policy point of view.

Glen Olds also didn't do very much for VISTA, but you had a guy named Glenn Ferguson who knew Shriver quite well and had worked in the Peace Corps, who in effect stepped in and fulfilled Glen Olds' role for the VISTA program fairly effectively, although I will also say that the VISTA program, compared to the other two operations, was also a piece of cake in terms of the planning for it. I mean, it was simply not that complex an operation. You already had the selection system for the Peace Corps and you could copy that and modify it somewhat. Other than that, what you had to do was basically go up and scare up a whole bunch of projects domestically, just like Peace Corps projects overseas. It was really not that tough.

G: Back to Community Action. Pat Moyniham asserts that after the legislation was submitted the original task force members returned to the various cabinet departments and the most forceful community action advocates sort of presided over a radicalization of Community Action. Did you observe a process such as this?

W: During the first five weeks of the poverty program there were a series of people involved who exited, one of whom was Pat Moynihan. From my observation, Pat had practically no influence on the poverty program. Pat's assignment was to prepare the President's transmittal

message that the President would use to transmit the legislation to Congress, which is supposed to be a major policy document, a document which sets the stage for why this legislation is needed, and then sets forth in some way the basic way in which it is going to operate. It is supposed to be a clear, concise message to Congress which is supposed to have an impact on the public as well. It was a very, very important piece because it would have been, again, the first major statement by Johnson representing a new initiative. And Pat's job was to write that. Helping him was Jim Sundquist. Jim Sundquist, a very interesting guy who then worked for the Agriculture Department, who again was more of a thinker. He was a guy who sort of sat on the side and kind of watched what was going on and contributed very intelligent critiques of what was going on. But he was not deeply involved in the planning and programming itself.

Anyway, the process of writing this draft message--I've forgotten, there were two or three other people who were involved at the time. Frank Mankiewicz was involved to some extent in that process.

G: How about John Kenneth Galbraith? Was he involved in that?

W: No. Not to my knowledge at all. I never saw him.

I'm trying to remember who else was involved in that message-writing process. Pat was the guy who was supposed to do it, and I remember that while we were writing the program document we kept waiting and waiting for a draft to issue from Moynihan. It didn't come and it didn't come and it didn't come. First we were supposed to send the presentation up the first weekend in March, and the

deadline for the President's transmittal message was February 28 or something like that.

Tape 2 of 2

W: Then after February 28 came and went and there was no draft, then it was March 4. Anyway, the deadline kept moving up and nothing came out. Then finally about the eighth or the tenth of March, about a sixty or a seventy-page document emerged and it was an absolute mess. Everybody looked at it and said, "Ugh!" Shriver looked at it and went right through the roof, because this was supposed to have represented at this time something like four weeks worth of work. And it was just a chaotic, absolutely chaotic thing.

So as a result Shriver sent the whole thing over to Bill Moyers, and I think, although I didn't see it, with a cover memo that said something to the effect that, "This looks pretty awful to me and I don't know what to do about it." Bill Moyers sent the whole thing over to Walter Heller, and Walter Heller then wrote the President's covering message with I think probably a few additions from Bill Moyers and Sarge Shriver. But Walter wrote it and Pat exited at that point in time. I would say that Pat's influence on the poverty program and its early development was essentially nil. He wrote a book about maximum feasible participation later on; he certainly was not the author of that phrase.

G: Who was the author, do you know?

W: Dick Boone.

(Interruption)

G: [I have] an indication that there was a rift between Moyniham and Wirtz at this point also. That Moynihan, charged with the responsibility of representing the Labor Department, did not do so adequately in Wirtz' view.

W: Well, I would say Wirtz' interests throughout the poverty program were protective of Labor Department interests. From what I saw, he regarded the whole OEO thesis as being a mistake to have a separate poverty agency. Wirtz' thesis from the beginning was that he may very well have an inter-agency committee on poverty which is composed of the cabinet heads, who have some kind of relationship with poverty programs--maybe they have some kind of coordinating and reporting responsibilities like that--but to have a separate agency to deal with poverty simply doesn't make any sense. And he was opposed from the beginning to the idea that OEO should operate the programs.

G: A lot of it was bureaucratic territoriality, too?

W: Now Moynihan when he was in the Labor Department operated essentially as a lone individual, too. He was not a manager of a large group of people or anything else like that. He was just like a staff adviser. I'm not taking a specific title in the Labor Department but I'm talking about the way that he operated; he operated as an independent counsel to Wirtz on policy problems and things like that. Moyniham operated as a thinker, not as a doer. But he really had practically no influence on what was happening.

G: There must have been some compromises made with Wirtz in order to have the program develop as it did with Neighborhood Youth Corps being run by Labor.

W: Oh, yes. There was considerable thought at the beginning to having the Neighborhood Youth Corps run by OEO, and it was a very, very specific compromise. This was one place where the Budget Bureau did become deeply involved because it is involved in questions of government organization: what programs should be delegated and what programs should not be delegated, and what responsibilities OEO should have for programs that were delegated, and what the specific operating relationships would be between those agencies. Part of that, of course, was sitting astride all the inter-agency bickering that was going on to see who was going to get what pieces of the pie. Quite clearly the Labor Department had to come out of the poverty program with some piece of the action. HEW was getting a work-study program, the Farmers Home Administration was getting something, SBA was getting something, the Commerce Department, EDA, I think was getting something or other. For the Labor Department not to get anything, first, would have raised all kinds of political problems in Congress, because the Labor Department has a lot of political support on Congress. You would have had Wirtz going right through the roof and going to the President obviously. He was already going to the President saying, "You know, this whole thing is a little kooky. Why don't you just make a committee up there instead of setting up a whole new agency?"

G: Did the President side with Shriver or Wirtz in these?

W: There was not so much an argument on that because when you came right down to it there really wasn't an option for the poverty program to run the Neighborhood Youth Corps. It would have created such a fracas at a time when we had plenty of other fracases going that we didn't need one, and it would have created a situation that clearly wouldn't have worked. It wouldn't have worked politically; it wouldn't have worked bureaucratically inside the government. So I regarded it as one of those things in which there's a fair amount of argument going along, but in which everybody knows what the answer is going to be if you really sit down and look at it and say, "Hey, are you really going to have a situation in which you have a poverty program in which the Labor Department has no role whatsoever?" That's silly.

G: Do you recall any particular meetings in which Shriver and Wirtz sat down and resolved something, or Shriver and Wirtz went to the President about something? I know that from the President's diary entries that they did go to the White House together on occasion.

W: There were meetings in about the first week of March. I was aware of what was going on, but I was not deeply involved. Wirtz had basically gone to the President and said, "Hey, this whole poverty thing is getting out of hand." And he said just what I said a few minutes ago, "What you really ought to do is maybe establish a coordinating committee or an overall cabinet committee for the poverty program or something like this. But this idea of setting up a separate agency and having them running programs is really off the

wall." The President and Shriver and Wirtz--but Shriver and Wirtz basically were called over to see the President to resolve that question. And I guess I would say if it was resolved in anybody's favor, it was resolved in Shriver's favor. That Shriver said, "Hey, look, Mr. President, you asked me to pull together a poverty program. A poverty program can't be just a cabinet committee or something like that if you want to be serious about it." And he's right.

Certainly one of the other things that ran through the poverty program was a basic feeling on Shriver's part that most government programs were not very effective, certainly, and that any program that worked through the existing agencies was bound to be suspect. He suspected the U.S. Employment Service and how effective it was working through all the state agencies. He suspected HEW and all these work-study programs working through state departments of education and so on. The story about grants from the Department of Education is that they leave the money on a stump and hope that somebody will pick it up who knows what they want to do with it. But Shriver is a person who is very much involved, and he wants to damn well make sure that if he's going to give some money to something that he's going to have control over whether it works or whether it doesn't work. And it's true, the U.S. Employment Service does not have very much control over state employment agencies. They basically give them a certain amount of money. Same thing in the Office of Education. Much of its operations through state agencies are controlled only by means of post audits, and they do not have extensive policy control

or management control, certainly at that time. I'm not trying to make a case of just how they operate today; I'm trying to make a case as to how they operated in 1964.

There was a rather strong feeling that not only must OEO operate some programs and must have a rather strong control over the delegated programs, but that the threat of establishing a new operating agency would have a stimulative effect on the existing agencies and get them to clean up and make their programs more effective in some way, the idea that a little competition certainly won't hurt in government operations as well as in private operations.

G: Let me ask you a little bit about the operation of the task force. You've talked about the three different groups, and the program development group. On any given day, how would the task force spend its day? Would it be conducted as a seminar, people discussing points and presenting position papers?

W: No. Most of the work during the first six weeks was carried out by a few individuals who worked full time, and a lot of people who floated in and floated out from time to time who critiqued or oversaw or reviewed work that was going on. The work of the few full-time individuals was brought together almost daily, but on a haphazard basis as to exactly when that would occur, primarily because the pressures on everybody's calendars were so extreme. And it was all coordinated by Yarmolinsky at that time. I mean Annie and I would go up to Adam's office. He was the one, for example, primarily who would say, "Okay, we need position papers on the following ten topics." He was the one

who would review how the preparation of the presentation was going. That would occur on literally almost a daily basis.

G: So he would assign the papers. Would he assign them directly to, say, Dick Boone on the one hand?

W: Pretty much. Pretty much, yes. But he used Ann Oppenheimer and myself as being the primary staff to review those. In other words, we operated I would say in a small sense just as the Budget Bureau operates for the President, in the sense that the heads of the agencies report directly to the President, but the Budget Bureau operating off to the side, is the President's main arm in reviewing their operations and critiquing them and trying to coordinate things. That's exactly the way we operated. We were Yarmolinsky's main arm in trying to not only prepare the presentation itself, but to try to critique what else was going on. When Dick Boone wrote a position paper, for example, on something or other, we would get it as well as Adam. If we didn't get it from Dick Boone, Adam would send us a copy of it and say, "Hey, what do you think of this?" So we were pretty much keyed in on everything that was going on outside of the [Hill]. We were not so much keyed in on what I would call the political wrangling that was going on.

G: On the Hill?

W: With the Hill. I wouldn't get telephone calls directly from the Hill myself. I would say less frequently than in other cases would I hear that Senator such-and-such or Congressman such-and-such had just called because he was all upset about this particular question.

Occasionally I would hear about that, but for the most part I was less involved in the direct political pipelines than I was in the substantive pipelines having to do with the program.

G: Now after these papers would be submitted and critiqued by you or Ann or Yarmolinsky, then what would happen? Would there be a general discussion of the material? What was the process at this point?

W: There wasn't any. Shriver really was trying to avoid becoming involved in the questions of how the poverty program was being developed. He looked at his role during the first four or five or six months as being to package the program and to get it through Congress. Once he got it passed he thought and I think wanted his role to come to an end. That was his job, was to get the legislation put together and to get it through Congress. So he really was not interested in daily or thrice weekly or weekly meetings to try to go over staff papers or anything else like that. You had a situation in which, particularly in those early days, there weren't so many people involved. We weren't a huge government agency. We had maybe a dozen people and we were all working our tails off. About nine or ten o'clock at night half the time we would go out for dinner together. We all knew pretty much what was going on, even though working under pretty horrendous circumstances. So that it wasn't one of those situations that requires complicated processes for keeping everybody informed and for deciding what is policy and what is not policy.

The only thing that we needed at that point in time was to get our act together so that when we testified before Congress we were

testifying consistently. Nobody felt--particularly during the first six or eight weeks--that we were really setting agency policy. What we were doing was trying to get a piece of legislation passed. Those are two different things. I'm not saying that they're completely unrelated. But they're not the same thing either.

G: Was there a drafting committee also that got hold of these papers and then hammered out specific titles?

W: There was. There was a legislative drafting group, which Norb Schlei was certainly the key figure initially in. He had four or five other people working with him. We were also key in drafting the legislation, because we were the ones who were really describing the programs. You had counsels from each of the various agencies that were also involved, and I can remember spending time running around to HEW and Labor and so on getting people to get stuff over to Norb Schlei and going over to see Norb. Norb was in the Justice Department, I guess.

And then there was a guy named Murray from San Francisco, a very bright lawyer who flew in from time to time and spent three or four days several times, who had an important role. I'm trying to remember his last name. Murray Schwartz[?] Does that name pick up anywhere?

G: Yes, there's a Schwartz.

W: The legislative drafting group and the program group worked very closely together, and in effect, if I remember correctly and I'm a little hazy here, the final draft of the legislation I think was finally prepared in our office. Certainly we had major roles in writing and drafting it, or rewriting major pieces of it.

G: Did the White House have any input, and if so, how?

W: Yes. There were several places where the White House had input. I remember Larry O'Brien was over several times talking with Shriver. I met Larry a couple of times, basically talking about legislative strategy, what had to be done in order to get a piece of legislation passed. Again, very little of program substance was dealt with within those conversations. But it was through that the idea [came up] that [for] the sponsor of the bill [it] would be wonderful to have a respected southern congressman--Phil Landrum--and it was out of that that Phil Landrum was approached and agreed. I think that was a wonderful choice, because I think Phil Landrum did a magnificent job basically in a not easy job. It's during the legislation through the House. It was always viewed that--well, there were different questions in the House and the Senate, as there always is. They approach legislation rather differently. But the House was always looked at as the crucial area, rather than the Senate, because the Senate will raise more problems of states' rights and the role of states and certain more broad, basic issues. But it was always regarded as pretty clear that the Senate would go for the legislation and would vote for it. We had the votes in the Senate, and the House was very, very close, as you know.

G: Was there a question at first about the committee process, whether or not since it did cut across the jurisdiction of a number of committees, whether it should go before a select committee rather than the House Labor Committee?

W: That's right. There was a considerable amount of discussion as to whether a new committee should be formed of some sort, or whether it should be joint between Health, Education and Labor on the House side as well as Agriculture. As I recall--again, I'm recalling from the cobwebs of my memory--Congressman [W. R.] Poage I think was pretty upset over the fact that this legislation which he reviewed as pretty influential would not come before his committee. He was on the Agriculture Committee, as I recall. And [I recall] that he had his nose considerably out of joint.

G: How did you resolve this problem?

W: I think this was resolved basically by Larry and Shriver and the President looking at the committee make-up and seeing Adam Clayton Powell, and looking at the committee make-up of that and knowing that Adam Clayton Powell had pretty good control over his committee and that Adam Clayton Powell would love this piece of legislation. And that that was the way to go.

G: Was Powell or someone on his staff brought in in the drafting process at all?

W: No. No. I would say there was essentially no involvement of anybody on the Hill in drafting. The first time we really started doing any Hill work was after we had already sent the yellow book up. Then we started our homework with the House Education and Labor Committee staff.

G: The yellow book was the large presentation, is that right?

W: Yes. Yes. It's the one that has the circle on the front that says "One Fifth of the Nation."

G: You were talking about sponsorship in the House. I was going to ask you about Senate sponsorship. Senator [Pat] McNamara I guess carried the bill there. Was anyone else approached first before McNamara? Say Lister Hill perhaps.

W: I don't know, but I think probably not. Lister Hill was not a friend of this legislation. I can't remember whether he voted for it or against it, but I do know that--if he voted for it, in the final analysis it was not because he was really in favor of it. On the other hand, Pat McNamara, it would have been right down his alley, and certainly in the Senate he was the chairman of the Senate Labor and Welfare Committee, so that it would have been a fairly obvious committee assignment there.

G: I have a lot of questions I want to ask on the legislative phase of the program, but a few more questions on the task force before we get to that. In fact, a lot more questions on the task force. Let me ask you about HEW and its role here. Did it have a well defined position within the task force?

W: No, it didn't at all. I would say in part because you had a fairly weak cabinet member, Mayor Celebrezze; in part because HEW tends to divide itself up into three large departments in any case. The primary way in which we were working with HEW was through a work-study program through the Office of Education. And that, again, of the nine programs that we were authorizing was one of the more simple ones to operate, and had fewer policy issues associated with it because the only way the Office of Education operates is through state agencies. There simply

weren't as many issues to deal with there, in part because of the stance of HEW itself. It didn't take the same kind of aggressive stance that Willard Wirtz did. And in part because of the way that it operates, which is much more on a hands-off basis.

G: Do you recall ever hearing that Celebrezze was threatening to resign if he didn't get to run the Manpower program?

W: No, I don't recall ever hearing that. I think if that threat were made I suspect the President would have let him.

G: Did the task force have an urban orientation? Did it have at all an anti-rural bias?

W: I don't think it had an anti-rural bias, and I don't think it had that for one reason, and that's Jim Sundquist. Because Jim Sundquist's background comes more from a rural orientation, although I don't want to plug him as simply a rural thinker. But at that time in particular his home base was the Agriculture Department, and it was more because of his thinking that the Farmers Home Administration programs were folded in. You also had the Appalachian programs, of course, which were also folded in, and Jim Sundquist had a fairly influential role, not in planning the specifics of those programs, but in pointing out that there had to be a rural component, that the concept of CAP fell apart when you got to rural counties basically. You don't have the sophisticated set of operating agencies.

G: How about the Attorney General? Did he have an active involvement at all?

W: I met with him twice during the process of pulling the program together. I'm trying to remember the specific issues. I can remember the instances because I was in his office both times.

G: Was Shriver with you or were you by yourself?

W: No, I can't remember whether Annie was with me. I think I was with Dick Boone and Dave Hackett. At the time, as I recall, what we were doing was reviewing final drafts of the legislation and going over issues in the legislation at the time. I honestly can't remember the specific issues. I think by that time most of the issues had been resolved and I was there primarily to say, "Hey, look, here it is." At that time we were operating by the hour in trying to get things done, so it was a question of running around things by hand and saying, "Here. Read it. If you've got a problem with it, let me know. Otherwise it's going to be set in concrete pretty soon."

G: Did he have any problems with it, do you know?

W: No. No. To the extent that we had I guess what I would call infighting, it was not with the Attorney General, Bobby Kennedy, but it was with Dave Hackett and Dick Boone at the time when they were looking--and Sandy Kravitz, all of whom came out of the juvenile delinquency program. Dave Hackett was the head of it, and when there was a question in the early days of what the relationship was going to be between CAP and juvenile delinquency and whether it was going to be one or the other or the two together or what.

G: Dave Hackett has indicated that his initial concept of community action was to establish a mechanism for local community groups to solve their

own problems, rather than setting up a centralized agency to deal from Washington. Did Community Action fail to establish this sort of mechanism?

W: I'm going to talk philosophically now. I think from my point of view there's a fundamental error in that thinking. The basic thesis of community action that Dave Hackett proposed was that if you get all the groups together in a city or an area which needs to deal with poverty, you establish a set of common goals and objectives and an agenda, then the federal government will provide the funds to help carry that out. It's a very appealing thesis.

What happened in fact is that the process consisted of getting a number of groups together that traditionally were major rivals and bringing in frequently some new groups or some new figures who looked at this as a major opportunity to heighten their political leverage. You would have a period of several months in which there would be a considerable amount of scrapping going on among them, and that one group would emerge somewhat more powerful than the others. They would quickly throw out all the guys from the other groups and what you did, rather than establish a coalition, was you created a small skirmish in which one group came out on top, and they walked away with all the money and threw all the other guys out. In other words, the basic community action philosophy I think doesn't deal with some of the political realities of what happens.

Also I think that in many, many cases you'll find that there are urban areas which exist because there are uneasy accommodations which

skirt basically unresolvable differences between community groups. The basic thesis which says that if you can just get everybody together in a big room and establish a common set of goals and objectives, then we'll all be able to work together in harmony just doesn't make sense when you get down to the local level. That's like saying that all you have to do to solve the problems of integration and civil rights in Mississippi is to get the NAACP and the Ku Klux Klan together in a room and establish a common set of goals and objectives and programs and everything will work out hunky-dory thereafter. It just doesn't work that way. If you get into New York City there are so many cross-cutting rivalries and people out to cut each other's throat at the local levels. HARYOU-ACT had so many competing organizations that it was trying to put out of business and that they themselves were trying to sabotage HARYOU-ACT so that they could get a piece of the action as to what was going on. It just didn't work that way. Life isn't that neat.

G: Bill Kelly described three different stages in the task force composition: the first, February to the spring, consisting of theoreticians, and in the summer, planners and logisticians, and then in the late summer those who were operationally-oriented. Did you perceive this sort of a changing composition?

W: To some extent I think that's correct. Certainly in the first few weeks up until really April, you had some people involved who I would classify primarily as theoreticians who rapidly became much less involved or no longer became involved: Pat Moynihan; Frank Mankiewicz's

influence waned; Jim Sundquist; a number of other people sort of went back to wherever it was that they came from primarily. But after that I think that the characterizations are a little too general for what I would see. In Community Action, the theoreticians--Community Action is basically still a theoretical problem. It's fraught with all sorts of theoretical and philosophical issues. The theoreticians still remained a very, very strong hand right through the summer. And even through the first year or two of its operation, I would say that the thinkers were very strongly in evidence.

In the Job Corps, on the other hand, [it] was evidenced mostly by just a complete breakdown. To say that it passed into a management phase is just plainly off the mark. It passed into a headless phase when there was nobody there who had the breadth to be able to take it over. Vernon Alden, who was supposed to be running it, was in absentia almost the entire time, and when he was around it was almost worse than when he was gone. Underneath him you had Wade Robinson[?], who was an educator, and you had a couple of army people from the Defense Department, a fellow named John Corley who was working on logistics and equipment and organization and management. But the Job Corps, more than anything else, was an extremely complex administrative problem aside, and it also had complex theoretical--

(Interruption)

The Job Corps also had extremely complex theoretical issues. It also was carrying the burden of being the program which more than any other program Shriver saw as the one which was going to get into

action firstest with the mostest. And it was in a state of total chaos at this point.

Everybody regarded VISTA as being at this point in time a kind of unimportant appendage. VISTA kept knocking on the door and saying, "Won't somebody please review our management and organization chart?" or something like that, and we'd say, "Oh, go away, will you please? We just haven't got time." Because it was very clear that they were a pretty small piece of the totality. Although that's not to say that nobody cared what was going to go on there, but it was such a small piece, and the problems in the Job Corps and CAP and in just figuring out how the OEO should be organized and what its relationships with the delegate agencies would be, warring with the Labor Department over what level of policy control we would have over the Neighborhood Youth Corps, and how the Neighborhood Youth Corps would be tied together with CAP programs, and things like that.

G: Should the Job Corps have been run by the military or had more military input?

W: I think it's an academic question, because I would agree that if it had been proposed that the Job Corps would have been run by the military or with a very substantial amount of military input, that I don't think it would have gotten passed. I think it was absolutely out of tune with the mood of the country at the time, and it would have become increasingly out of tune. If you can imagine a bunch of Job Corps camps being run by the Defense Department in the middle of the Vietnam War, I can't conceive how that wouldn't have become some kind

of a major fracas. As it was, the Job Corps was an administrative mess. So I think more than anything else the Job Corps suffered from the contradiction of being administratively by far the most complex program and yet the one that had to bear the brunt of getting under way the fastest. The administrative complexity was simply the complexity of establishing a hundred Job Corps centers staffed, managed, organized, with all the equipment, materials, and supplies, training programs and everything else like that. There's no problem in selecting the kids to go there and getting them there. The problem was in getting the Job Corps centers organized with a staff that knew what to do with them when they were there.

G: I gather sometimes the kids would arrive almost before the staff got set up.

W. Oh, yes. That was one problem. The problem that that created for us was this: we didn't receive appropriations until late October of 1964. Sarge set a goal of having ten thousand kids in the Job Corps by June 30--the end of the fiscal year at that time--of 1965, which is about eight months. We hit ten thousand, but those kids were sleeping on high school gymnasium floors because the centers weren't finished. We were paying for them to eat in restaurants and sleep in motels and so on, because we met the goal. We met the goal in numbers but we didn't meet it in having the places ready for them.

One of the main things that happened also was the staff. Most of the staff had only been there three or four days. They didn't know what on earth they were supposed to do, they didn't have the books,

they didn't have the materials, they didn't have the equipment, they didn't have the beds, the blankets, the sheets, the towels, the washing machines, any of the other kinds of things that are needed to get things off the ground. Many of those centers were out in rural areas where--all the conservation centers, of course, were in rural areas where things don't arrive overnight and there's not a Sears-Roebuck store in the shopping center five miles away that you could go and buy stuff on an emergency basis.

G: Should the Job Corps have been more like the Neighborhood Youth Corps?

W: Certainly the Job Corps didn't work, in my opinion, and in fact I was deputy director of it for the first year and a half of its operations, reluctant deputy director.

G: When you say it didn't work, what are your criteria there?

W: I would say that whether the Job Corps helped [is debatable]. It hurt a lot of kids, and it helped some kids. I'm not even sure that it helped more kids than it hurt. There were a lot of kids who came into the Job Corps with the hope that they were really going to get into something, not always completely realistic. A lot of kids came in feeling that they were going to have their own personal bulldozer as soon as they got in, and that within a couple of days they would be driving it all over wherever it was they were going. They had their own illusions. But we gave them the promise that they were going to get a leg up on a new life, and what they got frequently was a Job Corps center in which the big black urban kids with an awful lot of street sense ran the center, no matter what the staff did. That

included protection, all the kinds of things that go on in a big high school.

I don't want anybody to take that as a racist statement. What I should say is the big urban kids. What you had in many Job Corps centers was a mixture of big, black, urban street-smart kids with physically small, underfed white kids from rural poverty, many of whom had hardly really seen a black before. It was a pretty explosive mixture. Until you could see the kids come off the buses--and you could count the rural kids as they got off the buses, because they would be four or five, six inches shorter than the rest and their weight would be thirty, forty, fifty pounds lighter. Half their teeth would be gone. They would be obviously victims of malnutrition. I mean their faces would be covered with poor skin conditions, the whole works. You put a bunch of kids like that together with a bunch of street-smart urban kids and you've got a tough problem. And part of the naivete of the Job Corps was that until the Job Corps centers opened, nobody ever figured that one out, nobody even saw that one coming. Sure, black-white relations, but it wasn't so much black-white as it was urban, street-smart, big versus very unsophisticated, undernourished, weak, small rural kids.

G: Then would the corrective have been more localized camps?

W: I think so, yes. I think certainly one of the problems was taking kids and putting them two thousand miles away. When you did that, that distance from home, it's too far to send them back every couple of months, and these kids came from homes with chaotic conditions, in

many cases, where sisters were getting beaten up, or mothers were getting beaten up, or other things like that were happening. And it was tough if you're a kid and you get a letter or a telephone call that says, you know, there's a disaster condition at home, "Ma's left again and your pa is here and he's beating up on me and I can't take it anymore," and the kid is sitting there in a Job Corps center. What's he going to do? He's going to take off and hitchhike back home.

There were I think a lot of things that were not true in the Job Corps that reflected the fact that it was hastily patched together without leadership, without any consistent leadership. I think it gradually improved over time. Certainly the second and third and fourth years it was more effective than it was the first year.

There was another contradiction built into the Job Corps, which restricted it, and I'm sure this is a contradiction that will get different comments from different people. There were basically two kinds of Job Corps centers: large centers run by corporations for the most part, and small centers run by the Interior Department and the Agriculture Department. Small centers had maybe seventy-five to a hundred kids at them and the large centers had anywhere from fifteen hundred to twenty-five hundred kids at them, some of them three or four thousand. I think the general impression was that the larger centers had far better educational programs, but couldn't control the kids. That the kids ran the centers, in fact, and the staff really could never really enforce any kind of discipline or organization on the kids.

On the small centers, the kids had a wonderful time in the country and they got good food. I've been out to several Job Corps conservation centers there in beautiful areas, and the kids basically were pretty well behaved. They stayed in line. They didn't learn a heck of a lot out there either; they were out there chopping brush and clearing paths and doing fairly menial work. They got a good chance to get a year, fifteen months or two years in the countryside. Whether they came back with really usable skills is very questionable.

G: Were these the same type of kids that were recruited for [large centers]?

W: Yes. Yes. There was no basic difference as to who went to which kind of a center. There wasn't a screening difference that said, okay, this kid has certain characteristics which means he should go to a conservation center, particularly in the beginning.

G: The question of what sort of kids was the Job Corps designed to reach, did you attempt to focus the program on kids that you thought had a pretty good chance of coming up the ladder, or did you focus on the poorest of the poor, the ones that would be the hardest?

W: No, the one thing where I think the Job Corps did not step back from a tough problem was that it tackled almost the toughest kids in the sixteen to twenty-one-year-old age group to deal with. When I say almost the toughest, there was a considerable amount of debate over criteria for getting into the Job Corps and what it should do. It also related somewhat to the other programs in the poverty program package. Where we had a work-study program for college kids, that

clearly is not much of a poverty program. It's in there because it was something that HEW wanted to pass, and they'd been trying to get passed for a couple of years on its own and hadn't been able to. So we decided to stick it in and maybe we could get it passed as part of this.

The Neighborhood Youth Corps program was basically kind of a temporary public works program for kids in their own setting, and the kids were going to be selected by the Employment Service. We well knew that a lot of the worse kids never come into contact with the Employment Service and won't go near them. So a very basic decision was made early on that the only kids that we would select out of the Job Corps, at the bottom, would be those with serious criminal records and those with some kind of serious mental or physical handicap which meant that they really needed some kind of very, very special treatment. The Job Corps is obviously not able to offer advanced kind of sessions for mentally retarded. Nor did we feel we were very able to handle kids with repeated convictions for assault and things like that, although I think it was pretty clear that many of the U.S. Employment Service offices, which were the primary screening agents for Job Corps kids, purposefully overlooked criminal records in referring kids and recommending kids to be enrolled in the Job Corps, and we had a lot of kids with pretty heavy criminal records in there.

But the point I'm making is that in a point of view of setting policy, we decided to go for the hardest group to deal with with those few exceptions, that is, criminal records, mentally or physically

handicapped. And I think if you look at the characteristics of the kids who enrolled, they document the fact that we did handle kids who were tough, who were badly off. We didn't have very many kids--occasionally we made a mistake and enrolled somebody who had--at one point in time we found out we had a guy who had a year in college enrolled. Nobody could figure out exactly how he got there. I remember statistics that said that the median grade of the first ten thousand enrolled was something like 8.3 completed. I know from having been to Job Corps centers and talked to Job Corps kids that they were kids who needed something or other.

G: If you were designing it over, would you come up with something [different], perhaps a combination of the NYC and the Job Corps?

W: I would be the first to say that I'm not really an expert on that. And secondly, I don't think I really have an answer. I'm not sure that the country has an answer today. Maybe the only thing that we've accomplished in the last sixteen years is that we've discovered that we don't have an answer.

G: We know we don't know.

W: Yes.

G: If you would select a Job Corps camp that you regard as the most successful, which one would it be?

W: Well, the one that was supposed to be most successful was the one in California run by Litton Industries. It had a dynamite camp director for the first couple of years. I can't remember his name, but I remember meeting him. It was a very well-run center. It seemed to

have a lot going for it. That's the one I think George Foreman went to as a matter of fact.

G: At least it turned out good fighters, I suppose.

W: Yes. But we had some who were absolute disasters. The one in Indiana and the one in Kentucky were just horrible.

G: Did you have a set of guidelines with regard to selecting sites, choosing Job Corp sites, what sort of considerations for these?

W: Well, of course you had to divide that into two areas. We had to divide that into the large sites where we were basically looking at old military installations, in most cases, not in all cases. I'm talking about the first eight or ten centers that were selected after--when we got into women's centers and that, then the types of centers became more varied and we got old nursing homes and things like that. But almost all the first centers that were selected were old military bases. There are only so many of those around, so it was simply a matter of trying to evaluate the availability of each one and what facilities that it had and how much it would cost to create whatever new facilities we might need there and try to make some kind of a rough comparison between the two. I'm sure it wasn't very sophisticated.

The selection of the conservation centers was a lot trickier. Because the selection, of course, was basically in the hands of either the Agriculture Department, the Bureau of Forestries or the Interior Department, which had four agencies I guess that ran conservation centers. They made the basic proposals. A few of those were existing centers, but most of those were centers where we had to build a great

deal from scratch. Many were built completely from scratch. And there were quite a few policy issues. I remember for example we had one proposal [that] was to put a Job Corps center at a place called Big Bend National Park in Texas. We discovered I think that it's something like a hundred-and-twenty miles to the nearest town. We said, "Hey, look. These are kids, sixteen, seventeen, eighteen, nineteen-year-old kids. You can't put them in a situation where the nearest town is a hundred and twenty miles away. I mean, they've got to have some kind of off-site recreational opportunities." Well, the Interior Department, I guess that was the Department of Parks or whatever it is, really thought that Big Bend was a wonderful area. We had a fair fight over that one.

But in fact I would say that the Job Corps in the early days--you've read my book about how the first list of Job Corps centers was announced. We had a list of the first conservation centers I guess that Interior and Agriculture had sent over as their preliminary proposal. And all it was was just a list of names; it wasn't anything else. We were trying to look at it and trying to figure out how on earth to make a decision about it. We sent the list up to Shriver and Shriver sent it over to the President, because he said, "Hey, there are some political implications here," because obviously one of the things about the Job Corps that had been controversial from the beginning was what control will local officials and state officials like governors have over whether there is a Job Corps center in

their town or state. Can the federal government simply come and put one in regardless of whether the local folks want it or not?

G: The governor's veto.

W: Anyway, this list was sent over to the White House simply from the point of view of, "Say, hey, you got any reactions to this list, good or bad?" We hadn't even started to figure out how much it would cost to put anything there or whether these were good sites or bad sites. The next thing we know the President is up there reading the list at a press conference. (Laughter) That's absolutely and literally the way that it happened. I was sitting in Shriver's office. Larry O'Brien called up and he said, "Hey, what's this list of Job Corps centers?" Shriver said, "Well, that's something very tentative." This was Saturday morning about ten o'clock or something like that. Larry O'Brien called back about five minutes later, he said, "Well, the President just announced your list of Job Corps centers as being the first centers that will open. They're all going to open in the next three months." Well, we hadn't contacted a single governor, a single mayor, a single congressman or senator or anything else like that. I'll never forget that day.

G: Was the President especially interested in the Gary Job Corps center?

W: Yes. Yes, he was, because he was interested in it--I think the idea of the Job Corps was something which the President found attractive because of his earlier experiences in his career. He wanted one in Texas, and he was delighted to have one at Gary, and he was delighted to show his presence there from time to time to show his interest in it.

G: Likewise did he pressure you all to proceed with the program?

W: No, I wouldn't say that. I never felt any direct pressure from the President to proceed with the Job Corps or anything like that. I think my main experience with the President and the poverty program came when we were putting together the budget for the second year of the poverty program. The appropriation which we received in October of 1964 was for the fiscal year ending June 30, 1965, and in October of 1964, October and November, we had to put together the budget for fiscal year 1966 as well. As I remember the budget for the first year was something like 947 million and we didn't get all of that appropriated, but we got a good bit of it appropriated. We put together a budget for the second year of something like 1.8 billion, I mean, it was a big number. And it was partly justifiable. The first year we were only operating for seven or eight months anyway, so it's bound to cost more in the second year.

Well, the Budget Bureau came back with a number of something like 1.2 billion as an allowance. We riffled through the meeting of that and told Shriver that what it meant was that the second year for most efforts would be lower, and we'd have to start closing Job Corps centers as soon as we opened them up. Well, [that was] a little bit of an overstatement, but it was definitely a tough number to deal with. So, Shriver called the President and said that we'd have a hard time living with that number. And the President talked with Bill Moyers, I know, and then I got a call from Shriver. He said, "I'll meet you downstairs in the lobby, as soon as you can get there.

We're going over to see the President,"--this would have been about mid-December--"to make our case for a higher number."

So I met him, and it was just Shriver and myself that went over, and the President. We went into the Oval Office and sat down, and before Shriver had a chance to say a word--and it's a rare occasion when Shriver doesn't have the first word--the President said, "Well, Sarge, I want you to know that there is nothing dearer to me than the War on Poverty program, and there's nobody who wants to see it succeed more than me, because this is the first program that really has my name on it and this is Lyndon Johnson's program. It is not Sargent Shriver's program," something else like that. He said that in a kindly way, he wasn't trying to say that Shriver was taking it away from him, but what he was trying to say was that he felt that it was his, Lyndon Johnson's, program.

At this point in time--this is a side note--we're already starting to get a considerable amount of flak from cities that their applications hadn't been approved, from Job Corps centers that there were fights going on over where there was to be a Job Corps center somewhere. All the initial eruptions were starting to take place and they were all floating back to the President. So the President said, "I just want you to know that nobody wants this program to succeed more than I do. But we just don't have the coonskins yet to hang up on the wall." That's the specific phrase that he used. I understand he used it fairly frequently. He said, "I want this program to grow and to be the kind of thing that we all want it to be, but I think that we

need to move carefully and I think we need to take our time here. Therefore, I've gone over with"--I'm pretty sure it was Kermit Gordon at that point in time--"the Budget Bureau. We're going to stick [with] it"--whatever the number was, 1.2 [billion] or 1.3--"and that's my decision. That's where I am."

Of course what he succeeded in doing was taking the offense away from Shriver right away, because he had already killed most of the arguments that Shriver had. So we stayed there for ten minutes or so and talked. Then we left and when we were riding back in the car we both said, "Well, we lost that one I guess. We never even got a chance to get the ball in the court; [he won] before we even got the ball."

Well, about a half an hour later the President called Shriver and he said, "I want you to know, I've sat down and talked this over with Bill Moyers and with Kermit. It's against my better judgment. I really do not think that this is the way we should do, but I'll raise the budget allowance." I think it was to 1.6 [billion]. That's an approximate framework. I think we asked for 1.8 or 1.9, and the mark came in at 1.3 and he finally came in at 1.6.

So that from the point of view of the personal position of the President, I think that rather than pushing to see that things happened very, very fast, it was my very strong impression that the President was concerned that things might not be happening as [they should]. We had better do things right as well as fast. We were perhaps under more pressure from Sarge himself to achieve quick results--well, Sarge is a very results-oriented person--than from the President

himself. It was quite clear the President wanted to get the legislation passed quickly and wanted to get something under way, but after that I think the President was very aware of the fact that administrative complications and failure to do your homework with the local townships and the local cities and the local counties and the local people can create problems which can subvert even the best of programs.

G: Did he mention any of these in particular? Say Mayor [James] Tate in Philadelphia?

W: No. No. He mentioned absolutely no specific situations at that time.

G: Did you get the feeling that he saw the War on Poverty as sort of a re-enactment of some of the New Deal agencies?

W: I always had that impression, yes. Certainly not a re-creation of the New Deal, but certainly the child of the New Deal, in the sense that a child is never identical with the parents but it certainly has a lot of the inherited characteristics.

G: How did the conservation projects become part of the Job Corps concept?

W: That occurred in a deal that was made in the absolute final days, actually within the last twenty-four to forty-eight hours before the legislation was passed by the House of Representatives. The plan of the Job Corps had always been to have a certain number of Job Corps centers run by the Agriculture Department or in national parks and Interior Department lands of one sort or another. There had always been a certain amount of question as to how these would relate to the larger centers, whether they might be in some way preparatory centers for the larger centers or whether they would have a different role and

so on. But there had always been a certain amount of hesitation about conservation centers because the educators in the Job Corps planning program were very skeptical about whether any kind of a decent educational program could be offered in the context of a Job Corps center run in some very rural area with the kind of staff that you could get out there. In the legislation as originally proposed there was no mention or division between conservation centers and urban centers or anything else like that. There was every intent to leave that fuzzy although it was planned to have some of each.

At the time, and I guess there still is, there is a very substantial conservational group in the Congress. There is a group of congressmen who were very much interested in matters of conservation. At that time it was headed up by Representative [John P.] Saylor of Pennsylvania. But it includes primarily congressmen obviously from more rural areas, some of whom at least tend to be Republican because rural areas tend to be somewhat more Republican. From a political point of view it so happened that a lot of the people in the conservation group in Congress, in the House of Representatives, in the last days when their legislation was coming up for a final floor vote, were also fence-sitters. They really hadn't committed themselves one way or another. We had already agreed at the suggestion of Edith Green to specifically allow women in the Job Corps.

G: She jumped on that.

W: Yes. Now that was an amendment which we agreed to right off. There was never any great fight about that. There was a lot of logistics concern because it created a whole second program for us, but. . . .

Anyway, I remember that going into I think forty-eight hours before the bill was to come up for a final vote, the vote count that was done by Larry O'Brien or Wilson McCarthy, one or the other, was essentially tied at 196 to 196. I remember that I got a call--I can't remember whether it was from Shriver or Yarmolinsky, one or the other--that I should go over and talk to Spencer Stewart[?]. I think that was his name. I'm trying [to think]. Basically he is the head of a group which lobbies for conservative [conservation?] causes. I think Spencer Stewart called and said that in effect he could deliver most or all of the votes of the conservation group in return for a commitment that not less than a certain per cent of the Job Corps centers would be in conservation areas and that Job Corps enrollees would do conservation work.

I was directed to negotiate that, whatever that per cent was, what per cent we could live with. That was done on the basis of maybe an hour or two's preparation, and I remember we were playing around with 20 or 30 or 40 per cent. As soon as it got up to 50 per cent we decided that it was unworkable. As a matter of fact I can't recall even now what the percentage was that was enacted in the legislation. I think it was 40, but I'm a little hazy on that point right now. It may have been 20, in respect to the fact that we had girls and we were not going to put girls in conservation

centers. In the final analysis I went and met with Spencer Stewart and he and I negotiated language on the spot--we just wrote it out right there--to require that not less than a certain number of Job Corps enrollees be in conservation centers. And if you look at the votes it is very, very clear that Spencer delivered his votes. I have absolutely no doubt but that that was one of the two things that contributed to the passage of the legislation.

The other one of course being the axing of Yarmolinsky. That's been pretty well documented.

G: Well, I did want to ask you about that, too, a little farther along the line.

Who coined the name of the Job Corps, do you remember?

W: Shriver.

G: Really?

W: Absolutely. Just like the Peace Corps. I remember we went round and round and round on what we were going to call this thing, and we had all sorts of names like the Army for Youth and the Corps for Neighborhood Development or for Youth Development and all sorts of fancy names. I can remember the meeting when we had about ten names out there and Shriver--after about two minutes he had no patience for meetings like that. He said, "No, we're going to call it the Job Corps. That's what it's all about, jobs. We're going to call it the Job Corps. That's the name of it." That's the way it was named. That was a very, very short discussion. And I don't have any argument with that. The same way that the Peace Corps really doesn't describe

the operation, I'm not sure that the name has to describe the operation. It carries an image with it.

G: There was also a movement to lower the age of draft examinations so that they could determine the people who would be rejected ahead of time and maybe get them into a Job Corps camp. Do you recall this?

W: Oh, yes. Oh, yes. That was a major question because there was a fairly complex fight going on in Congress at the time which was already under way at the time that the poverty legislation had been introduced. The Labor Department had proposed lowering not the draft age, but the age for Selective Service registration and for testing, so that individuals who did not have basic skills or who had basic remedial health problems could be enrolled in programs at least some of which might be run partly or in coordination with the military so that more kids would be eligible for the draft. At the time the draft was already fairly controversial and there was increasing concern--again, my numbers may be a little bit hazy--that something like a third of the people who were registering for the draft were being found 4-F for either physical or educational reasons and were rejected. It was a very socially conscious administration and the obvious question is, "What do we do about a country in which a third of the people can't meet the very basic requirements to be drafted? There is something seriously wrong here." The next question is, "Well, right now we're identifying this at age eighteen I guess. Maybe we ought to move it to age sixteen so we can catch these problems earlier and do something about them."

This discussion and debate was already under way by the time the poverty legislation was introduced, and the only question was whether this would be tied into the poverty legislation as a specific requirement or as a part of the package. Now this whole thing was very controversial, because there were a large number of Republican conservatives who were dead set against it because they felt that in some way it was increasing the militarization of the country. Likewise there were a lot of Democratic liberals who were dead set against it for the same reason. It's one of these situations where you get the two poles agreeing with one another but for different reasons. And as I recall, it was a situation in which there were very mixed reviews on exactly how Congress was going to react to a proposal. Senator [Secretary?] McNamara testified on the proposal as part of the poverty package. But as I recall, because it appeared to be very controversial to bring in a whole set of issues which went way beyond poverty issues, that is the intrusion of the military into training of civilians and things like that, that we decided to steer clear of it.

But the people who were for the idea were trying to get it put into the poverty package. That was the way in which it came up, and the administration basically decided not to press in that direction. I don't think that they would have fought against it if there had been a very substantial volume of support for it in Congress. It was a very controversial proposal in Congress.

G: To what extent was one of the purposes of the Job Corps to enable more people to pass the draft examination?

W: Oh, I suppose in a way it would have been considered to be one of the purposes. I would have considered it one of the fairly minor purposes, because I think if I recall correctly half the kids in the Job Corps were sixteen, seventeen and eighteen, but half of them were already nineteen, twenty and twenty-one. So half of them were already beyond the age at which they probably would have been drafted, or let's say having been examined once and found unfit would have been re-examined and found fit. So that half the kids were automatically unlikely candidates.

A lot of kids from the Job Corps--I remember some of the initial surveys that we did, and a fairly significant percentage went from the Job Corps into the military. Whether they would have qualified if they had not gone into the Job Corps we never knew because they were sixteen, seventeen, and eighteen-year-old kids who hadn't yet registered for Selective Service and gone through the testing and examination procedures. But it seems to me that something like 20 to 25 per cent of the graduates from the Job Corps in the very early years went into the military. I think that went down dramatically because of the Vietnam War.

[End of Tape 2 of 2 and Interview I]

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