LYNDON BAINES JOHNSON LIBRARY ORAL HISTORY COLLECTION

LBJ Library
2313 Red River Street
Austin, Texas 78705

http://www.lbjlib.utexas.edu/johnson/archives.hom/biopage.asp

MCGEORGE BUNDY ORAL HISTORY, SPECIAL INTERVIEW I
PREFERRED CITATION

For Internet Copy:
Transcript, McGeorge Bundy Oral History Special Interview I, 3/30/93, by Robert Dallek, Internet Copy, LBJ Library.

For Electronic Copy on Compact Disc from the LBJ Library:
Transcript, McGeorge Bundy Oral History Special Interview I, 3/30/93, by Robert Dallek, Electronic Copy, LBJ Library.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES AND RECORDS ADMINISTRATION

LYNDON BAINES JOHNSON LIBRARY

Legal Agreement Pertaining to the Oral History Interviews of

McGEORGE BUNDY

In accordance with the provisions of Chapter 21 of Title 44, United States Code, and subject to the terms and conditions hereinafter set forth, I, McGeorge Bundy of New York City, do hereby give, donate and convey to the United States of America all my rights, title and interest in the tape recordings and transcripts of the personal interviews conducted in New York City on March 30 and November 10, 1993 with Robert Dallek and prepared for deposit in the Lyndon Baines Johnson Library.

This assignment is subject to the following terms and conditions:

(1) The transcripts shall be available for use by researchers as soon as it has been deposited in the Lyndon Baines Johnson Library.

(2) The tape recordings shall be available to those researchers who have access to the transcripts.

(3) During my lifetime, I retain all copyright in the material given to the United States by the terms of this instrument. Thereafter, the copyright in both the transcripts and tape recordings shall pass to the United States Government. During my lifetime, researchers may publish brief "fair use" quotations from the transcripts and tape recordings without my express consent in each case.

(4) Copies of the transcripts and the tape recordings may be provided by the Library to researchers upon request.

(5) Copies of the transcripts and tape recordings may be deposited in or loaned to institutions other than the Lyndon Baines Johnson Library.

McGeorge Bundy
Donor

Dec. 28 1993
Date

Ralph C Bledsoe
Archivist of the United States

October 21, 1994
Date

SPECIAL INTERVIEW I

DATE: March 30, 1993

INTERVIEWEE: McGEORGE BUNDY

INTERVIEWER: Robert Dallek

PLACE: New York City, New York

Tape 1 of 1, Side 1

B: What are you doing with this [material]?

D: I am working on volume two of my Johnson biography. Volume one, *Lone Star Rising*, came out--

B: Yes, I remember. I haven't read it because early Lyndon doesn't interest me.

D: Well, that's interesting, because--

B: It will when I come to figure out what I think about him; I'll have to read that. I read the first [Robert] Caro [volume] with such dismay.

D: Volume two--

B: Is worse.

D: Of course, I'm not an objective witness--

(Laughter)

B: Well, I'm not asking you to rate the competition; I just want to berate the competition.

(Laughter)

D: Well, if you invite me to, I can do that too.

B: I'll bet you can, chapter and verse--

D: You can even find it in some of my footnotes. But what I did in this first volume was to try and look at the pre-presidential, pre-vice-presidential career. And what I found with this man is that he is terribly complicated, and that on the one hand you can be very put off by him.

B: I don't think anybody who knew him well wasn't put off by him at some point. I have not met anybody.

D: But I found that he also had extraordinary virtues and was a man with extraordinary vision. The thing I argue in that book was that he wanted to transform the South by integrating it into the mainstream of the country's economic and political life. And to do this he hit upon the idea that the New Deal and government largesse and all these federal programs, and then the defense spending, beginning in the 1940s was of course an excellent plan. And indeed, small wonder that Texas had more air bases than any other state in the Union in the 1950s. He was brilliant at doing that kind of thing. But now I come to the vice-presidency and the presidency, and this is a very different kind of thing.

Anyway, what I wanted to get you to do in the limited amount of time we have here today is to first of all, if you can tell me, do you remember when you first met him?

B: I suppose it was in the early days of the Kennedy Administration; I don't have any recollection that I had met him before that, there was nothing where I would have approached him.

D: More importantly, do you have general impressions you can give me of the man, of the President?

B: Yes, I can. Do you want to begin that way?

D: Yes, begin that way and then we can get into specifics about both domestic and foreign policy matters.

B: There are just a great many things to say about him. I suppose the most important is, as you already know, mainly the enormous combination of ambition, energy and operational brains; [the] conceptional brain I'm not so sure about. I wonder if he would even know what you are saying about what he wanted to do, himself.

D: That's interesting, and I raised that; he was a great operator and an *ad hoc* sort of--

B: And a [man who asked], "How do I judge this?"

D: I don't think he ever read a book in his life.

B: That's interesting. I don't know that he did. He certainly read furiously, and you couldn't tell what he thought about what he read except by what he did. He didn't want to talk about the pluses and minuses of a paper. I think you'd find, if you talk to the guys who really wrote speeches with him, that it was trial and error for them. That's a very interesting question; it would be interesting to know what [Jack] Valenti and [Richard] Goodwin--Goodwin doesn't have a whole lot of truth in him but he's bright as hell.

D: McPherson?

B: Harry would have the most thoughtful view. My experience with him was very much trial and error. He wouldn't say what he wanted to do about [Chancellor of Germany, Ludwig] Erhard, for example; you had to find out by doing it or not doing it.

D: Here I think there might be an interesting distinction of the man. I find in reading the record--this is mainly what I do, is work my way through.

B: Check through the whole--get the whole damn--[you're a] well-trained Columbia Ph.D.

D: It's an act of madness.

B: You have to learn to disbelieve in those documents, especially with LBJ.

D: I love to tell the story about John Connally, who I interviewed a couple of times. I said to him, "Governor, I understand you've put five million pages of material into the Johnson Library now." He said, "Yes, but you ain't going to find the whole story there." (Laughter)

B: Of course not. That's a very important friendship though, and John Connally's man-to-man assessment of LBJ would be as good as anybody's.

D: Yes, I spoke with him at length a couple of times.

B: Whether he is forgiving is a different question. He is a hard man too. In fact, he is a harder man.

D: The point I was going to make is, I think there is a distinction--the point you're raising about Johnson: Trial and error; *ad hoc*--see, I think in domestic affairs there was a clearer vision of where he wanted to go.

B: He had a much wider--his map was full of many more points of information.

D: When it came to foreign affairs, the impression I'm getting from reading the record is that he was much less sure of himself, and what I hear you saying to me is that it was a certain trial and error. One of the more specific questions I might get into now is, you worked with John Kennedy, and the sense I have of Kennedy was that he did have a very keen feel for foreign policy.

B: Certainly by the time he died--it's the way life works--he was an extraordinarily perceptive, informed, and in relevant terms an experienced practitioner, and confident in himself and perceptive about who was helpful, and in which ways, and all that sort of thing. So he was riding and in control.

Johnson had this enormous recognition that this was an important subject. He didn't have any sort of temperamental isolationism, rather the reverse. He was interested; he seemed also to be active and effective in the world. He'd been, in that sense, in the front ranks of Cold War Washington for twenty years. And his basic instincts were relatively standard Cold War instincts with a serious admixture of the domestic reformer. He liked helping the Indians, but he wanted to do it in his own way.

D: You mean the South Asians.

B: South Asians. I don't know if the subject of other Indians ever came up. That would have been domestic, and he would have been friendly [to the issue] and he would have listened to [Secretary of the Interior, Stewart] Udall.

I think his problem in foreign affairs at the beginning was sort of, "I'm going to show these guys I'm not a Texas provincial. I'm a world statesman and I can talk to [Charles] de Gaulle." So he makes a little mistake the first day, thinking that he'd persuaded de Gaulle to come to Washington. Anybody who thinks he can second-guess de Gaulle on the contents of a *mano a mano* conversation on the first day out is over-stretching, even Lyndon. Anyway, at least that kind of "I'll show them" [attitude] is a part of it. It's not the only part, not the largest part, but it wasn't his own home country in the same way [it was] proving to Larry O'Brien that he could count the Senate better than O'Brien could; that was easy.

D: What about his relationship with you and [Secretary of Defense, Robert] McNamara, [Secretary of State, Dean] Rusk; does this enter in?

B: Are we talking about the beginning, the middle, or the end?

D: In the beginning. There are great differences, obviously.

B: There surely are.

D: In the beginning, because there was this dependency that he--

B: With Rusk there was [?] a real sense that, "This is my kind of man, and I can get along with him, and I understand him and he understands me, and we are both aware that the country is full of Yankees." He had that feeling about Dean Rusk, very strongly. And he never had any reason to change his mind. He was a man that he relied on, he trusted, he could be sure there would never be a side-bar play. And they were attuned. There were lots of ways in which they were very different. Dean Rusk was--it never occurred to him to try to take three tricks with one ace. And Lyndon felt that any trick where you only got two tricks for an ace wasn't good enough. You did something good for the party and if you could get a radio station on the side, you know, what the hell? You were supposed to do that. That was the way it worked.

Dean Rusk was much more Presbyterian. I don't really know his denomination, but [he was a] serious, virtuous, nonprofit sort of guy. So that was always a very trusting, very untroubled relationship, in terms of "where do I stand with the other guy," for both.

McNamara was more intense; "Mister Sta-Comb" was the brains of the lot and all that kind of thing. As the vice president, he found that McNamara was enormously energetic, and enormously loyal, and enormously reliable, and he also found out--this at the end of the game and I was not in the government; I was only watching a friend--how exhausted--mentally, tension-exhausted, frustration-exhausted--McNamara was. But that was a very strong, good, untroubled relationship. It was more complicated between him and me. And that's a story that I probably want to wait and tell you all in one bunch off

the tape. He had thought me useful, and he had not thought of me as one of the people in the White House who was trying to fence him out. For instance--

D: When he was vice president.

B: When he was vice president. He wasn't in the office much; I didn't call on him much. He didn't happen to have a guy in our staff meeting, but if I were doing it over again I would probably invite him to do it, and he probably would have done it, and it would have probably made him a little less nervous. I'm not sure JFK would have encouraged that, not that he would have stopped me: "You really think you need to do that?"

It's an absolutely marvelous small point that the Kennedys thought Johnson was indiscreet, [and] Johnson thought the Kennedys were indiscreet. And indeed what I think--what does the psychiatrist call it when you give a different reason from your real one? The real underlying problem was they were rivals for the top job. You never forgive the other guy for wanting the presidency in a way that endangers your own hopes; [Adlai?] Stevenson, Kennedy. Kennedy kept trying to help: you want to talk to Arthur [Goldberg?] about that. He did more than a man could be asked to do to try to make them understand each other. And all they said to themselves was, "Arthur has got one weakness; he likes that other guy."

(Laughter)

D: The bottom line.

B: Terrible, terrible. So that was a difficulty, but not with Bob. I don't know what their relationship in the earlier years was.

D: Bob McNamara.

B: Yes.

D: Not Bobby Kennedy.

B: That's so clear in the records. I got caught in that jam a couple of times through failure to perceive how edgy it was. But my own relationship with him was flexible, like everybody else's; he was a man who when he decided that he was annoyed at you he'd get your name wrong, "that Moyer," or "that McBundy," deliberately. Scoundrel!

D: Ed Guttman tells me that he was offered the press secretary job by Johnson at some point, and turned it down. And he said that ever thereafter when he saw Johnson, it would be "Goodman," or "Goatman," or anything that was wrong.

B: Have you run into the great habit that Lady Bird had, when she discovered that you had been sent to left field and that communications had broken down? It would go on for two or three days. Phone calls weren't returned; memos didn't come back; you ceased to exist. It's very hard to conduct the job of that particular office when you have no relationship. It's actually very dangerous for the old bastard, because you may have to make a decision when he's not paying attention.

What would happen along about the third or fourth day was that Mrs. Johnson would call Mary and she would say, "You know, this is a crazy city, and Lyndon and I have said to each other, I suppose forty times, we ought to get the Bundys over. And now finally we found the time and could you come, just the two of you tomorrow night?" And you would go and he would be polite, and whether she had told him, "This is nonsense; you've got to see him again." "I can't stand the bastard." "If I ask him, 'Will you come to dinner'"--what that conversation was is purely imagination. But the repair job--and I've since encountered other people who have been through that. And while we are on this--I'm going to ask you to turn off the tape here.

(Interruption)

You learned to hold something [in abeyance] that he's not in the mood to pay attention to. There is a very interesting, simple, and important case, the famous memorandum of George Ball on Vietnam in the fall of 1964. I don't now know whether I actually stuck it in the night reading, or whether I didn't bother because it wouldn't get read. Probably the White House records would show it, although they might not; he might not have checked it. It might not turn up; there is an uncertainty there. But what I do know is that he was not going to make that an object of his close attention in September and October of 1964. He had done what needed to be done for the time being about Vietnam in the Tonkin Resolution, and long-range thoughts from George Ball, especially since way down deep that wasn't "him," were not going to be the subject of any kind of [inaudible] that can wait.

D: Here is maybe one example when the record should not be looked at as something that you swallow whole.

B: All that I really know--I don't know the record, as I say; I don't know whether I showed him the paper or said to myself, "He will never look at that." Because by then I knew him well enough to know that this was a man who wasn't answering or following the actual, operational, real questions; that you couldn't find out anything that didn't relate to the next stage of the campaign. That's so clear, that that's the reason that George's memo doesn't surface in pre-election.

D: Would you say this was true of the Mike Mansfield letters and memos that come much earlier?

B: No, that's a more complicated matter. Mansfield is a senator; Mansfield is an important

senator. Mansfield and he had been on the same side of many battles. He doesn't want Mansfield against him and he wants Mansfield on board. Therefore, a Mansfield memo would get attention. But George Ball is on board. He works for Dean Rusk; he works for me. He's not going to make me any big trouble. He doesn't have any votes. Mansfield is a senator. So that one interviews Mansfield--I do a memo to be used with Mansfield; it probably would have said, "Remember this about him, that about him; he's going to want to know the following." This is part of a dialog to keep him on board and it does keep him on board. And that's roughly his attitude toward the responsible doves, until [Senator J. William] Fulbright drives him crazy.

D: Which is more like the late 1960s.

B: Fulbright doesn't play at all. That's not the right way to put it: Fulbright doesn't play as Johnson would have played if he had made the same agreement. If Johnson had sponsored some president's resolution he wouldn't have found reason to question its validity a year later. He didn't play the game that way. Now maybe you *do* play the game that way, but you don't *think* you play the game that way. And Fulbright was a troublemaker. Mansfield was a load-bearing wall in the real work of the Senate.

D: He was a team player.

B: Team player.

D: What about the Gulf of Tonkin Resolution?

B: The Gulf of Tonkin Resolution is a very complicated story. I'd have to think whether I want that on tape or not.

D: I've read every document that--

B: Let's put it off the tape for the moment and we'll see whether it's simple enough.

(Interruption)

D: Clearly, I'm never going to finish with you today; you've opened up a can of worms here. (Laughter)

B: I'm free as long as you are.

D: I have to get to LaGuardia.

B: You have to get to LaGuardia for an eleven o'clock flight?

D: Noon. So you think if I go back at 10:30--?

B: What is it, a domestic?

D: Yes, American Airlines to Chicago.

B: American Airlines, unless there's some trick in the weather--

(Interruption)

--everybody in this part of town [inaudible].

D: Not to mention the rest of the country.

Let me ask you if you are willing to talk a little bit about Vietnam generally, then specifically. I must tell you, in some ways I have anguished having to write about this in my book.

B: It's a hard subject. The reason I'm talking about it in my book is to get it out of the way before the next book, which is going to be memoirs. I said, "What do you want me to talk about?" The people at Yale said, "Well, the only thing we really, in the department we ask that question, if he asks [?]." They said they would like me to talk some about Vietnam [?]. So I did a lecture on what do I think about it. But where do you want to begin?

D: Your lectures, I take it, will be published--

B: They will be published long before you are, unless you are doing this in segments.

D: One huge volume; it's probably going to take me another three and a half years to get it out.

B: I think I can beat that. I'd better.

D: And then your memoirs--

B: The memoirs will be about something else. They will be sort of the whole--I don't even know. I am reading other people's memoirs to figure out what they really ought to be.

D: And Kai Bird is doing--

B: He is doing a general study of my father, my brother and me [*The Color of Truth, McGeorge Bundy and William Bundy: Brothers in Arms, A Biography*]. And his timetable seems to be about ten years long. So I'll get there before he will.

D: Vietnam.

B: Where do you want to start?

D: Go to the beginning, Kennedy, the shift over to Johnson. Are you of the school that thinks Kennedy would have done much the same?

B: No, I think he would have done different because he is a different man. But how much different is a very hard question. He was a more modern man in the sense that he could have said, "This is a mess; it won't work." When he would have said it, how much he would have said it would have been, as it was for Johnson in 1965--I'm clearer now than I was at the time about the four-year focus [inaudible]. He [LBJ] wasn't going to do anything that would give [Barry] Goldwater a break, Kennedy neither. And in that sense they were both taking that year off. I suppose therefore the most interesting question is, would Kennedy have gone for a resolution, assuming the same events? Some people

make a great big thing out of 34A [operations]. I don't. [They were deniable?] operations as if it were plausibly somebody else's, and that's all that is. The Vietnamese may be out there doing whatever the hell they were doing.

But the broader issue of Kennedy's view of the war and whether he wanted a second term to be devoted to the war: I think he would have been freer to cut loose. He could never face the electorate again. Johnson, until the spring of 1968, had himself in his own mind's eye as president for another four years. He was a candidate until he wasn't. He was a hawk; he was temperamentally sort of always more "one more regiment" than Kennedy. [He thought] we didn't stand as fast as we should have in the missile crisis; we didn't press Berlin as hard as we should have. Maybe he didn't say that; maybe you can't find that in the record. I doubt if you'll find it on the tapes, because he seldom said anything that would leak against the President.

(Interruption)

D: Well, we had Kennedy--

B: We were talking about Johnson versus Kennedy on Vietnam. Kennedy--what he would have done is a very hard thing to say. But the triangulation that I put on it is that as compared to Johnson he was simply--had Johnson really known the concessions at the Cuban Missile Crisis he would have been genuinely shocked. How could you give up something that's undermined your ally? There is a real temperamental difference that I think would have taken the--Johnson simply wasn't asking himself the "would you get bogged down?" question. I suspect if you wanted to make an early litmus test and you were looking to see what Lyndon Johnson--if you can find out, because he was very careful and very discreet--but we had all this fuss about Laos in 1961, and what Kennedy

really got out of that was all these people that want to save Laos--the only guy in the Joint Chiefs who wants to save Laos is the navy [chief]. Now is it an accident that it's none of his business, because Laos is landlocked?

(Laughter)

D: I never heard that before.

B: And Kennedy saw all that, had a skeptical view of it, and the Kennedy who had finished the electoral course and was free to make his own judgments, would in fact have wanted to have a half-million men in Vietnam, and wouldn't have seen that a hundred thousand led to two hundred thousand? The notion that they are alike because the same bloody-minded hawks were running the government, whoever was president, is total baloney. Because the one thing that Rusk and McNamara and Bundy had in common was that they understood that they were working for a president who--either one--would insist on making his own decisions.

D: That's a crucial point.

B: It's baloney that we were running [and] deciding [for] either of these guys. It's an easy way for intellectuals to think, that other intellectuals are [or?] so-called [inaudible] persons that live by the word can take charge and run a government. This is a *presidential* form of government; it doesn't work that way. It's like thinking John Hay ran Lincoln's decisions.

D: These people don't get to that Oval Office because they are wallflowers.

B: No way.

D: Okay; we have Johnson, then, in the office and you described his temperament as "one more regiment," or having--

B: Well, it's an interesting question. The process of decision making in 1965 is an exceptionally complicated one. I've said but I want to underline it--I forget whether we were on or off the record. Are we taping now?

D: Yes, we are.

B: Were we a minute ago?

D: Yes.

B: Okay. He puts it off except for the Gulf of Tonkin exception; he wanted a resolution.

(Interruption)

Nobody can say exactly what JFK would have done. But that it would have been different and that it would have been less, I think, is a safe generalization. The demonstration of it is not in the movie.

(Laughter)

D: What nonsense. Who cares whether it's such nonsense, but it has such an impact on so many--

B: It must make teaching the subject just a difficult problem.

D: When I talk about Kennedy and the assassination and I ask how many of them have seen the [Oliver] Stone film--

B: The hands go up.

D: A great number of them. "How many of you are persuaded by what he is describing?"

B: Large numbers?

D: These are young people--

B: I have trouble with one of my own children, a real movie fan.

D: I don't mince words; I tell them, "You are being bilked; you are being sold a bill of

goods, you are being brainwashed. Let's talk about reality." Then I even tell them I have FBI documents demonstrating that Johnson had absolutely nothing to do with killing Kennedy. Now that's good. I'm an authority; that they like, and I counter with right [?]. Then there are always the handful always, sort of very left, paranoid.

B: There are people for whom it fits their own paranoia, and there is nothing you can do about it.

D: Most of them are pretty good, open-minded kids who just are ignorant.

B: But it's so important to get them to hear something closer to reality, because it gives them a view of our government.

D: The notion that there could be a secret conspiracy is the kind that can be revealed only by some flamboyant movie producer.

(Laughter)

B: Or that now we will open the Kennedy documentary records and we are going to find what this Stone has called for. What are they going to find? It's crazy. Then he will say that it was destroyed. He's going to have his story, his way, for *his* paranoia.

D: If you would give me some general estimates of--I would like at some future time maybe to come back and talk to you further.

B: That would be better for both of us, if you've got the time.

D: Yes, I will be back. In general, because there has been so much recrimination and so much pain--I just saw McNamara in Washington.

B: Well, he's just coping with Deborah Shapley at the moment.

D: I just finished reading that book yesterday [*Promise and Power: The Life and Times of Robert McNamara*].

B: You see the problem then. She's an earnest, able person, and Bob made a mistake that is still painful for him. Fundamentally, where he was and where she was made too much of a gap for communication. Naturally it hurts him, and she can't understand why he's hurt, and so forth.

D: There's no core [?] to this man, or we can't understand--

B: The reviewers are worse than both the book and the subject.

D: I read the reviews first and then I read the book, and I was taken aback because the book is not as bad as--

B: No, it's not. It does sort of say the man can't trust or be trusted again, and that's not the point. If I wrote it, if I had trouble in the family and I couldn't reach a very close relative, [inaudible] then I'd call Bob McNamara.

D: You wrote him that.

B: And he is entitled to know about himself, that he's not the man in that book. She could even understand that, if you could get her to back away and think it through. But she has to be the hanging judge, because from her point of view Vietnam was a great mistake.

D: She's sort of locked in the 1960s.

B: Exactly right. What do you want me to talk about?

D: What I'm curious about is, now in all the years that have gone by, you look back on all this and how do you feel about this whole experience? Was it a great mistake?

B: Oh, sure it was a mistake.

D: I'm playing devil's advocate a little bit with you now; it's so easy for us to look back and say--

B: That's true.

D: --"What a mistake." And yet in the memos I read from the period in which you and Rusk and McNamara were operating there wasn't that. Certainly in 1964 and 1965 there was a feeling this had to be done.

B: That's right.

D: This had to be confronted. And even what you say about Kennedy, I'm mindful--I think that he would have been much more flexible than Johnson would have been.

B: Oh, it was a hard extraction. You don't solve the problem by saying Kennedy is different. (Interruption)

That's one of the reasons I want to get it written, is if I don't do it now, I can't write memoirs that won't, in terms of public reviewers, turn around that subject. It's probably the largest event that I got closely entangled with and I don't want it to be sort of the story of my life, because it's not.

I don't know how it would have come out with Kennedy, so let's just talk about Johnson. I think what happens in 1965, 1966, 1967 is that he organizes, and he really does organize. He runs the decision making; he knows that he's running the decision making. What he wants is to hold the country together and first, not lose; and second, in some sense prevail. And what he decides is that that's important; he has already decided that that's important. [He] in a sense made the [decision], "I'll win in 1964, and I will stand in Vietnam in 1965, and I will have the Great Society." The most important of these is the Great Society. But he is convinced that he can have both, because he is simply not going to accept the notion that he is going to be the man who can't hold the Alamo. A big jump, in the sense that he knows it is not the Alamo. But the judgment he's going to have rendered on him is not going to be that he lost. He is going to hold it

with everybody and he is going to organize; he's not going to command it. He's going to be the Senate majority leader--shorthand--therefore, [and saying] McNamara is going to bring him, not just a plan, but a plan with the chiefs, and still more with Westy on board, and then the next plan the chiefs and Westy on board. And Ball is going to bring him--shorthand--Mansfield, and Stevenson, and after Stevenson he's going to have Justice Goldberg. Why does he put Goldberg in there? [John Kenneth] Galbraith asked him to. Galbraith says, "You've got to have a man of peace." "Well, I can get a man of peace if that's what Ken and Arthur and their friends want."

Does he think it's going to change; does *Johnson* think Goldberg is going to bring peace? No, Johnson thinks Galbraith thinks it's going to bring peace, and Galbraith has some votes. And poor old Arthur has his career wrecked for the *zero* of being the president's peacemaker--this is the one that made me mad. It's baloney that Arthur Goldberg will make any difference, because what does the ambassador do up there? He does what Dean Rusk gets told by Lyndon Johnson to do. And what are they going tell him to do? Just what they would tell some career ambassador. So it's baloney, but it keeps Ken Galbraith quiet in the summer of 1965.

D: He's stroking the liberals.

B: Yes, which he does very well; he's been doing it all of his life. And that's just what he thinks it is. When you talk to [Richard] Russell you're talking to real power; when you talk to Mansfield you're talking to 50 per cent real power. With Fulbright--of course he's wrong about Fulbright; Fulbright causes him more troubles than there are in this world. The man can hold a few damned hearings, and that's going to louse up my consensus for the war? He's a nobody, this Fulbright. Well, he's not a nobody, but he ought to be, in

Lyndon Johnson's world. So he's going to organize a consensus behind, "I'll make peace with my left hand and I'll make war with my right hand, and everybody is with me. And I'm going to do it without calling up the reserves. I'm not going to alarm the American people. [But] Bundy wants me to make a speech." So he goes to Johns Hopkins. "Bundy wants to goddamn go and debate the radicals," so he sends me to the Dominican Republic to shut me up.

D: He sent you to the Dominican Republic in the spring of 1965 to prevent you from--

B: I think so. "Just get him out of town." And then I come back and I schedule a debate, at the invitation of CBS, and he goes and tries to stop it.

D: Did he stop it?

B: He says to Moyers, "Announce that that debate is off." Moyers says to him--I didn't know this at the time--"Mr. President, you can't do that; that won't stick, [McGeorge] Bundy's agreed to do it. You just have to sit and enjoy it." But the notion that he has to let an assistant make a speech he thinks he's told him pretty firmly not to make--he doesn't say, "I'm sending you to the Dominican Republic to shut you up." But his thought is, "I stopped him and the son of a bitch didn't pay attention." So my relations with him break down, and that's one reason I leave the government. It's not the biggest reason. But I called [President of Harvard University] Nate Pusey in the fall of 1965 and said, "Do you ever reappoint a professor?" He said, "It will take me a little time, but I think I can arrange it." And then I get an easier way out, which is the Ford Foundation. That people can misunderstand: they don't know I have to get out.

D: What were the other reasons for your leaving?

B: Basically it's the breakdown with Johnson; he doesn't trust me any more.

D: And principally over this episode.

B: Over the overall question--it's a real one: I'm a real believer that you can't make war without explaining it. He's a believer that you can.

D: Don't you think he was ruined by the Goldwater election?

B: How do you mean?

D: How I mean is, he wins this phenomenal landslide--

B: He thinks he's got such a landslide that he doesn't have to--

D: He relaxes the political antenna which were so keen, which had been so effective for so long. What happens--see, this is what I puzzle over.

B: I don't know.

D: In February 1965, Hubert Humphrey sent him a letter, a very interesting letter, in which he says, "Remember, Mr. President, that in World Wars I and II we needed that consensus. People need to understand what they are fighting for." He knew Roosevelt; he knew that Roosevelt operated by the adage [that] before you can have an effective policy abroad you need to have some kind of stable consensus at home. He knew this; he was too astute a politician [not to]. Why--?

B: Well, there are two things to say there. One, he was right in this sense: He once said--and I forget in what context or to whom or which date--in effect, "You guys are paying so much attention to the noisy antiwar group, that we are--this is a hawk country. You go and test down [?] who is going to vote which way. If it is between your New York liberal friends, or if it's between Fulbright and the sentiment of the country, the country is a hawk." And of course, he is right. You look at the elections from 1964 onward, and the only dove who ever won--a relative dove--is Lyndon Johnson in 1964,

and that was because Goldwater was crazy. [Inaudible] I still get angry at my rioting friends in Chicago. The Chicago convention lost that election.

D: *Apropos* of that, I have one specific thing I must ask you, because it's right--

B: [Inaudible] bothering me [?].

D: I've been told that in 1968, McNamara called you up and told you that he had a conversation with Hubert Humphrey and that McNamara told Humphrey, "If you tell Johnson"--this is around September--"I'm breaking with you and I'm going to go public on a peace program, or a withdrawal program, Vietnamization or call it what you will"--McNamara called you and said, "Will you go along with me if Hubert announces this? We will come out publicly endorsing his stand." McNamara may lose his job at the World Bank, because this is supposed to be a neutral position; you don't get on the public record that way. Do you have recollection of that?

B: I don't have recollection of that. I have recollection of how I felt, and I would hope that I told Bob what I felt, which was that Hubert should do that. I actually made a speech which infuriated Johnson that same season, which went about a lap beyond Hubert. It didn't go to getting out, but it was my effort to say that I was very much on that side of the argument.

D: The background for this is that--

B: Hubert didn't go as far as he wanted to go.

D: It was McNamara who told me this, and he said, "Ask Mac Bundy about this but don't tell him you heard it from me initially, because I don't want to color the--"

B: What does he remember that I said?

D: He remembers that you agreed. But his memory is vague on this and so, "Test the

waters," he said to me.

B: That's right, surely we were both out of the government by then. We were both believers that--

Tape 1 of 1, Side 2

--and Hubert over Nixon by a country mile, but that's picking on [?] character alone. Nixon is the shabbiest piece of work that ever made it, that I saw, for a very long time. So that was an easy choice for both of us. I'm sure we had the conversation--if Bob remembers the conversation, it fits into everything I recollect about 1968.

D: Good. One other thing I wanted to ask you about was the 1967 war. Now, you are out by then.

B: You mean the Israeli war. I get called back in.

D: Oh, okay.

B: And I think it is McNamara's fault; you'll have to ask him. They get into a war after Johnson has tried very hard, really, to prevent it, to stop it. [Inaudible] The war comes; the Israelis made that choice. I saw [Abba] Eban on that subject not long ago; he does it very well. But Johnson was surprised that they actually went. And I got called down there sort of in the capacity of "old hands come to a tough problem," and we yammer around, and by the end of the day McNamara has said to the President, "You need to get someone to run this war for you, because Walt is busy with Vietnam." Johnson appoints me. Turn the machine off and I will tell you why--

(Interruption)

The other point you have to bear in mind is, [Johnson's policy in] 1965 worked, in the sense that he doesn't call up the reserves; he doesn't have a rebellion in the House, he

does pass a hundred bills, and he gets another fifty in 1966 in spite of Fulbright's goddamn hearings, which he can hardly stand because they are off the board [?] in terms of his political experience of what you can honestly [inaudible] to do. But that's the second hearings. He got the first set of hearings in when? Is it 1966?

D: 1966, I believe.

B: And then there are more in 1968. And I really don't follow it closely in 1967; I see it again when the "wise men" are called in. In the fall of 1967 we give him lousy advice [because] we believed what we were told.

End of Tape 1 of 1 and Special Interview