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HUBERT H. HUMPHREY ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW III

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ACCESSION NUMBER 79-43

INTERVIEW III

DATE: June 21, 1977

INTERVIEWEE: HUBERT HUMPHREY

INTERVIEWER: MICHAEL L. GILLETTE

PLACE: Senator Humphrey's office in the Dirksen Senate Office Building, Washington, D. C.

Tape 1 of 2

G: Senator, let's start today with some foreign policy issues during the fifties. Remember that resolution by Senator Joe McCarthy that would tie President Eisenhower's hands at Geneva? It was sort of a slap both at the Democrats in the Senate as well as the Eisenhower Administration. I think the Republicans wanted it killed quietly in committee, but Senator Johnson got it out on the floor and brought it to a vote. Do you remember that?

H: What resolution was that? I haven't the slightest recollection at this time.

G: It was a resolution that would more or less tie Eisenhower's hands at Geneva.

H: What was he going to do at Geneva?

G: He was going to Geneva. I think the essence of the resolution was--

H: I don't think I know anything about it. I think you're just up a blind alley with me. On individual items like this for that period of time it's awfully hard to remember. As I said to you the other day, one of the greatest capacities of the human mind is the ability to forget. You have to learn how to erase so that you can add new things in; otherwise, the computer gets overstocked. Individual items like that are very difficult to remember unless you go back into the Congressional Record and you bring in two or three other people that were involved, and then pretty soon the bubbles start to come in your mind again and you start to recall. I mean, individual items of legislation are just about impossible.

G: Another point--you proposed the establishment of a disarmament subcommittee to the Foreign Relations Committee. That was in 1955. Do you remember the details of that?

H: Oh, yes. That was mine. When it was my stuff I can remember it pretty well. Yes, I had felt that we ought to be looking at the subject of arms control at the congressional level in a more systematic method than we were. There were three committees that were involved primarily: the Joint Committee on Atomic Energy that 2had, of course, the whole

question of the atomic bomb and was--it's no longer an existing committee--a very secretive committee; the second one was the Armed Services Committee; and the third one was the Committee on Foreign Relations. Well now, when the Committee on Foreign Relations did something on arms control it generally met with opposition from the Joint Committee on Atomic Energy or the Armed Services Committee.

So I introduced a resolution to set up not just a subcommittee, but a special subcommittee on disarmament and arms control under the general aegis or mantle of the Foreign Relations Committee. That subcommittee would consist of members of the Armed Services Committee, the Joint Atomic Energy Committee, and members of the Foreign Relations Committee. Fortunately, we were able to do it with the members in the Foreign Relations Committee, because you had Bourke Hickenlooper, for example, that was a member of the Joint Committee on Atomic Energy, you had Stuart Symington that was a member of the Armed Services Committee, and there were others. So that we were able to have a special committee that had it's own staff and its own professional competence. Now keep in mind that up until then no subcommittee of the Foreign Relations Committee ever had any staff. They were all called consultative subcommittees. They did not have legislative jurisdiction, nor did they have investigatory jurisdiction. Everything was under the general mantle, or under the general control of the full committee--namely, the chairman and the staff director.

I ran into strong resistance on this, from both the chairman of the committee and the staff director, because I think they saw that it was setting a precedent. Which, by the way, has now become a fact--namely, that you would have subcommittees that would have their own professional talent, their own skills, and their own legislative competence. I was able to get it passed, however.

G: How did you get it through?

H: Just by plain hard work and lobbying the living daylights out of people and getting the cooperation of some of my colleagues, like George Aiken on the Republican side, on it.

G: Did Johnson help you on this particular [resolution]?

H: I think that he did, yes. I remember, for example, that when I went to him about it, and I did talk to him about it, he said to me first of all, "That's your problem over there in the Foreign Relations Committee." But he did not, as a member of the Armed Services Committee, object. Had he objected to it we would have been a dead duck, because he was very powerful. He was the chairman of the Preparedness Subcommittee, for example, of the Armed Services Committee.

G: How about the Lewis Strauss nomination? Do you remember?

H: Oh, yes. Johnson, as I recollect, fought that nomination. Anyway, we defeated him. Was that involved with that First Boston Corporation? There was one that was involved with that. I can't remember the details. Lewis Strauss was to be the director of the Atomic Energy Commission.

G: Right.

H: And I think it was primarily related to some of the private enterprise efforts on the utilization of atomic energy.

G: Public power issue.

H: It got into the public power issue. That all went back to some of the amendments earlier to the Atomic Energy Act of 1954, as I recollect, in which we had a bitter fight around here. Johnson was a public power man, and he participated with us in that struggle. We fortunately won that battle, because the Atomic Energy Act was going to be amended by some of the Hickenlooper amendments, as I recall, that would have turned over the patent rights that had been developed under government sponsorship to the private sector. Lewis Strauss was tied into that. He was the personality symbol, so to speak, of it. I don't remember all of the details, but I remember Johnson took a vigorous opposition to it. Why don't we just break off here?

[Interruption]

G: Senator, let me ask you about the Omnibus Farm Bill in 1954. You introduced an amendment then to prevent the secretary of Agriculture from limiting the number of terms to which county ASC committee members might be elected. That passed by one vote. Do you remember that?

H: Yes, I sure do. You see, what was happening was the Republicans were trying to destroy what I call the elected county committee system. They were hell-bent on getting rid of that, and they were also desirous of getting what they called their office managers, a civil service type of operation, which made the elected county committee system almost advisory without any managerial authority. I had always been--always have been--for a strong elected county committee system that could really supervise the farm program at the county level. This was started by Franklin Roosevelt, and it was one of the best ways that we had of seeking compliance by farmers over these when we had allotment programs and we had acreage set asides, and so forth. Farmers were paid on the basis of their allotted acres, the amount of crop on their allotted acres. That's where their price support program came in. It was a whole lot better to have farmers supervising farmers in their neighborhood than it was to have some outsider come on in and just try to impose his authority from Washington. This was a very democratized program, and it worked well.

The Republicans wanted to get rid of these county committeemen out there because they felt that they were all Democrats, and so they tried to come on in and limit. That was Ezra Taft Benson. He came on in with the first step, which was to limit the number of terms they could have. That was just step number one to get rid of the whole system, and I figured the time was at hand to clip them quick and have a knockdown-drag-out fight in the Senate right then and there over the whole idea of the county committee system. I had been an advocate of that even before I came to the Senate. I recall that we won, and it was one of those times again where Lyndon Johnson had to help us and get in and pitch to give us the helping hand that we needed. I think I noticed your notes here on it show that we got practically every vote.

G: For the Democrats, I think, it was forty to one.

H: Voted forty to one for us. LBJ and the Democrats versus Benson; that's about the way we did. I used to go after Ezra Taft Benson on a daily basis.

On that Omnibus Farm Bill we had the difference between the flexible price supports and the fixed price supports. The Aiken amendment to support five basic commodities on a flexible scale passed forty-nine to forty-four. LBJ voted against it. I voted against it as well. That was the big battle that we had around here all the time. The Anderson amendment pertaining to grazing lands--I don't remember what that one [was]. Humphrey amendment to prevent the Secretary--we just talked about that one.

We always had trouble with Mr. Benson. He became the black knight, finally, of the Republicans. We targeted in on him, because he became very unpopular with the farmers with his constant effort to undermine any of these programs that really were managed by farmers. He always was trying to tighten up on the credit, he and George Humphrey, on the Farmer's Home Administration. He tried to take away the autonomy of the rural electric system, as you may recall, and that will come out in here. I led the fight in the Senate to keep the Rural Electric Administration within the Department of Agriculture but not subject to control of the secretary of Agriculture. The director of the REA had to be appointed by the president, confirmed by the Senate, and the Rural Electric Administration was only in the Department of Agriculture for budgetary and administrative purposes.

G: Can you recall Lyndon Johnson persuading other senators to go along with you on any of these?

H: No, I can't recall the specific detail of that. But the point is that whenever you had the leader with you, you knew that you were gaining some support. Because Johnson got votes by whispering in ears and pulling lapels, and nose to nose. You have just almost got to see the man. He'd get right up on you. He'd just lean right in on you, you know. Your nose would only be about--he was so big and tall he'd be kind of looking down on you,

you see, and then he'd be pulling on your lapels and he'd be grabbing you and just literally. . . . Even if he wasn't asking you to vote for something, he'd be talking about the bill in such a way that you knew what he had in mind.

G: Do you think he was more than an even match for Knowland?

H: Oh, my God. I mean that was just like Ken Norton with Bobbick. I don't know, you're not maybe a prize fight fan, but Knowland was no match for him at all.

G: Bobbick was Knowland.

H: Bobbick was Knowland, so to speak. Johnson was a tactician; he was second to none. He was an organizer. He always cut into the ranks of Knowland when he needed to. Knowland was a real Republican elephant, and Johnson was a lion. I mean he was clever, fast and furious when he needed to be and kind and placid when he needed to be. There is no comparison. They're not in the same league.

G: Do you think he and Dirksen had a better working relationship?

H: By far. Knowland didn't have any great sense of humor, for example. Also, Johnson always was able to take the measure of a man. He knew those that he could dominate; he knew those that he could outmaneuver. Right off the bat he sized you up. He knew with Dirksen that he had himself a match. Dirksen was clever; Dirksen was a good speaker; Dirksen was smart; Dirksen was agile; he was Machiavellian; and he was always willing to make a deal. Johnson liked that, and even as president Johnson worked closely with Dirksen.

Johnson knew how to woo people. He was a born political lover. It's a most amazing thing. Many people look upon Johnson as the heavy-handed man. That's not really true. He was sort of like a cowboy making love. He wasn't one of these Fifth Avenue, Madison Avenue penthouse lovers. He was from the ranch. But what I mean is he knew how to massage the senators. He knew which ones he could just push aside, he knew which ones he could threaten, and above all he knew which ones he'd have to spend time with and nourish along, to bring along, to make sure that they were coming along. And Dirksen was one of those. You couldn't push Dirksen aside. He could match wits with Johnson. You couldn't ignore him--he was the minority leader. Yet he had many different points of view than Johnson, so Johnson would just woo him. He would work with him. He was always very kind to Ev, and every so often he would just mix it up with him to kind of let him know who was boss. It was a very unique relationship.

G: Do you recall him mixing him up or getting the better of him on occasion?

H: Oh yes, every so often there would be a debate. I can't remember the specific issues, but

there would be times when Johnson would have to, you know, get those great big hands of his [clapping]. I can still see him clap them, and he'd come right on over, right under Dirksen's nose and just go right like this (clapping) and clap his hands under there and take on Dirksen. But Dirksen was good. He was like a boxer. You never knocked him out. You maybe scored points on him, but you never knocked him out, and Johnson knew this. Johnson, therefore, always played to Dirksen but never let Dirksen run him. Never.

I'll never forget when I handled the Civil Rights Bill in 1964. Johnson was now president following the assassination of Kennedy, and he made me the manager of that bill. He asked Mike Mansfield, "Let Hubert Humphrey handle that bill," that comprehensive Civil Rights Act of 1964, which I handled. Two things he did. First of all, he called me up on the telephone. Of course he said, "You have got this opportunity now, Hubert, but you liberals will never deliver. You don't know the rules of the Senate, and your liberals will all be off making speeches when they ought to be present in the Senate. I know you've got a great opportunity here, but I'm afraid it's going to fall between the boards." You know that's the way he'd say. Just like saying, "You're not going to make it." He sized me up, he knew very well that I would say, "Damn you, I'll show you." He didn't frighten me off. He knew what he was doing exactly, and I knew what he was doing. One thing I liked about Johnson [was that] even when he conned me I knew what was happening to me. It was kind of enjoyable. I mean I knew what was going on, and he knew I knew. That was what was even better. That's why we two got along pretty well with each other.

The second thing he told me was, "Now you know that that bill can't pass unless you get Ev Dirksen." And he said, "You and I are going to get Ev. It is going to take time. We're going to get him." He said, "You make up your mind now that you've got to spend time with Ev Dirksen. You've got to play to Ev Dirksen. You've got to let him have a piece of the action. He's got to look good all the time." Now my liberal Democrats around here were furious because many of the meetings that we'd hold on the Civil Rights Act would be in Dirksen's office. They'd say, "You're the manager of the bill. We're the majority party. Why don't you call Dirksen to your office?" I said, "I don't care where we meet Dirksen. We can meet him in a nightclub, in the bottom of a mine or in a manhole. It doesn't make any difference to me. I just want to meet Dirksen. I just want to get there." I didn't dare tell them what we really had in mind, but I constantly worked with Dirksen.

I remember when I was on "Meet the Press" in about the first part of March, late February, when the Civil Rights Bill had come on down. I was made manager of the bill. They said to me, "How do you expect to pass that bill? Senator Dirksen has already said he shouldn't go for this, he wouldn't go for that, he shouldn't do this, he wouldn't do that." And I said, "Well, I think Senator Dirksen is a reasonable man. Those are his current opinions and they are strongly held, but I think that as the debate goes on he'll see that there is reason for what we're trying to do." And I said, "Not only that, Senator Dirksen is

not only a great senator, he is a great American, and he is going to see the necessity of this legislation. I predict that before this bill is through Senator Dirksen will be its champion, not its opposition."

Johnson called me after that and said, "Boy, that was right. You're doing just right now. You just keep at that." He always talked about "those bomb throwers"; that's what he called the so-called liberals. "Don't you let those bomb throwers, now, talk you out of seeing Dirksen. You get in there to see Dirksen! You drink with Dirksen! You talk to Dirksen! You listen to Dirksen!" That's what he'd always [do]. See, he was the smartest so and so.

G: I get the impression that you seemed to foresee Lyndon Johnson's espousal of civil rights before anyone else, at least in the Senate. Did he ever confide in you long before this his feelings on race relations that led you to have confidence in him?

H: Yes, we talked a lot. I knew he was very sympathetic to the Mexican-Americans, for example. Now Johnson never forgot that he was a schoolteacher down there. Also, Johnson was a Roosevelt man. That was his greatest joy, to remind people that Roosevelt looked upon him as his protege. A hundred times I heard him mention that, you know. That was his great moment. Also, David Dubinsky was another one of his heroes, and the ILGWU, and how he and David always worked together.

Johnson used to tell me just simply this: "Let me tell you something, Hubert, [about] all this civil rights talk. The thing that we've got to do is get those blacks the right to vote. When they've got that vote power there will be no more of this segregation around here." He said, "That's what will shape up all these people in Congress, because they've got the swing vote." And he said, "Now you fellows are trying to get them public accommodations. You want them to ride in a bus"--and he'd go over all the little things--"but what they need is the vote. That's what I'm going to get them. I'm going to get them the vote power. When they get the vote power, they got the power. You wait and see. In any state where the blacks have got the vote power, you'll see their senators are much more willing to listen to their requests."

I remember one time when my friend Russell Long came to me and he said, "Do you know the director of the NAACP down in Louisiana?" I said, "I think so, yes." I did at the time. He said, "You know the national director, Roy Wilkins?" And I said, "Yes, I do." He said, "Do you think you could speak to him about me? I'm for the poor people." And Russell is; Russell is a populist and all that. "I would just kind of like to have a little better, closer contact with them." Well, that was just the beginning. See here, the blacks always had the right to vote in Louisiana, but they were becoming vote conscious. It wasn't that they didn't have the right to vote, but they were beginning to exercise that right to vote. And Russell wanted to be sure that he was properly moving towards it. [That was a] very, very clever move.

But Johnson understood that from the day one. Also the civil rights amendments of 1957 and 1960--there were two batches. You see, I never could go with him on those because they didn't go far enough. My position had to be one of being further out, pushing harder. I voted for them ultimately, but what I meant was that during the process of the debate I wanted much more than he was willing to give. Because for me to be able to be a leader in this field, and for my own convictions as well, I could not be for the compromises that he wanted at that stage. But it told me one thing above all. First of all, I knew he was sincere. It was not just parliamentary tactics. It was some of that, but he was sincere. He and I talked many times about it, and I knew that he was not a segregationist. I knew he didn't want to classify himself in those days as a southerner. He refused to sign that southern oath.

G: Manifesto.

H: Manifesto.

G: Did he ever talk to you about that?

H: Oh yes. Oh yes, indeed. And he'd remind me who did it. I remember he told me one time, "I know you think Bill Fulbright is one of the great liberals around here. You liberals. You all have got your big heroes." Only in Johnson's voice. He said, "I want you to notice who signed the Southern Manifesto and who didn't. Now all your bomb throwers over there think I am the worst thing that came down here. They won't cooperate" and so on. "But they're all cheering Bill Fulbright. Why do they cheer Bill Fulbright? Because they think he's got great connections overseas. He's a Rhodes Scholar, and he's got the Fulbright Act" and so on and so on. And he'd go on. He said, "He signed the Southern Manifesto, didn't he? He signed that Southern Manifesto. I didn't." Oh, many times he'd mention that. He was very proud of the fact that he didn't sign it. Also, he used it.

Johnson used every tool in the book. This is when he'd get in an argument with Paul Douglas or Herbert Lehman or Estes Kefauver or any of these people that he thought he couldn't quite manage or that were resisting him. He'd let them know. Every so often he'd drop that little atom bomb; that when it was all said and done, "Boys, you've got some boys over here that you're sleeping with day in and day out, like Bill Fulbright, but I wasn't there when they signed that Southern Manifesto. I said no, and your hero said yes. Now how do you justify that?" See, he'd put them on the defensive. He used these things. He was so adroit.

G: In 1954 you proposed the establishment of the Security Investigation Commission?

H: Yes, that twelve-man commission.

G: Right. I get the impression that that was a proposal to take the politics out of the--

H: It was.

G: --more or less witch-hunting activities that were going on. Was he behind you on that?

H: I can't recall. I can't recall. But I remember very distinctly, because Joe McCarthy's spirit was riding high and all this. By 1954 Joe I think was gone. What year did Joe die? He was still there.

G: The censure came after this, so he was still [there].

H: Yes, that's right. He was still there.

But we had tried to defuse, depoliticize this business, trying to get away from all the constant having investigations and witch hunts, and to take a look at the whole security apparatus of the government. Which we later on did; I mean later on we set up the Church Committee, which did exactly the sort of thing that we were talking about in 1954.

G: You've been a proponent of the Nuclear Test Ban Treaty for a number of years, and I wanted to ask you about your role here in espousing that treaty.

H: I was maybe the most active member of the Senate in espousing that all during that time. Because I was chairman of that special subcommittee on arms control, and we had the best specialists in the country that came before us. We published reports. We documented what we could do on nuclear test ban. Of course, we were for an overall, but we settled for the limited nuclear test ban.

G: What did you have to do to get that approved in the Senate?

H: We got a resolution. I got Dodd. See, I always felt that in order to get those kinds of things passed--I learned this from Johnson--you had to team up with somebody that seemed to be on the other side. Tom Dodd was looked upon pretty much as a right-wing hardliner on communists, you know, and Humphrey was looked upon as kind of a softee. So I teamed up with Dodd and let Dodd take the initiative to pass the resolution in support of a nuclear test ban treaty. But I was the driving force behind it, and Dodd was the front man. I really learned that more than anything else from Johnson's tactics.

G: Did he give you much support on that? I guess he was vice president at the time.

H: Oh yes, indeed.

G: How so?

H: Well, I mean that the whole administration was for it. The Kennedy Administration was for it. When I say Johnson gave us much support, it was just that the administration was for it.

G: Can you recall your efforts to persuade individual senators to go along with that? And who were some of the critical ones?

H: Oh, boy, I can't remember that now. I should. I'd have to go back and look over the Record. But I remember exactly how we came about it. I remember getting Tom Dodd, involving him with it, and asking Tom if he'd be the co-sponsor with me of this. So that it looked like you didn't only have Humphrey, who had been the harping voice in the Congress for several years on the whole subject of a nuclear test ban treaty, but that you got a new recruit. And the new recruit was from more or less the hard-liners on defense, the strong anti-communist, Tom Dodd, at the time. That was able to bring along some people.

G: Did you have a difficult time persuading Dodd to go along with you?

H: No. I remember it took some time, yes, but he got interested in it. I can't remember whether Tom's interest was from the Joint Atomic Energy Committee or not. But I was speaking on it from time to time, as the Record will show, and I'd get Dodd engaged in colloquy on it, in some kind of friendly debate. In due time I just went to him and said, "You know, you and I are seeing this thing pretty much eye to eye"-- and then it was the limited Nuclear Test Ban Treaty--"We ought to join hands on this thing." I think Tom was up for election and thought it would be a good thing for him, and so we did. That's my vague memories of it. The main thing I remember is getting Tom Dodd.

G: Let me ask you about some education measures. One of the important education measures in the mid-fifties was the school construction bill that you supported. Do you recall the effort there to get that bill passed?

H: Yes. Actually we were not successful, of course, with the school construction part. We were able to get the school maintenance and operations, but not school construction. I held hearings on school construction when I first came down here to Congress, and I worked long and hard to try to get it passed. We finally got some funds in the National Defense Education Act for construction of laboratories and certain types of facilities that lent themselves to the national defense. And we got some school construction funds in what we call the aid to federally impacted areas, both for operation and construction, at the time of the Korean War, the build up during the Korean War and the mobilization that took place where you'd have thousands of families that were moving into a particular area because of the call up of the troops and of the mobilization. We got what we might call

just limited segments of school construction.

I was in the forefront of all of that. I was the author of one of those federal aid to impacted areas bills, and Lister Hill was the author of the other one. I was the author of the one on the construction; he was the author of the one on the maintenance and operation. Then in the National Defense Education Act, I took a big role in that.

G: That was 1958 I believe.

H: I think that was 1956. Or, yes, 1958.

G: Did you work with Johnson on that bill?

H: Johnson was strongly for it. [On] anything that said education Johnson's ears would stick right up. He was an educator, and he proved that when he was president more than any other time. But all federal aid to education programs, any kind of program that said education, Johnson was in the forefront.

See, this is why I used to argue so much with some of my liberal colleagues. I said, "On the basic things that we need around here Johnson is with us." On oil, no, because he was from Texas. And that, of course, just infuriated a number of my loveable friends, Paul Douglas and Herbert Lehman and men of that quality who were tremendous personalities here and great men of character. But I said, "Look at Johnson: on minimum wage he's with us; on health measures"--that we had at the time--"he's with us; on agriculture measures he is with us; on all the public works programs he's with us; on public employment measures when we had recessions he was with us; he was with us on the counter tax proposal to the Eisenhower efforts; he was with us in part on some of the civil rights, the 1957 and 1960." And I could always point out, "And on all education measures Johnson was with us." I said, "Now that's not bad. It's a middle of the road, I'd say a good center position, slightly left of center."

And where did we lose Johnson--this was when he was majority leader? On oil and anything that dealt with taxes of oil. He was a Texas man. And secondly where did we lose him? On comprehensive civil rights at the time. That didn't go as far as we wanted to go. But when it came to public power, rural electrification, minimum wage, he was with us. On repeal of Taft-Hartley, no, that was too much for him. But he confused us. He wasn't a monolith. The ADA didn't like him because Johnson was Johnson, and he wasn't going to be stereotyped.

G: In foreign policy he seemed to take a lead in representing his party in consulting with President Eisenhower. Do you think the Eisenhower foreign policy was pretty much bipartisan?

H: Yes, it was. Most of it was. We had some difficulties with him, but basically it was. And Johnson, I think, had a good influence on this, both on defense policy and foreign policy. Johnson did take an interest in it, and he did work closely with Eisenhower. He liked Eisenhower. Eisenhower trusted Johnson, and I think actually Johnson decided that he wasn't going to let Knowland have more influence with Eisenhower than he had. He moved right in on him. You've just got to understand the personality of the man. He just made up his mind that, "The President is over there and I've known him longer than Bill Knowland has, and I'm going over to see him." Therefore, Eisenhower had Johnson make our first space speech up at the United Nations. Johnson was the author of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration Act. He took a great interest in those things.

Johnson was very good on reciprocal trade. That's where we were talking about how he got old Mollie Malone, gave him three days to chew everybody up and then Johnson rammed through the reciprocal trade agreements. He understood the sense of pride that senators have, also the sort of ego that we have. When he needed them and he knew there was an obstructionist, he had to do one of two things. He either had to demolish the fellow, or give the fellow his day in court, so to speak, the chance to have his moment of glory, and then bury him.

G: You mentioned yesterday the incident of persuading you to give up your seat on Agriculture to go on Foreign Relations. Can you recall another example where he would really bear down on you and persuade you to do something that you were not inclined to do at first?

H: I can't exactly recall that. But I'll tell you one time, in 1956 I think it was, or 1957, Johnson called me on the phone--when did Mike Mansfield become majority whip? Was it 1958?

G: Well, let's see. Clements was defeated in 1956.

H: Yes, so it would be 1957. All right. In January of 1957 Johnson called me on the phone out at home and said, "How are you going to vote on majority leader?" I said, "Lyndon, I think our group of liberals have got a candidate of their own." He said, "That's a damn fool mistake. You're not going to win, you know." And I said, "I think that's right, but we've got some things we want to talk to you about. We think there are things we ought to get you to do if you're majority leader, and the only way that we can really do that, some of my people think, [is] to put up a candidate against you." He said, "Well, you've made two mistakes. First of all, you can't win. Secondly, I was going to ask you to be my majority whip." I'm sure he meant it, because he told me later on he meant it very well. I said, "I guess maybe I've gotten myself into a position where I can't do that." He said, "I think that's right, but that's two mistakes. You shouldn't do that, Hubert, you know better than that. You shouldn't let people talk you into these things." He said, "You better come around to see me."

Later on we went down. There was Senator Hunt of Wyoming, myself, and one other senator I can't recall at the moment now. We went down to see Lyndon Johnson at his office because we had some things we wanted done. We wanted to get, for example, Herbert Lehman on Judiciary. We wanted to put Paul Douglas on Finance. See, we were trying to get some of our liberals on these committees because Johnson was tough; he packed those committees the way he wanted them. He was chairman of the Steering Committee and chairman of the Policy Committee. The Policy Committee was more or less just an echo for him; I mean just to kind of legitimize his personal wishes. I went down to see him with these senators and told him what our demands were and what our requests were and said that we thought it was time that there be some changes around here, that Quentin Burdick go on Judiciary and that Paul Douglas go on Finance. And we had two or three others. I've forgotten who they all were. He said, "We'll talk about that after the election of the majority leader."

When we started to leave he said, "Hubert, I'd like to talk to you. Could you just remain a minute?" He said good-bye to the other fellows, then he looked at me and he said, "I want to tell you something. You know those two senators who were with you? They're going to vote for me." I said, "Are they?" He said, "Sure they are. I got their personal commitment." And he said, "What the hell are you doing with them? You better learn how to understand what goes on around here. These fellows have already committed themselves to me." I said, "I can't believe that," because they had been in our caucus. He said, "I'll guarantee you that they're going to vote for me. How many votes do you think you've got in that caucus of yours?" I said, "Oh, I think we've maybe got about eighteen." He said, "At the most you've got thirteen, most likely not that. Do you think you ought to go through with this?" I said, "Yes, we've made up our mind we're going to do it, Lyndon, and we're going to go through with it."

So we got down there to the caucus, and Lyndon Johnson was nominated by none other than Theodore Francis Green, who had the most liberal voting record around here. You always had Theodore Green. I've forgotten the seconding speeches, but I never have forgotten that Theodore Francis Green was with him. Then we decided to nominate Jim Murray of Montana. We knew we couldn't win; it was just token. By the time we got through with the nominating speeches it was perfectly obvious that we didn't have any more votes than he thought that we had. So I moved then that we make the nomination unanimous for Johnson, because number one, I didn't want to have Murray embarrassed--he was up for re-election out in Montana--by getting only a handful of votes from his colleagues. And number two, I knew that Johnson would keep book. I mean, when that roll call came he'd watch to see who each one of them was.

So when it was all over I came back to my office, and he called me on the telephone. He said, "Come down here. I want to talk to you again." I came down and he said, "Now let me tell you something. You and I can get along fine. I know what your stand is. We don't agree on a number of these things, but at least we can get along.

You're an open-minded man. Some of these damn fools that you're with I don't want to have anything to do with." He said, "Don't come down here with any committees. If you want something done, tell me what you want and we'll try to get it done. Now, who do you want on the Policy Committee?" I said, "We ought to put Jim Murray on there." He said, "All right. It's a damn fool selection, but if you want to do it go ahead." And I said, "Why is it a damn fool selection?" He said, "He's too old. He isn't going to do anything. He's going to go along with me on everything I want. You know that. You ought to pick somebody on there who if you want to have somebody stand up and fight with the leader will do it." And I said, "Well, Jim Murray is a senior member around here, and frankly we'd like to honor him by going on the Policy Committee." He said, "All right, that's a good enough reason, but he's not going to be effective. I'll tell you that right now." That's what he said.

He said, "Now who are these other people that you want taken care of?" I said, "We want Paul Douglas on Finance." "Well, all right." "And Herbert Lehman on Judiciary." "All right, all right." I remember there were four or five others. He said, "Okay, you get them all. But you could have gotten all that without all this fussing around here." I said, "We didn't think so." He said, "I can tell you you would have gotten it all, but since you had enough sense not to drive it to a vote down there and made it unanimous I am perfectly willing to deal with you. But I don't want you bringing in a lot of these other fellows around here. When you've got something that your people want, you come see me. I'll talk to you. I don't want to talk to those other fellows."

Really and truly that made my problem with the others more difficult, because they felt now I'm being used by Johnson. I felt, "I'm getting them what they want from Johnson." And that's why I've said that liberals are never so happy as when they're unhappy, and never so unhappy as when they're happy; because if you get what you want, then you're not happy. You really enjoy suffering more than you do pleasure. (Laughter) But I was never one of those kinds of liberals. If I shot for a mile I was always willing if need be to settle for a quarter of a mile, but make some progress. We had the true believers and we still do, and that is one of the problems both in the conservative ranks as well as in the liberal ranks. You've always got some conservatives that are willing to compromise out a little bit, but you've got the true believers over there, too, the strong right wing. You've got the same thing in the liberal ranks. You've got liberals that are willing to compromise things out, but then you've got another band over here that is the true believers.

G: In 1954, he [Johnson] went out to Minnesota to campaign for you in re-election. Do you remember that?

H: He came out to one of our big fund raisers that we had out there as I recollect, yes.

G: Was he pretty effective? Do you think he helped you?

H: Yes. He was helpful in this sense: he gave me status, both he and Walter George. Walter George wrote a letter to the Minneapolis Star [saying] what a fine senator I was. Which was just a shocker, because I was being attacked by all the Republicans out there as not being in the mainstream of the Democratic Party, that I was one of the wild-eyed jackasses and radicals, socialists, and what have you. And all at once Johnson helped arrange to get Walter George to send that letter out there.

G: Oh, did he?

H: Yes. That letter was very, very helpful, because that just took the steam out of all those old conservative editors. Because Walter George was looked upon, he and Eugene Millikin of Colorado, as the kind of two prudent, frugal, responsible, sensible, conservative members, one a Democrat and one a Republican. They were on the Finance Committee, and George was chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee. These were the bulls of the Senate, so to speak. Well, my God, all at once the chief bull, Lyndon Johnson, and the second bull, Walter George, both came out for Hubert Humphrey. So in that campaign, when the Republicans were riding high and McCarthyism and conservatism were riding high, to have them help me wasn't the margin, the difference, but it helped.

G: The following year he had his heart attack, and I'm wondering if that changed him much. Did you notice?

H: It's hard to know. I think it did for a period of time. First of all, Lyndon was a very sentimental man in many ways. When Herbert Lehman got up in the Senate and asked the Senate to stand in silent prayer, I think it was, and passed a resolution, that really touched the heart of Lyndon Johnson. He was just so grateful for that. He really was a sentimental fellow. See, this is what a lot of my colleagues didn't understand about Lyndon Johnson. I understood him not just as the stereotype Texan, L.B.J., roughrider, wheeler-dealer, I understood him as a person, the sentimentality, the sentiment that he had. I knew the kind of things that touched him.

David Dubinsky, for example--I keep coming back to him as a labor leader. Why did he like David Dubinsky? David Dubinsky was a little immigrant boy that had made the ILGWU into a great union. They were poor people, and they were most of them women. They were poor salaried people, poor wage people. Johnson took an interest in them. And here was David Dubinsky, this foreign-born man of Jewish birth and so on that came here. Johnson was never anti-Semitic, you see. He had very good connections into the Jewish community. Well, I sensed that Johnson could cry. Johnson was a man of deep emotions and passions. You had to understand that about him. He was not what he was oftentimes portrayed as being, just the calculating, tough politician. He was that plus these passions.

When Herbert Lehman called for prayer for his recovery and got that--I think it

was a resolution he passed--that really touched him [Johnson] and he never forgot it. He'd talk about that many, many times. I've forgotten, but I think they sent Johnson a radio or something, a little gift. The detail slips my mind. Those things really were impressive to Johnson.

G: Do you think he felt that after that heart attack any chance that he had to run for national office had ended?

H: I suppose for a period of time, but when he started to recover again, why he mounted the horse once again. You have to just keep in mind that this fellow is a very strong man, strong willed, strong of body.

G: Now do you remember the issue in which the minimum wage was increased to a dollar from seventy-five cents.

H: (Laughter) Oh, do I ever! My gosh! That was the time that Spessard Holland of Florida was the leader against it. It was late in the afternoon and I was there with Johnson on the floor, and I remember him looking around and saying to me, "I think we'll pass that minimum wage bill now." He had a little short quorum call. Zip, zip. He called it up, and it passed like that--voice vote--zip. And boy, oh boy, Spessard Holland came charging out of the Senate dining room, and he wanted to know what had happened here. Oh, he was just jumping, screaming, and hollering and pounding the desk. Johnson said, "Well, Spessard, I had a little quorum call. If you fellows aren't on the job around here, I've got legislation to pass." He just slipped it right on through there. Zip! Oh boy, they were furious with him.

G: I guess a lot of that was timing.

H: That's exactly right. Johnson used to talk always about timing. When the time is to pull the noose, when the time is to pull the trap. You just had to know what the time was. There had been a lot of debate about the minimum wage. There had been all kinds of debate about it, and so it had just simmered down. But opponents of the increased minimum wage to a dollar were still hanging in there, and Johnson just felt that we'd had enough of this. It wasn't that he closed off debate; it was just that he closed off extended, prolonged debate that would result only in further delay. He followed the rules: he called it up; he informed the minority side, and he had a short quorum call-- and I mean very short--and bingo! He'd look right up there at the presiding officer, and he'd have his man up there in the presiding office, [and indicate] third reading, get those three fingers up. Third reading. Bingo!

You just have to understand this fellow. He worked the floor of the Senate. And also he never hesitated to call on you for help. Many times he'd call on me when there was a bill up where he figured I could have some influence. He'd say, "I expect you to get

the following votes. I expect you to get them. Now you go after them."

G: Are you thinking of a particular bill here?

H: I can't right at the moment. But I can just see the guy. He'd call you on over and tell you that, "This vote is going to be close, and there are three people over here that are your kind of guys and they're all wobbly. You get over and firm them up for me now and report back. And don't get me any of that 'I don't know' stuff--either yes or no. I want to know whether they're going to vote with us or against us. Because many is the time, as I told you yesterday, that he'd say, "The most important thing around here is to know how to count. If you don't know how to count you can't be a leader."

G: That's fascinating.

H: I've got to let you go.

G: Thank you so much, Senator. You've really given us some good stuff here.

[End of tape 1 of 1 of interview III]