

Oral history interview with H. R. Haldeman
conducted by Raymond H. Geselbracht
in Mr. Haldeman's home in Santa Barbara, California
on April 11, 1988

RHG: Mr. Haldeman, I just want to explain to the researchers in the future that my preparation for this interview has been almost entirely to go through your journal that you kept while you were in the White House and that our questions will be in response to issues raised by that journal, and will be in some ways a gloss on the journal and in some ways an expansion on the journal, which is a very important document. Just by way of a warm-up question, let me ask you about the way in which you developed the persona, the personality that you brought to the White House in 1969. Your journal shows you to be a very dedicated man in a very particular kind of way. I wonder if you could tell us where the particular kind of dedication came from. Did it come from your family, was your religion an influence, your sense of career, your sense of nation? What was it?

HRH: The hardest thing for anybody to do, I think, is psychoanalyze himself and I'm not really sure where roots of whatever characteristics I have come from. Obviously a combination I think of all the forces that you enumerated. I would add to that, though, the time I spent ser[ving], in the campaigns, but much more after the campaigns, starting with the transition and then moving to the White House, I think a lot of it comes simply from the association, of being a part of the White House operation. Of recognizing the importance of what you're doing and the potential effects, both positive and negative, that can

arise from what you're doing, and the.... You're in a surrounding where everybody is so dedicated to the cause--each in his own way, obviously, and producing in different ways. There's a universal feeling within the group that you're doing something important and that it's essential that you do the best you can at it, and not let things fall between the tables. I think, to the degree that I reflect that, [it] is a reflection of my earlier background and training, compounded and amplified by the atmosphere that I found myself in as we were getting ready to go to the White House, and then when we were at the White House.

RHG: Was there some sense of public service...

HRH: Oh, sure.

RHG: ...that your parents instilled into you? I'm just trying to think, you had to do so many things, to get to the White House, and there was just so much in your makeup that you had to develop and take with you, and I'm just wondering where that...?

HRH: By the time I got to the White House, or by the time that we won the election in '68, I had spent a long time working with Richard Nixon in various political activities, starting with the Vice-Presidential campaign in 1956, where I had served as a volunteer and worked as an advance man, and then again.... That was about a three month activity during the actual campaign for Nixon's re-election as Vice President. Then, the Congressional campaign of '58, where the Vice President campaigned for the Republican Congressional candidates, I again worked as an advance man--spent another three months on a leave of absence from business. Then in '60 I took a full year's leave of absence to work as campaign

tour manager for Nixon in his campaign for the Presidency, which he lost to [John F.] Kennedy. Again, in 1962 I took a full year's leave of absence to manage Nixon's campaign for Governor of California.

That was an evolutionary process. By 1956 I had been in the advertising agency business for 16 years. I had to some degree started to look for other things, other kinds of things to do, not in place of that business, but to add on to that. I had slipped into, fallen into the routine of business operation, and so forth, and the political opportunity as a volunteer was something that intrigued me, and I went ahead with that. A lot of reasons--no overwhelming ones. I was impressed by Richard Nixon the man; I was interested in him. I had followed the [Alger] Hiss case and found it fascinating. He was the Senator from my state in 1952, and I was--I actually had volunteered to work in the '52 campaign (his first round for election as Vice President) and was not accepted, so I never got into that one.

RHG: How did you make that application?

HRH: I wrote a letter to Nixon, volunteering to work in the campaign in whatever way I could be useful, and outlining my background a little bit. About the time I got it ready, the Nixon "Fund" thing broke in the middle of that campaign. He came to California and made his famous "Checkers" speech on television from the El Capitan Theater in Hollywood, which was a television studio at the time. I drove over to the El Capitan with my letter in an envelope in hand, and waited for his motorcade to pull into the theater. Tried to get to him to give it to him, was not able to,

gave it to a staff person, and was assured that it would be delivered to him. And it ultimately was. I heard later from Glen Lipscomb, who was Congressman from California [and] who was working on the campaign staff, saying that there was no opportunity for me in the national campaign, but why didn't I contact California headquarters and see if there was something I could do here? Which I didn't want to do, so I didn't. That was the end of it, really, 'til '56.

By 1956 I had--I'm not sure where she fit. Loie Gaunt, long-time staff person for Nixon, pre-Presidential, pre-Vice Presidential, she'd worked in his Senatorial office--I had known Loie when she worked in the Dean's office at UCLA [University of California at Los Angeles] when I was active in student affairs on the UCLA campus. Her brother was a fraternity brother of mine at UCLA, so I knew her through that also. I contacted Loie--she at this time was the office manager in the Vice President's office (by 1956)--contacted her [and] told her I had tried in '52, and I wanted to try again. She, I think, got the thing to the Vice President's attention. He asked Ray Arbuthnot, who was sort of his chief advance man at the time and lived here in California, a close personal friend of Nixon's, to contact me and see if I would be suitable as an advance man. Ray did, and I was, and became an advance man, and that's how it started.

There was no great ideological thrust or noble ambition involved in this, and no thought at all of becoming permanently involved in either politics or government. It was a thing where I felt it would be an interesting side experience where I could

make a contribution that would be worthwhile, something [that] would be a learning experience and an interesting experience for me, so that's why I did it to begin with. Then, step by step, I became more and more involved, more caught up, and became quite close to Nixon after he left the Vice Presidency in '60, and moved to California. I did some traveling with him, having been his tour manager through that year of campaigning for the Presidency, and then he asked me to manage his campaign for Governor. So, I became closer then.

When he went on to New York and into the law business, our ties faded substantially, although we kept in touch from time to time. I did see him, traveled with him once in a while on a trip, and that sort of thing--until we got to his starting to get ready to run in '68, at which time I became involved, to a minor degree. That increased up to the point where I left the agency--left J. Walter Thompson Company--in April, I think, of '68, exactly twenty years, probably, to the day, from right now. I joined the campaign staff as chief of staff to the candidate, and went on from there.

RHG: So, you didn't much campaigning with him between 1962 and 1968?

HRH: No, I didn't. I did go to the '64 [Republican] convention with him, to help out. He was there just as former Vice President of the United States and senior member of the Republican Party. That was the [Barry M.] Goldwater convention, and I was there. I traveled with him once in awhile, but I was not actively involved and I.... He did some campaigning in '64; I did not participate in that.

RHG: Now, during the Presidency you became, according to Nixon's description, as I remember somewhere, as mentioned somewhere in your journal, his intimate in the White House. There was something--and [John D.] Ehrlichman has said, in his book and elsewhere, that really in 1968 the American people elected you and Nixon, essentially, as almost a single person. Did you consciously, prior to '68, try to understand Nixon and understand where you might strengthen some of his qualities?

HRH: Yeah, I think in a growing sense I did in all of the associations, from '56 up to '68, look for ways that I could.... That's what an advance man does. An advance man's job in a campaign is setting the candidate up to make the best possible and most effective appearance that he can, in an individual campaign stop. I started on that basis and learned all the details of a very intricate trade as an advance man. [I] got to know Nixon: how he performed and reacted, and that sort of thing, in the process, and became much more involved in that in 1960 when, as tour manager, I traveled with him. I was chief advance man, I was in charge of all the advance men. They did the advance work; I was with the candidate every minute of that entire year of 1960, basically, and had dealt with him, between him and the advance men and the tour planners and everybody else, on a very close basis. Then in '62, when I managed the campaign, I had total responsibility for his campaign for Governor and had to learn to how to manage him and the campaign and the party's resources and all that sort of thing to his, hopefully, best advantage. It turned out not to be.

As a sidelight, I was opposed to his running for Governor. I never felt that he should run; told him so right up to the time he was walking down that corridor to announce he was going to run; I tried to get him not to. My argument there was that he shouldn't run for Governor because he didn't want to be Governor. He was running for Governor because [Dwight D.] Eisenhower and Len [Leonard] Hall, the former Republican National [Committee] Chairman, and others had told him he had to maintain a political base in order to have any political future, having lost the Presidency in '60, and that the only way he could do that was as Governor of California and that he must do it for that. That was the reason he was running for Governor. It was not because of any burning desire to do anything great for the state of California. I had the belief that politically you don't have much chance of winning an election that you don't really want to win, for the purpose of serving in that office. I still think I was basically right. I think that's why he lost that election in '62: he didn't want to be Governor, and that came through to the voters. Pat [Edmund G.] Brown, his opponent, the incumbent Governor, very much did want to be Governor and had in a lot of ways been a good Governor. He'd also in a lot of ways not been a good Governor, but he wasn't bad enough to throw out just on his badness and Nixon wasn't good enough to overcome his goodness as Governor, because where he was really aiming himself was back to running for President.

Learning how to deal with his strengths and weaknesses became a vital part of all of those activities, more and more as

we went along. Then in this campaign in '68, the Presidential campaign, where I was serving as chief of staff, I wasn't just the tour manager at that point; I was responsible for everything that related to the candidate himself. Which meant the speechwriters, the campaign scheduling process, the advance men and the tour operations, which John Ehrlichman basically oversaw in '68. I spent all of that year right with him, all the time, and you learn a lot about a person in that kind of process. We fought that war together, and there's no question that I spent a lot of my time and thought trying to determine what things ought to be done, what things ought not to be done, how he gained the most advantage, where the pitfalls were that needed to be looked out for, and that sort of thing. It became an instinctive process. It wasn't something that I sat down one day and wrote out a memo to myself saying, this is what you should do. It just happened. I, as we moved into that, became very much involved in approaching it on that kind of basis.

RHG: About the '62 campaign, there 's just one rather famous incident that I'd like to ask a question about: the so-called last press conference. Last year, the first I guess, first scholarly biography of Nixon was published by Stephen Ambrose [Nixon: The Education of a Politician, 1913-1962] and he tried to figure out what had happened; where the last press conference had originated. The best he could do was to present three different stories. And, let me tell them to you and maybe you can draw on your memory to try to see which one is accurate.

HRH: OK.

RHG: Now, the first, he says, according to Nixon (this must be from the Memoirs; I don't have the footnotes here), he glanced at a television screen just as he was leaving for home, and heard reporters, using an insulting tone, ask, "Where's Nixon?" At that, he said, he snapped, "I'm going down there." That's number one. Now, number two, the second theory, is [Herbert G.] Klein's. He said that just as Nixon was leaving, Ray Arbutnot and Jack Drown showed up to take Nixon home. When they heard his plans, one of them declared indignantly, "You can't let the press chase you out the back door. You ought to face them," or at least go down, go out in your own style. Now, the third version, and I'm not sure who's this is, has it that when Klein told the press "The 'Boss' won't be down," that Haldeman was watching on television. Several of the reporters snickered, which made Haldeman furious. He burst into a diatribe against the liberal press, blaming it for the defeat. "They should be told just where the hell to get off." Nixon then decided to do just that.

HRH: Well, I can categorically--I assume that that third description comes from someone in the journalistic fraternity; it sounds like something Dan Rather would come up with.

RHG: And I'm sorry I don't have that citation....

HRH: I have Ambrose's book, we can check it.

RHG: We'll look it up.

HRH: But my guess would be, off the cuff--and I'm happy to have it on the record because it reflects a bias that I admittedly have, based on my knowledge of the gross inaccuracy of most of the journalistic accounts of inside stories of Richard Nixon.

Incidentally, I have a great respect for Ambrose's--I have not found any major fault with anything that I know of in Ambrose's book, to the degree that I've gone through it. I have not covered it word by word. But the third story is pure fiction, dreamed up by somebody who was not there. I don't know who, but I can say that categorically. When we find out who, I'm sure I'll be right.

The middle story, the Klein version, so-called, I think, is the one I would think most likely to be correct. The first one could be correct, the Nixon story, but Klein sounds more likely to me, based on my knowledge of the thing, which, unfortunately is second-hand. At the time that Nixon made the decision to go down, after having said he would not go down, and making plans to leave by the back door and go quietly home from the hotel (we were at the Beverly Hilton), I was in a room near his room but not in, I don't think even in his suite. I think it was in the next suite down in the hotel, with, as I recall, Bob [Robert] Finch and several other people, having breakfast and watching Herb Klein on the TV, downstairs telling the press that Nixon would not be down and closing out the coverage of the campaign. The next thing I knew, either Drown or Arbuthnot, and that's why I think the Klein version is probably accurate, although Klein wasn't there either, because obviously he was downstairs with the press at the time.... Nixon is the only one whose version is first-hand so it should be the most accurate, but I suspect it's not. I think that there was a reaction by [Drown] and/or Arbuthnot and/or Nixon to the press reaction to Klein's

discussion downstairs, that they were seeing on television, and that amongst the three of them--and they're the only three I can of my own belief put into the room at the time, into the Nixon suite....

RHG: This is Drown, Arbuthnot, ...

HRH: Drown, Arbuthnot, and Nixon.

RHG: ...and Nixon himself.

HRH: Of the three of them, one or another or all of them said something to the effect that's quoted there, that "we're going to go down," or "I'm going to go down and tell them what I think." In any event, the next thing I knew was somebody hurriedly saying to me, "He's going down." At which point I, without doing anything further, shot down as fast as I could get downstairs to warn Klein that Nixon was coming. There was no advance man available and I didn't know.... I was moving as fast as I could. I did get there before Nixon did, as I recall. Klein was on sort of a platform talking to the press, and I went up to the edge of the platform and signalled to Klein "Nixon's coming down." Just about that point my information was irrelevant because Nixon walked in the door and went up, took over the microphone and the rest is recorded on television. That would be my version of what happened.

RHG: I just want to ask a couple of questions about the '68 campaign. I read an account of the Nixon advisors selecting the Vice Presidential candidate and keeping a rather closed door. I know Maurice Stans says in his book that he wanted to come in and nobody would let him in. A few advisors selecting the Vice

Presidential candidate. Now, [Spiro T.] Agnew turned out to be a lot of trouble for the White House in many ways. This, I hope we'll talk about in the coming days. Was there any concern about whom you were picking at the time? Was there any suspicion that this man might not be Presidential caliber, or is that not what one talks about when choosing a Vice President?

HRH: Well, it is what one talks about to some degree. It isn't the only thing one talks about, unfortunately I guess. The Vice Presidential selection process was very high on Nixon's list of concerns prior to the convention, because obviously he felt sure he was going to be nominated, and he realized the importance, having been a Vice President himself, of the right selection of Vice President. He spent a lot of time worrying the subject over. The time prior to the convention we spent, as I recall, quite a long time, a week or so, at Gurney's Inn in Montauk, Long Island--a little resort hotel out on a desolate beach. I was staying at the Montauk Inn; Nixon was staying at a private home, I think, or at a special house at the Inn, or something like that, I'm not exactly sure. Anyway, I remember he was holed up writing his acceptance speech, primarily; doing a lot of speech work. Ray [Raymond K.] Price was there working with him on the speech, staying at the hotel with us, Rose [Mary] Woods doing the typing. There were just a few of us there. My role at that time, other than finishing up campaign stuff, was accompanying Nixon on his breaks between work on the speech. When he'd go for a walk on the beach or for a swim, or sit and talk or something. I would spend two or three hours with him sometimes in these long

distended sessions which were almost totally devoted to discussion of Vice Presidential possibilities. At that time it was working it over in his own mind. Not so much consulting with other people, although there was some consulting with other people.

Then we got to the convention. Nixon had made up a short list I think at that point. Incidentally, I should say here that anything that I'm saying now that is in conflict with what Nixon says in his memoirs, which I have not checked on this point, I would defer to his recollections. They're probably superior to mine. Mine may flesh out some of the minor details. But my recollections are not very strong in this area, so I'm not speaking with [the] conviction that I'm right and anybody who disagrees with me is wrong. I would have to review the disagreements to decide where I'd come out on them, and I would probably defer to them. Certainly in the case of Nixon and possibly some others: John Mitchell and perhaps some others who were involved in that process.

In any event, by the time we got to the convention Nixon had decided to work out a process for Vice Presidential selection that would involve key party leaders and people whose judgment he respected on that subject. One of the factors in Vice Presidential selection was unification of the party: bringing everybody together and trying to move into the general campaign in the strongest possible position. Who was Vice President was a factor in that and how people like Strom Thurmond and Billy Graham and various people that were involved in the process from

various sides of the spectrum--Nelson Rockefeller, Jerry [Gerald R.] Ford, Congressional leaders, opinion leaders, party leaders--how they viewed the process would be a factor, to a degree at least, on the strength of their interest in helping in the campaign and assuring the election. So he had gone through all of this. We got to the time at the convention when it was--we went through this process Nixon had worked out, where he assembled as I recall, several different cadres of Vice Presidential advisory groups. It finally boiled down to one very small group that was the ultimate selection group, and by this time we were going on into the night. I was in all of those; I was the only person, incidentally, I think, other than Richard Nixon, who was in all of the meetings of--I have some notes (and I don't know where they are) on the Vice Presidential selection process, but I'll find them someday and we'll get them into the Archives. But I have the lists of the people that were at those--there were I think, three levels of meetings, and different people--some people were involved in more than one. I think Mitchell was involved in two, but then slept through the third, as I recall. He was supposed to have been at all three but didn't make one of them. It's my belief that I was the only person other than Richard Nixon who was in all three of the meetings.

Those meetings were discussions of the various people on Nixon's short list, and in some cases other names were raised: "Have you thought about so-and-so?" In almost, if not all of the cases where some new name was raised, Nixon of course had thought

of them. It would be hard to come up with a name that he wouldn't have considered at some point in his checklist process. When it got down to the final selection, why was it Agnew? I think Nixon, I would imagine, in his memoirs, has laid out the factors and I would think they would be very accurate. My recollection would be that they were a party unification desire: Agnew was a Rockefeller Republican, basically, had been Rockefeller's campaign manager or something of that sort, I think. He was East Coast party, liberal side of the party, opposite end of the country from Nixon. A man with governmental experience as Governor of Maryland, with business experience, a feeling that he had covered sort of the broad spectrum kind of thing that you were looking for in [a] Vice President.

Nixon's view of Vice Presidential selection--he may not have mentioned in his memoirs, or anywhere else--was, I believe and recall from the Montauk walks and that sort of thing, that nobody that he selected as Vice President was likely to be of very much help to him in the campaign. Now, we're looking only at the political effect in the campaign, because that.... You [have] got to recognize, a Presidential candidate's first and overwhelming objective is to win the election because, bar that--and Nixon knew this, having lost one--bar that, he's not going to have to worry about any of the rest of the issues. So you've got to concentrate primarily on winning the election, and in selecting the Vice President you do concentrate very heavily on winning the election. His feeling was that no Vice President was going to help him very much in winning the election. The wrong

Vice Presidential selection could drag him down, and the thing there was sort of a negative approach: who was going to do us the least harm, rather than who's going to do us the most good. Agnew apparently scored well ultimately in that regard, and the net was that he was the selection.

Now in the process, I think it's been reported, and I know it to be the fact, that there was an interlude in the final selection thing where Bob Finch had the opportunity to be [the candidate]. Bob Finch at that time was Lieutenant Governor of California; had been prior to that very close to Nixon as his chief staff person in the office of the Vice President for some time, and very close to him politically in California and in national politics. Had worked as an advance man with me in the '56 campaign, but was much closer to Nixon at that time than I was. Much closer, and has always been closer politically. Bob Nixon always regarded as an outstanding political person, both as a strategist and as a candidate and an officeholder. He did take Finch into another room, out of the parlor of the suite where the final meeting was being held, took him into one of the bedrooms of the suite, as I recall, and had a long, personal, heart-to-heart talk with Bob, which only Finch and Nixon can recount accurately. It's my understanding that he told Bob that he would be his first choice as Vice President if Bob were willing and wanted to take the post. But that there were some obvious disadvantages. They discussed that, and the net was that Bob felt that someone else should be the Vice Presidential candidate.

RHG: That's really a remarkable choice in the sense that he's from the

same state that Nixon is from; it suggested to me, when I read that, incredulously, that Nixon just had a terrifically high opinion of Finch and was willing to run with him despite the political negatives.

HRH: He did, and I think that one, the Finch selection, was an aberration or a detour from the process I was just talking about. It was overriding a lot of the normal factors and saying, Bob was so good and Nixon would be so willing and like to have him at his side as his Vice President that he would take the risk, the political risk of the election part of it. But, on the other hand, Bob was a very attractive candidate: a guy with a lot of political vision, a lot of political savvy, and a strong idealist, [he] counterbalanced Nixon in some other ways. He was younger, he was more charismatic, more liberal, within the party spectrum of liberal to conservative. The overriding similarity was that they were both from California. It totally wiped out the--although Nixon could argue [that] he was a New Yorker at that point, having lived in New York for the preceding five years. The Finch thing was rather remarkable; I think, looking back on it, it would have been marvelous if Finch had been the Vice President. I think it would have helped in lots of ways.

It also would have been marvelous, to digress, if Bob Finch had, a few years later, been elected Senator from California instead of having to defer to George Murphy, the incumbent Senator. Nixon and I and others tried hard to dissuade George Murphy from running for re-election, on the theory that he probably would not win, and that also he should step aside and

let Bob Finch, a superb Senatorial candidate--the ideal place for Bob Finch would have been in the United States Senate. As Vice President he would have been President of the Senate, and that would have put him in.... And he would have been, I think, as Vice President, a very active Vice President in presiding at the Senate, and would have been an enormous value to President Nixon in working his legislative program through, which Agnew was not, in terms of Senate relations. Agnew was not a creature of the Senate at all, where Bob Finch, although not having been in the Senate, was legislatively inclined and he would have, I think, worked superbly well as President of the Senate or later as a United States Senator, if he'd had that opportunity. We tried to create that opportunity, but it didn't work.

RHG: Finch has said in an oral history interview that Nixon offered him, during the transition, any Cabinet post that he wanted, which I also found to be very remarkable. Is that true?

HRH: I don't know that to be true, but I would certainly not dispute it if Bob says that's the case. [The] only reason I don't know it--of my own first hand knowledge, I don't find it surprising because.... I think Nixon had enough respect for Finch's political judgment and savvy, and governmental judgment and savvy, that he knew he wouldn't take a post that wouldn't be appropriate for him. When he offered him--I'm sure he said "any post"--I think he did that with the confidence that there's no way that Finch would have opted for Secretary of State or the Treasury, which are two posts that he would not have belonged in. And probably not Secretary of Defense, which is also probably one

he would not have belonged in. But in domestic posts, HEW [Department of Health, Education and Welfare], which he ultimately took, or any of the others: HUD [Housing and Urban Development] or Transportation or possibly Commerce--probably not. There were a lot of, there were a number of posts where Finch would have been very good. I think the one he selected was probably the right one, but my own belief is--and we'll get into this, I suspect, as it evolves during the course of the Presidency--Bob Finch should not have been a Cabinet officer at all. Bob Finch is not an administrator, and he should not have been burdened with the administrative problem of running a Department, which Cabinet officers are burdened with. Bob Finch should have been a United States Senator. Lacking that, he should have been a Counsellor to the President, which he ultimately became. But, unfortunately, he became that in a sort of a negative way, having run into some serious problems over at HEW and moved out of there into the Counsellorship. Right at the outset--of course, he was Lieutenant Governor, he couldn't come into the administration right at the outset because he.... He could've resigned the post, but, he didn't....

RHG: He did resign.

HRH: Did he resign? OK, I should correct that then. He did resign. That was one of the problems in considering what Finch would do: how he covered his position as Lieutenant Governor. I had forgotten that. He resigned as Lieutenant Governor?

RHG: Yes. He was elected in 1966 for a term that expired...

HRH: Four years.

RHG: ...in 1971.

HRH: OK, right. So, in any event, the Cabinet thing was, I think, a mistake for Bob. I think he should have come in right at the outset as Counsellor to the President in a [Daniel P.] Moynihan-like role. And that he would have been ideal there: as a policy developer, as a smoother of the waters, as a worker with Congress in working domestic programs through. It should have been in the domestic program area, because Bob's expertise is not in the field of foreign policy.

RHG: Just one other question about the campaign, asked, I think, primarily because it comes up later, much later in the Presidency, and that was: what was happening during the campaign between Nixon and South Vietnam, with regard to the [Lyndon] Johnson bombing halt and the negotiations, peace talks and such?

HRH: Here again, I can give you some background from my own knowledge but it's another area where I would defer to Mitchell, to [Henry] Kissinger in a sense, and certainly to Nixon. From my viewpoint (and I stand ready to be corrected by people with superior knowledge) there was, first of all, great concern--and I don't want this to sound as negative as I think it's going to sound--there was great concern within the campaign organization and on Nixon's part that Johnson was planning to pull a trick out of the hat. There was a political recognition on Nixon's part, and his political strategists' part, that an incumbent President has enormous powers to influence an election. Those powers were not exercised by President Eisenhower in the 1960 election on behalf of his potential successor, in many ways. Nixon recognized the

potential was there for it, especially when the nation was at war, which we were in Vietnam, because the President as Commander-in-Chief has the opportunity to very strongly affect the conduct of that war, and especially the Vietnam War, which was not a properly declared war. And there was great concern that, well....

There's a little bit of history that goes back to this that I've covered in something I've written, I think. Going back to the '62 campaign for Governor of California. Nixon was running a campaign in California that was well conceived and being well executed, up and to a point. And that point was a few weeks before the election when President Kennedy got into the Cuban missile crisis situation. Nixon was building a campaign following this classic Nixon theory of politics, of building a campaign to a climax at election day. In other words, gradually building your position: not trying to get way up in the polls at the beginning with the risk then of sagging, but rather trying to steadily build so that by election day you've crossed the line and you're ahead of your opponent on the chart. That was the strategy in '62. The Cuban missile crisis--and I don't know the exact date, but that's obviously easily confirmed when that took place--was a few weeks before the election. And, in Nixon's opinion (and I completely concur), totally diverted the attention of the citizens of California from the gubernatorial election that was facing them to the overwhelming international crisis that the President of the United States was facing vis-a-vis the Soviet Union. Consequently, nothing that either candidate, Brown

or Nixon, said in California had much effect in the closing weeks of the campaign, which were the weeks when Nixon expected to close the gap and move ahead. Nobody, and certainly [not] I, has knowledge of whether Nixon, had not the Cuban missile crisis taken place, might have won the Governorship of California. Certainly I agree that the Cuban missile crisis strongly decreased Nixon's chances of winning. He might not have won anyway, but he lost by more, or had less chance of winning, because of the missile crisis.

OK, that relates to the bombing halt question in Vietnam in the sense that we got campaign intelligence information from people within the Johnson administration saying the President was going to call a bombing halt in order to get [Hubert H.] Humphrey elected, to make Humphrey a "peace" candidate, and give Humphrey the credit. I mean there were all kinds of rumor-type things as to what Johnson was up to.

RHG: Do you know who that was?

HRH: Nope. There were several sources, and I don't know who they were. Kissinger was one of them to some degree, I think, through Mitchell. I had never met Henry Kissinger. All I knew was that there was a Harvard professor who had some ties to the Johnson administration and to Rockefeller, who was concerned about what Johnson was doing. It was my understanding--Mitchell was the contact with Rockefeller--through Mitchell we were getting some of these reports, but we were getting them from other sources, too. I think Bryce Harlow got them from some sources that he had, who may well have been Congressmen, Democratic Congressmen,

who had ties into the administration. I don't know that I knew at the time, and I sure can't trace back in my mind now what those sources were. I just have a very strong impression that we were getting intelligence reports. We didn't know whether they were valid or not. They were rumors, if you want to call them that, or leaks (whatever you want to call them) that Johnson was planning something. We got specific calls once in awhile, I remember on the campaign trail, urgent calls saying.... I remember getting one from Harlow, and I took it from the secure phone on the platform from which the candidate was speaking at that moment, saying, "We undersand there's going to be big foreign policy announcement, Johnson's going to go on TV tonight," or something. So there was concern about what Johnson might do to affect the course of the war that would in the process affect the course of the election. The Nixon-[Hubert] Humphrey election, we knew, was close, and a small thing could make a very big difference. Nixon had lost a close election once before, so again he had a high degree of sensitivity to that.

There was also--and there are much better sources than I to the details of this--there was also the contact with Madame [Anna] Chennault, who had ties to the South Vietnamese government, close ties to the South Vietnamese government. There was information coming out of that that indicated that various things might be happening or could be happening or could happen after the election, were Nixon to win, that related to the war in Vietnam and the peace talks in Vietnam and the whole range of

possibilities there. So, the question of a bombing halt and/or any other major development in the war was a question very much at the front of Nixon's mind as the candidate, and of other people's minds in the political and foreign policy group with Nixon during the campaign. There was some peripheral involvement by Kissinger, as I recall, through the Rockefeller ties, because he had been Rockefeller's foreign policy man, coming in through Mitchell. I don't know if I answered the question. What was the question? I got way astray.

RHG: No, no, no. What did Nixon do in response to the information that he was getting? Did he himself communicate with [Nguyen Van] Thieu? Or was...?

HRH: No.

RHG: Or indirectly?

HRH: No, I don't believe so. I don't think there was any direct communication. I think there--I mentioned Madame Chennault, and that's the only tie to Thieu that I'm aware of. I don't know exactly what the details of that story are. That's something during the campaign that I was not involved in directly, and I don't have any first-hand knowledge.

[End side one]

[Begin side two]

RHG: Contacts between Nixon and South Vietnam: Professor Ambrose is now writing his second volume on Nixon and he's trying to understand what happened regarding South Vietnam, and he's found two stories. One of them comes from a book called The Palace File by Jerrold Schecter and Mr. [Nguyen Gregory Tien] Hung, a

South Vietnamese author, and they talk about Nixon's attempt to persuade Thieu to refuse to go to the Paris peace talks in the beginning of November 1968. That's one story. But [Ambrose] says he's also found some evidence amongst the Clark Clifford papers at the Johnson Library to indicate the opposite--that Nixon wrote a letter to Thieu telling him to cooperate with Johnson. Do you know anything about that?

HRH: I don't, and that's surprising. I haven't read Schecter's book, obviously, yet. I know Schecter. That doesn't ring a bell either way, so I can't give you any first hand knowledge. What I can say is that from my judgment, I would have to opt for the Clifford side, which is an unusual ally [laughter] for me to have, because I can't conceive that there would be any motivation on Nixon's part to urge that they not go to peace talks. There would be strong motivation to urge that they do go to peace talks.

Nixon did not see Vietnam as an asset in any way, shape, or form. It was a terrible, terrible liability. Anything that would have constructively brought Vietnam to a halt in the right way, or even to the start of peace talks or anything else, based on my knowledge of Nixon's thinking at the time, would have been exactly what he would have wanted to do. Because, perceiving himself as the next President, which a candidate has to do, the last thing he wants is to come into office with Vietnam still going on. The best thing that could happen to him is to have Vietnam ended so he can move ahead with his own agenda instead of having to deal with the problem of an escalating war, which is

exactly what he did have to deal with, and which was the overriding negative factor of his first term. There was no positive to Vietnam at all. I can't imagine that there would have been any desire on his part to prolong any Vietnamese War activity for an hour, if it could be shortened. So I would find the original speculation--the Schecter concept--to be very questionable and Clifford's evidence to be much more likely.

That gets into that whole issue which I shouldn't even get into: the whole question of Nixon's secret plan to end the war idea in the campaign, which was not.... Bill [William] Safire was the best authority on that, because Safire was the guy that did the work with Nixon on the concept. He never said he had a secret plan to end the war. He said he intended to end the war and he had an intention of how he was going to go about doing it, which was exactly true. He thought he was going to end the war very early on in his first term, if it were not ended prior to that. He was not successful in doing that, and that was the overwhelming failure of the administration. It was not, in my opinion, his fault. It was the intransigence of both the North Vietnamese and the South Vietnamese that made it impossible to bring an negotiated settlement.

I understand Nixon has now said in his "Meet the Press" interview yesterday that the biggest mistake he made was not bombing and mining much earlier. I'm sure he believes that to be the case today, but he did not think that at the time. Because at the time, day by day, he always thought we were right on the verge of a negotiated peace settlement, which would have been

preferable to the bombing and mining. He finally reluctantly went back to that as the only way to bring it about. Now he sees with hindsight that he couldn't get a negotiated settlement and therefore he should have bombed them into a settlement. Obviously, had he done so, on Inauguration Day, the war would have been over in a few weeks, and he could have gone ahead with his own agenda and accomplished a lot of things that the war precluded accomplishing.

RHG: Now, you saw Nixon victorious on the election eve day on two different occasions, 1968 and 1972. Can you just...?

HRH: Also 1956.

RHG: Right, right. Two Presidential elections.

HRH: Right.

RHG: But, can you just compare the two as to how he reacted, just as a person, to the victory that he had got?

HRH: Hard to remember totally, but in both cases, my feeling is that election.... Well, I think he almost hated election nights as much as I did. I had come, over my experience in '56, '60, '62, '68 and '72, to hate election nights. You'd think that you would hate election nights that you lose and love election nights that you win. I hated them all. The problem is, you're on the edge of or in the middle of an enormous letdown, because a campaign is such an intensive effort for so long, and all of a sudden, on election day, it's all over, instantly. There's a letdown on election day that carries over into election night, and you get caught up with trying to keep up with the returns and you have that haunting dread, in the back of--not in '72, there was no

dread, we knew we had won in '72--but in '68, some question. In '62 and '60 a lot of question, and we lost them.

I think Nixon had the same kind of thing. I think there was an enormous letdown. He, of course, had worked much harder than any of the rest of us in the campaigns, and had much more at stake than any of the rest of us. I think election nights were not a happy experience for him, win or lose. Then there's a factor in Nixon, which Henry Kissinger articulated, that I always found fascinating. His comment, not in relation to elections--and I don't remember specifically what event gave rise to it--but it was a comment that I've never forgotten. He said, "I do not understand this man. He is absolutely superb in defeat and absolutely terrible in victory." He knows how to handle loss, but he can't [handle] success. '68 and '72 were successes. '68, we rode through--that was the election night where we didn't know, because we didn't know about Illinois; [that] was the big thing--we rode through the whole night. Nixon went to bed. We sat up, we were at the Waldorf, I sat up all night and most all of the staff did, but Nixon went to bed, as I recall, around midnight or one 'clock, something like that. Then woke up in the morning about the time NBC conceded Illinois and the election to him, as I recall it... At that point he was really groggy. He was sleepy, and I remember him coming in, in his pajamas and bathrobe, and looking at the TV. Dwight Chapin has a memorable picture of that, the only one that exists, that I think has been published somewhere. It's a sensational picture: Nixon in his pajamas, and looking at the television set, his hair ruffled, you

know, he'd just gotten out of bed.

He immediately, in '68, that morning, the morning after the election, turned and--well, in the evening listening to the returns, following the returns and we were getting our reports from the field. He was very concerned about Illinois and that they were pulling another 1960 on him: a lot of evidence now suggests there was a manipulated vote in what was one of the states that would have swung the election in '60. He was afraid something like that was happening again in '68, and we had intensive crews of poll watchers and return counters and all that sort of thing. We were getting reports from the field--Mitchell and his campaign people were. Nixon was following that closely, but he finally said, "There's nothing we can do about it. We either did it or we didn't," and he went to bed, and went to sleep. Then, when he got up, found that he'd won, [he] moved immediately to his concept that was expressed in his acceptance announcement when he went down to the press room in the Waldorf early that morning, which was the "Bring Us Together" theme. The little girl with the poster that had held up the "Bring Us Together" thing. And his point--he immediately assumed a Presidential attitude. "I'm now President-elect of the United States. I've got a nation that's torn apart, and I've got to try and start putting it back together." That was the first reaction, and then we took off, as I recall, right then for Florida, didn't we? I think we went right that day down to Key Biscayne, to start the transition planning process.

He had not done much in transition planning during the

campaign or pre-Presidential planning. Given a little thought to it, and we had some people working on task force activity that was to build up to it, but not very much. We were into that 75 days when we had to put it all together, and he moved intensively into that very, very quickly and full steam ahead.

In the '72 election there was that letdown thing again, even though he knew he had won. There was an enormous disappointment because the war wasn't over. The knowledge, in a sense, he was re-elected; it was still his war; he still had to go back and undo that. Fortunately peace, at least that next phase, did come about in January. There was no feeling of elation that I recall. There wasn't much, there wasn't any feeling of elation in '68 either. There was a, "Now we've got to get--, let's move on to the next thing." He had a very strong sense--it went deep in him and you'll see it as we get into talking about the public relations aspects thinking, I think (and I'm sure it must appear in my journal)--a very strong sense of the danger of letdown after victory. His point was, "If you lose, you can afford to let down; it doesn't matter what you do because you have no responsibility." The tendency is, you win and you say, "We've won, we got it made," and go off and have a party. His thing was, "We've won, now it's our burden. We gotta get going and do something about it." And that wasn't just the election but in anything. We had the ABM [Anti-Ballistic Missile] fight, that we won by one vote, a very intense battle in Congress. His point was, after we won it, "We don't celebrate. Now we've got to really work to capitalize on the victory. We have to make sure

we solidify it. We've got to build public opinion behind it to follow it up. We've got to utilize it vis-a-vis the Soviets in our negotiations on disarmament treaties," and all that sort of stuff. There was always, where everybody else would say, "Let's have a party now," Nixon would say, "Let's get to work now." That was the reaction on election night '72.

It was a strange night. Colson's written a lot about it, not totally accurately, but not totally inaccurately either, in terms of the strangeness of that night. We ended up having scrambled eggs over at his office at the EOB [Old Executive Office Building], having Manolo [Sanchez] whip us up some scrambled eggs, 'cause none of us had eaten for awhile. But it was a "Let's get at what we've got to do," and there the impetus was on reorganization. And we had....

I found it fascinating in skimming back through my notes, how early on was the genesis of the "We're gonna tear everything apart and put it back together right after the election." People think that Nixon spitefully fired everybody in the administration the next day, and [they] can't understand it. You see in my notes that that concept went way back months ahead of the election. Taking advantage of the re-election to do the necessary re-structuring and re-staffing and moving around of people, and that was what we started turning to right away.

Also, there's the vindictiveness streak in Nixon which shows up in a lot of these things, in a lot of my notes and a lot of the actions that were taken. There was a "Get the bad guys" feeling as well as the "Get going on our own thing." He had

there that whole new American coalition concept, "New American Majority", or whatever, and again, [the] bringing together kind of thing, but on a more specific programmed basis of involving the nationality groups and the minority groups and the non-Nixonian type people. Getting them in, getting them a feeling of being a part of the new administration, especially for the second term. There was a lot of thinking in that regard.

RHG: Now, during the transition you mentioned that there were some of these working groups, and I think they were different kinds of working groups: one--correct me if I'm wrong--but there were some that were headed by Arthur Burns that were really trying to draw position papers.

HRH: Right.

RHG: And another group of people working on selecting personnel.

HRH: Yeah. Actually I think it was headed by Paul McCracken.

RHG: Oh.

HRH: I think McCracken was the guy that was running the task forces, which were the issue things. I may be wrong. Burns had a position in there, too. After we got in, Burns's thing was implementing task force stuff, but I think during the transition it was McCracken who was doing that.

RHG: What was the goal of this group?

HRH: The goal was to have a Nixon "hundred days" in effect. To have a set of priorities and programs, a positive agenda, to move on, partly.... Well, recognizing that the honeymoon concept, that a President has a unique opportunity at the outset of his first term to move things that later he won't be able to do. Congress

is inclined to go along with him, the public is inclined to go along with him, the press is even inclined, in Nixon's case, to go along with him. Which was the case. [The goal was to] take advantage of that as quickly as possible. Again, it was that capitalizing on victory. Don't let down when you win, start moving hard when you win. Work harder. The whole task force thing was to have that codified, have some specifics that could be translated into programmatic terms and be moved ahead as the Nixon agenda.

RHG: So this was to be essentially a legislative program...

HRH: Yep.

RHG: ...that you could take to the Congress on the first day.

HRH: Well, no, not really on the first day,...

RHG: Well, first hundred days.

HRH: ...during the first period. And not necessarily a hundred days. You know, maybe two hundred, or a hundred and fifty or fifty, I don't know. But it was to come, to start running, not wander in and say, "Well, now we're here, what'll we do?" It was to come in moving full steam ahead.

RHG: Did Nixon know what he wanted that agenda to be?

HRH: Yes, and he had talked with these task force people. He didn't have--I don't think he had a total map. I think he had a lot of ideas. The assignment to the task forces, and there were a whole bunch of them set up in different fields, was several. One was to involve potential Cabinet officers in their fields. One was to screen people for Cabinet and sub-Cabinet positions, based on their contributions, interest and expertise in these various

areas. Another was to develop a legislative program and an executive branch program, things that would be done by Executive Order and through the agencies, that didn't require legislation. That would be positive, that would be moving ahead. And to bring about the unity thing, to bring some focus on things that the people wanted and needed. To be turning attention to the nation's needs other than the Vietnam War. Also, to be turning away from the Great Society programs. It was alternative to Great Society, because there was a strong feeling that a lot of the Great Society was disastrous and needed to be dismantled or at least discontinued, not carried forward. Not accelerated. Nixon's a firm believer that you can't beat something with nothing. If something's there, you've got to have something better to replace it in order to stop it; you can't just turn it off. So those were the reasons, I think, behind the need for these task forces and to get things going. That was the task forces, issue task forces, primarily domestic. Then, there were groups working on personnel recruitment, Cabinet and sub-Cabinet, to try and bring the best people we could and broad range representative--again, the unifying the nation concepts--to the extent they could. Primarily the objective there was getting people who were really outstanding people. To a great degree that was successful. Lyndon Johnson told Nixon that this was the best Cabinet [that] any incoming President had ever come in with.

RHG: Of course Nixon would not have agreed with that assessment somewhat later.

HRH: Not later, no.

RHG: Was that....?

HRH: He didn't totally agree with it at the time. Part of it was there were a number of Cabinet appointments that were for political unifying reasons. The incumbent Governors, [George] Romney and [John] Volpe and that sort of thing, that didn't turn out to be great appointments.

RHG: He was picking some very large people in the sense that you had three Governors. Was Eisenhower's Cabinet any kind of an inspiration to him; I think you had had a lot of very wealthy people in Eisenhower's?

HRH: No, I wouldn't say it was an inspiration to him. He never seemed to have any great respect for the Eisenhower Cabinet, overall. He did for some of the individuals. He had enormous respect for [John Foster] Dulles and I think for [Charles E.] Wilson and some of the others, but I don't think that he saw the Eisenhower Cabinet as a model at all, or an inspiration. I think he had his own goals there. He wanted heavy people, big people, important, solid, outstanding people. Not "me too" types. He wanted to get control of the executive branch of the government. He wanted to turn the ship substantially away from the Great Society and the welfare state things that were of concern to him. There were a lot of things in domestic policy that he wanted to get done. He wanted strong people in the Cabinet who would take control of their departments rather than being taken control of, and that didn't work out, in most cases. It never does.

RHG: During the transition someone else was brought into the administration that ended up being a twin with you throughout

your career, even on the last day of your career there, and that was John Ehrlichman. Ehrlichman has written that he was offered the positions of Attorney General and head of the Central Intelligence Agency by Nixon, I think on an automobile ride down in Florida.

HRH: Hm hmm.

RHG: And Ehrlichman, I think, felt overwhelmed by the offers. He said he's a real estate, a zoning lawyer from Seattle [Washington]. Do you know why offers like that were being made to him? Were you his patron, there?

HRH: Well, I wouldn't say I was his patron. I certainly.... I was his initial contact, in the sense that he and I were friends, not close friends but friends, in college. Knew each other. And after college knew each other substantially better because I was working in San Francisco, living in San Mateo, my wife was working down at Stanford. His wife was working at Stanford, and his wife was a very close friend of mine in college. She was the lifetime girlfriend of my best friend in school, and then they broke up and she ended up marrying John. But Jean [Ehrlichman] was working down at Stanford; so was Jo [Haldeman] and John was in law school down at Stanford. We spent a lot of time with them as two young married couples. We'd only been married a year, and I think they had too. As a matter of fact, John and Jean's first date was our wedding, oddly enough, 'cause her previous boyfriend was in the wedding and John brought her to the wedding.

I had great respect for John's political ability, through UCLA political activities. When we were recruiting advance men,

John's name came to my mind. I'm not exactly sure why. I talked to him, and he was interested and came in as an advance man. Worked in the one campaign and then became the chief advance man in '60 when I was tour manager. No, in '60 he was just an advance man; he was the chief advance man--he was the tour manager in '68. Took my role as tour manager, that I had had in '60. In the process he very much impressed Nixon. He got to know him, he was very frank with him, he relates his discussion on the boat cruise up north where he got into the drinking question, and that kind of stuff.

John's a very intelligent guy, and he tracked well with Nixon. They developed a good rapport. John came down and helped us in the '62 campaign in California, and Nixon had a high regard for him. As a result of that, John as tour manager, as I had in '60, assumed [a] more and more key role and more closely related to the President role in the '68 campaign. As the chief of the advance men he was the leader of the cadre of bright young guys that we were going to flesh out our staffing system with, so he was very much involved in [the] transition period in recruitment and was one of the half dozen that Nixon had in the original transition planning and staffing sessions. There was Mitchell and Finch and Harlow and Erhlichman and me, and that's probably it--and Nixon. So, John was in the inner circle at that point and had a direct communicating ability with Nixon. Was part of the "new guard" that Nixon was seeking to build. Had to build because he had to recruit a lot of people fast. He knew John was a lawyer, had respect for John's legal mind as well as his

political mind and business sense. I think that had John really wanted to be Attorney General, Nixon probably would have appointed him, might have appointed him Attorney General, although I'm not sure. I know he discussed the Attorney Generalship with him. It was my impression that it was John was the one who had raised the CIA. I thought, from what John told me afterwards, or what Nixon, or both, told me afterwards (I was not in the conversation), I thought that Nixon had raised with John, "Do you want to be Attorney General? I want you in a key position in the new administration."

He wanted to hang on to John; he was part of his inner circle, he wanted to be sure and get him. The way you do that, with most people, is give them Cabinet posts. Now, he wanted to hang on to me, too, and he talked to me about the possibility of going in the Cabinet. I had no desire, or a burning desire not to go in the Cabinet. I had seen enough of--I had no intention of going in the Cabinet. My ambition, basically, was to be Appointments Secretary, because that was the post closest to the President, that I was aware of, in what I thought would be the Nixon White House structure. I was surprised when he came up with the concept of maintaining the chief of staff role that I had had in the campaign as a position in the White House, because he did not want a Sherman Adams kind of a set-up at all. He was very much influenced by his experience in the Eisenhower administration, and he did not want a Jim [James] Haggerty as a Press Secretary. In other words, a man who spoke his own views as being Presidential dicta. And he did not want a "The

Assistant to the President" like Sherman Adams, who was in a sense a de facto President for domestic policy, or at least as Nixon saw it. So I didn't think he was going to structure his White House in a way that would provide the role I had had in the campaign as chief of staff in the White House. As we talked about structuring and all--I had done more work in the closing days of the campaign on structuring the new administration I think than anyone else had. Actually, nobody else really had done anything at all. I was the only one who was. Nixon had told me to spend some time developing some thoughts, 'cause....

RHG: This was during the campaign? Before the election?

HRH: Yeah, before the election. One of my strengths is administrative and organizational ability. Nixon recognized that very clearly and so he had said.... And he totally trusted me, which was one of the main assets of my relationship with him. I think he respected my ability to judge people, which he realized he wasn't always good at. He was sometimes very good, and sometimes made serious mistakes. I think he felt that I had some strengths in that area and so he was looking to me to work with him on organizing and filling out the structure of the new administration. In that process my role evolved as chief of staff. John, as I recall it, had sort of the same feelings that I did, that he didn't really want a Cabinet post. He didn't want to go off and run some Department. That, if he was going to be in the administration, he wanted to be at the core of it, or if he was going to be outside, it was my thought that he wanted the CIA. He's intrigued with the spy business, and I think he saw

that as something he would have liked to have done. Maybe Nixon raised it, but my guess still is that Nixon, in talking with him, raised Attorney General, because it's the obvious place to put a lawyer. That John said, "I think the CIA would be better." But out of later discussions the staying in the White House and really being involved with the Counsel to the President.... John didn't want to take a post that denigrated his legal standing. He was a lawyer, he wanted to maintain his status as a lawyer. Counsel to the President was a way to do that and still be on the White House staff. So, the Counsel to the President post was basically created for John and was a way to give him a position recognizing his status as a lawyer, but bringing him into the inner circle of the White House operation. Chief of staff was created for me too, for sort of the same kinds of reasons.

RHG: That was Nixon's idea? The chief of staff role?

HRH: I don't know whether it was his or mine. I think it was probably his. It was mine in the campaign. See, when I came into the campaign, Mitchell was already designated campaign manager. I had been Nixon's campaign manager in '62. I had a very strong desire not to be the campaign manager again. I don't like working in campaign organization and financing and all that sort of stuff. I like working with the candidate, with the man. So I told Nixon that I felt my value to him was not working with Mitchell in the campaign organization, it was working with him [and] running his part of the campaign, and that that wasn't Mitchell's strength. Mitchell was a different kind of person,

and had no political campaign experience at all, although a lot of political savvy as a bond lawyer. We devised the split responsibility where Mitchell was the campaign manager, responsible for the whole campaign organization, all of the political side of the campaign. I was the chief of staff to the candidate and was responsible for Nixon's personal organization, as contrasted to the campaign organization. And that concept carried over, along with the title, into the White House. Because there had not been a Chief of Staff before that, in the White House. Everybody thinks now it's a statutory post prescribed in the Constitution. [Laughter] It's not. It just sort of evolved, and I'm not sure who came--that was the title I had in the campaign, in order to clearly differentiate my role from Mitchell's. It just stuck as we went into the White House. The title, actually, was Assistant to the President, and our concept was that there would be a group of us that would be Assistants to the President. This evolved out of my thinking and study on how to put the White House staff together: we would have four or five Assistants to the President of equal status who would be interchangeably working with the President on what needed to be done at any given moment.

RHG: Although your responsibilities were very different, Moynihan would be another--where he had a real substantive....

HRH: Moynihan was a Counsellor, though.

RHG: From the beginning was he?

HRH: No, I guess he started as Assistant to the President for Urban Affairs.

RHG: I think so, I think so.

HRH: But he wasn't one of that concept. It was really Harlow and Ehrlichman and me.

RHG: Ehrlichman was Counsel, initially.

HRH: He was Counsel, that was just to preserve his legal status. His function as going to be basically Assistant to the President, just like mine and Bryce's and....

RHG: Burns?

HRH: Well, Burns was a different case. Burns regarded himself as somewhat superior to the President, not as a staff person. And Nixon recognized that. Arthur wanted to be Chairman of the Fed [Federal Reserve Board], and Nixon basically was in agreement with that. Wanted him to be Chairman of the Fed.

RHG: Was Kissinger an Assistant?

HRH: Yeah. Who was the Chairman of the Fed before Arthur Burns?

RHG: Martin.

HRH: William McChesney Martin, Jr.

RHG: Right.

HRH: And Martin wouldn't step down. So, Arthur was frustrated in his desire to become President of the Fed, so the assignment [at the White House] at the outset was really an interim utilization of Arthur while he was waiting for the Fed post to open up. It was basically domestic issues development, and it became this implementation--translating the task force recommendations into do-able policies. Arthur was responsible for that. When the Fed opened up, he was moved over to the Fed.

Moynihan was another unique case. He was brought in as a

representative from the other side, in effect, and as a gadfly in the area of urban policy. An idea developer, a stimulator, a thinking-stimulator and that sort of thing.

RHG: How did he come to Nixon's attention then?

HRH: I'm not sure.

RHG: He's an unlikely member of the Nixon staff.

HRH: Yeah, and I don't remember. I should.

RHG: Did Harlow discover him in some way?

HRH: Well, I don't know whether it was Harlow, Mitchell, Finch--I'm not sure where. It wasn't Arthur Burns, I can assure you.

[Laughter] I don't know.

RHG: Now, one of the most important assignments to be decided upon just prior to beginning the Presidency, particularly given Nixon's own preferences with regard to conducting the office and his concept of--I think the concept that he had about how he was going to conduct foreign policy--was the position of his national security advisor. Did Nixon have any prior association with Kissinger?

HRH: I don't believe so. I understand they had met once, somewhere, at some function, but had not really been aware of each other. Nixon was aware of some of Kissinger's writings. And Kissinger was aware of Nixon's [October 1967] Foreign Affairs Quarterly article [on foreign policy and the People's Republic of China]. Kissinger was Nelson Rockefeller's foreign policy advisor, and Kissinger was peripherally, as I indicated, involved in some way in the Vietnam thing during the campaign after Nixon became the nominee--through Mitchell. And Mitchell was

Kissinger's introducer into the thing. Mitchell was the one who told Nixon about this guy [whom] Nelson thought very highly of, who had these great Harvard credentials. Conceptually Nixon was aware of some of Kissinger's thinking, which he was in tune with. So, it was set up during the transition period at the Pierre [Hotel] that Kissinger was brought in for an interview. The two of them clicked at that interview. That's when Nixon decided to bring him in as national security advisor. That may seem more surprising than it did at the time, because at the time the national security advisor was seen as not nearly as substantial a post as Kissinger became. It would be his [the President's] staff person for handling national security matters and for operating the secretariat of the National Security Council. Kissinger had a lot of parallel views to Nixon's in that regard, vis-a-vis the importance of the President versus the State Department. Nixon needed a man with credentials and ability and mentality to cope with all of that, who shared his views. Kissinger fit all of those requirements and consequently was brought in to the post, and I think at the outset, especially, very fortuitously so. I think it was a superb appointment.

RHG: I think we have come to the Presidency here. Nixon's Inauguration arrives and you describe in your journal, very movingly I think, the triumphal return of the candidate to Washington. Can you just describe the feeling of the people and Nixon's enjoyment of everything, and so on?

HRH: There's no question that--I said before [that] he turned to business at a time of success rather than to celebration, but by

the Inaugural we had done 75 days of intensive business getting the new administration ready, and he was ready to celebrate. Everybody was. It was just an extremely exciting time for all of us. And I've got to say that President Johnson did a superb job through the transition in his relationships with us and his help to us, and most of the staff at his orders, did also. It was a very comfortable transition period for us, and a productive one. We were able to move ahead with great cooperation in Washington, so that we when we came.... We stayed away, and Nixon was very, very concerned during the transition that it never appear that he was usurping any Presidential powers or decisionmaking or anything like that. He totally recognized that Johnson was President of the United States until noon on the 20th, and that we would cooperate with him, but that it was his responsibility and that Nixon must stay in the background. Do his own thing, announcing his Cabinet and getting all that sort of stuff done, but not get into the conduct of the Presidency at all. But he was champing at the bit to get into the conduct of the office.

The transition went well both in our relationships with Johnson and internally. It was terribly hard work and very, very long, difficult hours, but it was exciting because you were building something. You weren't fighting a campaign battle. The campaign was over, you had won. Now you had your building permit, you could go ahead and build the structure. We were doing it and it was a very exciting kind of thing, a stimulating kind of thing to be doing. [That is how] it was for Nixon. And it went well. We got good people for the Cabinet, or he felt he

was getting good people. We had good briefing sessions, we had good relations with Johnson and his people, so by the.... But we stayed pretty much out of Washington during that period, and were headquartered in New York [City] and operated in New York. Then as we came to the Inauguration, it was the physical move to Washington, the anticipation of moving into the White House offices and of picking up new assignments and getting going. It was an extremely exciting period. Everybody, I think, felt that.

RHG: How did you--what were your feelings when you went the first time and saw Nixon's Oval Office? I think you went back to him and told him what it looked like; I can't quite recall how it was. Do you remember that?

HRH: Is that in the diary, in the journal?

RHG: You went, before he got there, you went and just I guess looked in to see how things were set up and....

HRH: Yeah, I guess I did. I guess before I went over to the Capitol I kind of think.... My journal would be a better recollection because I probably wrote it down. But I think I went in and then went over to the Capitol, so I had seen the office.... No, because they had, well, yeah, they had started doing some of the.... Basically, they had to do the changeover at the Oval Office in that period when Johnson left the White House to go down to the Capitol for the Inaugural, and when Nixon got back from the Capitol after the Inaugural, the whole office had to be changed over. Maybe it was after we got back, and maybe Nixon didn't go into the office before he went out for the parade. I'm not sure. Because they had a luncheon and all these different

things. I don't remember the exact time, but I do remember that we did a very fast transformation of the Oval Office from the Johnson office to the Nixon office. We took out the ticker tapes and the multi-television sets and re-arranged the furniture. We had laid out some plans and got the office set up with some of Nixon's own desk equipment and that sort of thing, so that.... There was a big crew of GSA [General Services Administration] people working in the office during that short period, getting it all--because I remember seeing that. I think my wife took some pictures during that time. Yes, she did, when the crew was in there, getting the office transformed. So I had seen it, and I guess I did describe it to Nixon. Told him--he said, "Have they got all that stuff out of there? I don't want to be in that office with it all piled up with all those machines and everything." I assured him it was and everything was all set. Then I remember when he came in he was very euphoric and very pleased.

We had all the fireplaces going in the White House that were operable and fires going, which made it warm and cheery on a cold January

RHG: It made sense in January, although Nixon was given to having fires in July and August sometimes, too.

HRH: Yes, he was. He was. But a lot of the fireplaces weren't operable, and we got them all fixed up so they worked. My first office--both my offices--the first office, the little one next to the Oval office had a fireplace, and I had a fire going in that a lot of the time. The first time--that was a disaster. I lit my

fire when I came in the first morning, and the damper was closed, so the whole place filled with smoke. No, it was clogged, I guess; it wasn't the damper was closed, it was the vent was clogged. So we had to abolish my fire for a while while they got that cleaned out; put a vent fan on the top of it.

RHG: All right. You had to start business then. You as chief of staff had the responsibility of setting up a staff system, so can you describe what steps you took, what kind of a system you set up, and the people that...?

[End cassette one]

[Begin cassette two]

RHG: Your first assignment, I would imagine, as chief of staff, was to develop some sort of a staff system or staff set-up that would allow the Presidency to operate, and you had, as you mentioned, a lot of young men with you, and put them in these positions. Can you describe the types of thinking that you did to arrive at an organization of the Presidency?

HRH: Well, there were several sources of information: some studies and some books on the office of the President that I went through, trying to figure out how to structure the office. Contrary to a lot of public opinion there is no statutory or any other kind of a plan for structuring the office. It evolves in the case of each President the way that his Presidency and his personal method of operation requires. I tried to see what other people had done and spent a lot of time with.... Fortunately, there were a lot of books on the Kennedy White House available at that time, and I could read about how they had set up and

operated. Recognize that the President I was working with was a totally different operator than Jack Kennedy had been, and we had to do differently, but at least I had a point of departure for figuring out what should be different and in what ways should it be different. And evolved--and this was all, actually, in the closing days of the campaign, that this was done--evolved a basic plan for the structure of the White House staff that was designed....

One of the objectives Nixon wanted was to be sure that there was a system in place and people in place that would cause things to happen when he told someone something was to happen. Because he had recognized that that isn't necessarily always the case in the Presidential office. He didn't want to be bothered by administrative and managerial concerns himself. He knew by then--he had not known in earlier years, but he knew by then--that he was not a manager. That was not his talent. [He knew] that I was [a manager], and he was very happy to have someone else available to take that over and get it done. So he was looking to me for that assurance; he did not want to get involved in the details of it, but he wanted to know it was there. He tested it constantly to see if it was there, and raised hell when it turned out not to be there. There were times when it didn't work as well as it should have worked, and he had very little tolerance for lack of success.

So I worked with some of the other people, most notably Larry Higby, who was my sort of administrative assistant through the campaign and had worked for me at J. Walter Thompson Company

in Los Angeles before that. I had hired him out of UCLA there. Very bright, very able, very young guy--he had just gotten out of school. In fact I had spirited him away from graduate school. He actually hadn't finished school when he came in with me, and then came back, worked with me through the entire campaign and got a very good feel of the whole operation. Dwight Chapin had worked with me years earlier at Thompson and had had earlier campaign experience and then had worked on Nixon's staff long before I was working for Nixon. He was working as an administrative aide for Nixon at the law office when he was starting his Presidential campaign. And a number of others that we had had as advance men and other roles in the campaign that were available for the inside, internal staff.

Our basic concept on getting things done, and keeping track of things, which seemed to be the biggest problem in other Presidencies, was to set up a staff secretariat along the lines that Andy [Andrew J.] Goodpaster had given me some help on. Goodpaster had been the Staff Secretary in the Eisenhower administration, and [later became] Commandant of the [U.S. Military] Academy. He was a [full] General in the Army, and [Nixon sent him] to NATO as Supreme Commander. When Nixon was elected [he was Deputy Commander in Vietnam]. We brought him back back to counsel with us on setting up White House structure and so forth. Working with all of the information available, and with a lot of help from Bill Hopkins, the long-time administrative secretary in the White House, going back to Herbert Hoover's Presidency, who was enormously helpful in

helping me to define the areas where he needed structure and where the pitfalls were: where it was likely that things wouldn't turn out the way we wanted them to, and how to deal with that. With this campaign crew and Hopkins's help and Goodpaster's guidance and a lot of advice from both books and people in previous administrations, we set up a structure that was ready to go into place on January 20th, but that evolved very substantially from that point forward and was always in a state of change. We were constantly fine-tuning and shifting and re-structuring.

We did a major re-structure in the first year, after, I don't know, six, eight months or something, in office--somewhere along that period. In the fall, I think, of '69, we got into some substantial revamping of White House operations. I changed my role substantially; Ehrlichman's role changed substantially, from Counsel to the President to Assistant for Domestic Affairs. Alex [Alexander P.] Butterfield evolved as replacing me in a lot of the day-to-day chores that I was doing, so that I could do more of an overall managerial job on the total operation. We evolved right up to the day I left in re-structuring, modifying structure. People came and went to some degree, and a lot of what we put together was--the chart came out of the people rather than the people being fitted into the chart. We utilized assets that we had in the ways that seemed best. But the staff secretariat was the core of it, and we had a Staff Secretary whose responsibility was to maintain all of the ongoing in-and-out records. Knowing how Nixon worked as I did, I set up paper

flow systems and follow-up systems, and that sort of thing, that would ensure that everything got to him in the form he wanted it and then was properly dealt with after it had been to him the way that he wanted it done.

I set up my own concept of the office of chief of staff as it had been in the campaign, that I had no independent agenda or program of my own. I was totally a functionary of the President and I worked on that basis. I had very little independent schedule even of my day's activity. I had routines. We had the routine staff meetings in the morning, but the rest of my day pretty much evolved out of what the President's day produced. I made very few commitments that locked me into anything that would preclude my being available to the President when he wanted me to be. I did that consciously; that was one technique I used in structuring the office. I felt that other people had to have other independent agenda. They had to meet with Cabinet officers, they had to meet with the press, they had to meet with committees, they had to set up their own committees of their staffs, and that sort of thing, to do all the things they needed to do. The President needed to know that somebody was there, any time he wanted him, for anything. I'd set up my structure both operationally and physically in a way to accomplish that. I had a direct line on my phone from his phone. All he had to do was push a button marked "H", and pick up his phone. He only had six buttons on his phone. Johnson had [a] 32 button call director, or something which Nixon would have never been able to cope with. He had a six button phone. We ultimately ended up with a

"Haldeman" and an "Ehrlichman" and a "Kissinger" button, plus a "Rose Woods" button and then his White House line.

He could simply pick up the phone and it would ring on a continuous ring in my office, on my phone, so that there was no chance of it being ignored. I'd immediately pick up the phone, knowing it was the President calling. We eliminated all preliminaries that way. He could start, he didn't say, "Is this you?" or anything else; he'd just say "Would you get something and something?" and hang up. We had a very good physical operating system that way. He also had a buzzer button on his buzzer pad next to the phone that he could push that rang a buzzer in my office. [It] started ringing as soon as he pushed the button and kept ringing--he didn't have to hold the button down--it kept going by itself, until I turned it off. So there was never a danger of his pushing a button and my having stepped out of the office for a minute and coming in and not knowing he had buzzed for me, because the buzzer would still be going. My secretary could also turn it off, and then she would come and find me and say, "The President wants you." Pushing the buzzer meant he wanted me to come into the office. He didn't have to pick up the phone and tell me to come in; he could just push the buzzer and I'd come in. He had that same thing for Rose, so he could get her in on the buzzer, and I think we put it on Chapin or Steve Bull, who were the Appointments Secretaries, so he could do that, and Alex Butterfield, because Alex later would handle the immediate personal needs of the President: he wanted to get somebody or find him a paper or do something like that.

Originally he buzzed me for that; we shifted that to Alex.

RHG: So Butterfield took some of your trivial responsibilities then?

HRH: Yes, and he took my office. I moved from the little office right next to the Oval Office down to the corner office which had originally been designed for the Vice President, but Agnew never used it. We had to negotiate him out of it, but we finally got him to let me have the office. So I moved down the hall, away from the right outside the President's door position, and Alex took that office so that he was always there. After about eight months or nine months, something like that, he took on the routine chores like taking all the papers in to be signed. I did that at the beginning, because the President wouldn't sign anything unless I told him it was ready to be signed. I had to take all the certificates in that--the huge commissions for everybody, all the officers' commissions for the armed forces and all that stuff that the President has to sign, plus all the Bills and memos and everything else.

We later got that to where Alex took care of the signing operation. Alex took the stuff in for the President's "In" box, but I had screened it all before it went in. Nothing went to Alex until I had gone through it; nothing came to me until Staff Secretary had gone through it, logged it in, and then logged it back out when it came out. So we knew where everything was at any given moment.

All memos were pre-staffed and structured so that the President in his incoming thing got: an action file, which was things that required his signature--decisions to be made and

signatures signed off on; a signing file, that just was stuff, no decision, it was just stuff, his own dictation, memoranda that other people had written for his signature but that he didn't need to read. They were routine things but they had already been carefully staffed, obviously--they'd just go in and he'd just sign those. So he had a signing file, and an action file, and then he had a reading file that was immediate reading, in other words things he needed to have, and then a reading file that was just background reading that he could read whenever he had the opportunity. Then there was an events file, an agenda file, for the day that was a master file of his schedule for the day (exactly what he was doing), and then a back-up file for each activity that was scheduled: every appointment, every public appearance, anything he did. There was a file for that that gave him all of the details and had suggested remarks to be made and all of the backup: the background on the people that were to be there; the issues that were to be covered; a reminder to him of what he wanted to be sure and emphasize, or to be sure and thank the person for what he had done yesterday at someplace else, or whatever it was. All of the total detail that he needed for the meeting, so that immediately prior to the meeting he could just flip to that file, go through it quickly and be ready to move into that meeting full steam ahead. Then the Appointments Secretary, which was originally Dwight and later became Steve Bull, was responsible for bringing the people in and out, actually handling the traffic flow in and out of the office, and carrying out the schedule, in effect.

I did all of that at the beginning to make sure it was set up right and going right. Once it was going, then we'd developed the President's confidence in the system and I was able to step back one step and then a giant step and to let Alex take over with the Staff Secretary and the Appointments Secretary getting all of those things done. I was able then to deal with the current problems, the issues that the President wanted me to handle, which are evidenced in my journal, all of the things that were involved. It became known early on, really, and almost I think at the outset--not only known but accepted--that I was dealing at the President's instruction, with the President's knowledge. When I said to someone, "The President wants this done," they knew it wasn't the usual Washington confab of "the President wants you to do this," but rather was a direct order from the President, and that I also relayed their objections and affirmations, whatever, back to the President in honest, accurate, form. They learned that they could rely on me as the President learned he could rely on me, and not only me, but me and my system, which was the Staff Secretary and Alex and the Appointments Secretary and all. They developed confidence that if they needed to see the President, there was a way to go about doing it. They didn't have to maneuver, they could run that through and get in. Now, some people lost that confidence later because they weren't getting in or weren't getting the answers they wanted, and that was of course because the President didn't want them there or didn't agree with the answer that they wanted him to give. Then it became my problem to deal with those

dissatisfactions with those people and take the brunt of them off of the President and on to me, which I did.

RHG: Did the staff, by and large, recognize the way the staff system was supposed to operate and do more or less what was expected of them, or was there a lot of education involved on your part?

HRH: There was some education but we had thought it through and laid it out as specifically as we could to begin with, and of course it did evolve. It changed as time went on, so there was continuing education, let's say. Various people had various approaches. This was a different way of working than any of us had ever worked. You had to learn how to do it; you had to learn to rely on it, each of those people did; and it took time. Some people it was harder for than others. For some of the old-timers it was difficult: the Bob Finches and the Herb Kleins and people like that [who] had known Nixon long before I did and had always, just when they wanted to see him, walked in to his office and chatted with him. Well, they realized fairly quickly that they were better off working--and that was my key to making the system work, that it had to be better than the alternatives, otherwise it wouldn't work. People had to recognize it was better than the alternatives, and they did. Those people found, over really a short period of time--even Arthur Burns, people like that, who had ego problems, all the Cabinet officers, Bill [William P.] Rogers and Henry Kissinger--all recognized fairly quickly that I was not an impediment, I was an accelerator, and that using the system worked better than not using the system.

Now, there were instances all the time when people felt that

the system got in their way and decided to go around it. There were ways set up so that you could go around it, because there was not an attempt to build a Berlin Wall or an iron wall around the President at all. It was carrying out the President's wishes, it wasn't us deciding the President shouldn't see Mel [Melvin] Laird, it was that the President said, "I don't want to see Mel Laird," or George Romney or whatever. These people began to realize that. At first a Mel Laird, a Congressman in his own right and a close buddy of the President's in the Chowder and Marching Society and an old political ally and all that--at first it was inconceivable to him that I would say, "The President can't see you today, but you can come over at 10 o'clock tomorrow." As far as Laird was concerned that was unthinkable, so he'd endrun it. I shouldn't single out Laird because I don't even--yeah, he was one that, a lot of them did.... He'd come over and start in to see the President and find someone else was in seeing the President, and he'd have to just sit and wait. Because you can't interrupt.

RHG: So he would just try to walk in the door, open door, as it were?

HRH: Right, to start out with, yeah. Or, he'd walk into the outer office, the Appointments Secretary's office, the outer office on the other side, and say, "Is the President free? I'd like to see him for a minute?" They'd say, "No, he's in a meeting." "Well, how long will it take?" "Well, it's going to take half an hour, and then there's another meeting for an hour and a half, and then there's an NSC [National Security Council] meeting for three hours, and then he's going to a luncheon over in the F Street

Club....

RHG: So he'd be faced with sitting all day, waiting.

HRH: So, "Do you want to sit on your ass all day over here or do you want to go back where you belong, and we'll call you when you can see the President?" People pretty quickly--including people in the White House--realized that an orderly process protected them also, because it meant when they were in seeing the President, someone else didn't wander in and bust up their meeting. Once you realize that there was a system that worked, you became willing to rely on it, and you realized that it was to your benefit as well as the President's and everyone else's.

The major exception to that would be Congressional people, some Cabinet and sub-Cabinet kind of people, and some staff people at times, when they felt what they had was so urgent you had to override. What they found was that if they did get to the President, they got really chopped by the President, because they weren't flying in the face of my orders, they were flying in the face of the President's orders, and he didn't appreciate that. So they learned that their dealing with the President was much more comfortable and beneficial and effective if they did it via the system, rather than by their own chaotic approaches. It worked, and it worked well. It was a very good system. It needed ironing out, and it got ironed out over time and got better. Overall it was well conceived and well executed.

RHG: Do you remember one or two of the problems that had to be changed; things where the system had to be changed?

HRH: Well, part of it was the demand on my time, which I alluded to

before, which we resolved by bringing more people into the President's confidence, which took time to do. He had never seen Alex Butterfield in his life, so I had to ease Alex into a comfort level with the President.

RHG: Which as I remember took quite awhile.

HRH: It did. It was difficult, because there he was in the really inner circle kind of stuff. The Cabinet problems, Congress problems, were always there because those people, each of them thought his own concern was of overwhelming importance and had no way of putting it into the perspective of the President's overall concerns. That we had to do, and balance out. Now obviously we made some mistakes sometimes. You don't do everything--nobody does everything right all the time. But we usually carried them out; we corrected them. People came to realize that we were honest brokers, what we were doing was to their best interest as well as the President's.

As far as specifics, I'm not good at anecdotes. There may be some in the journal. I tried to put some in, especially later on. There was the constant problem of.... You get a guy like John Volpe, who's been a Governor of a state, who had always this enormous briefcase full of overwhelming problems in his department that had to demand the President's immediate attention, and in which the President hadn't the slightest degree of interest. The President soon came to realize that, once Volpe got in it was very difficult to get him out. And that increased his resistance to letting him in. That increased Volpe's determination to get in, so you had the problems that way. Some

of those never got resolved. I think Volpe ended up probably never happy, and Hickel probably the same, and I guess Romney to some degree the same. Well, I think Romney was a broader-based guy, and I think he understood what we were doing. He didn't like it but he realized its benefits.

RHG: I think Stans was unhappy in several cases.

HRH: Stans was unhappy, but that was a different kind of a things. Stans had a much longer time relationship with the President than Volpe, Romney, and Hickel did. He had always been Nixon's man. He was Nixon's finance chairman in the Presidential campaign; he was the finance chairman in the gubernatorial campaign here in California. I worked very closely with Maury and all of that. Maury was frustrated because he had a deep political interest but not a great political talent, and Nixon had enormous respect and affection for Stans, but not a great regard for Stans's political acumen. Stans would want to get in and give political advice and discuss strategic concepts and all that the President did not want to get into with Stans. Stans is a very thorough, very methodical guy, and there were problems because of that from time to time. Also Maury had problems because he was responsible to the campaign contributors for the ongoing relationships with them, and the President wasn't always available to see people when Maury wanted [him] to be and that kind of thing. We didn't give enough dinners for the big donors, and that sort of stuff, to satisfy Stans. I'm not sure you ever can satisfy the political campaign contributor group, but you do the best you can, and we did. So Maury did have some frustrations, and they

came from a different basis, as did Finch's and Klein's for instance, who had the long-term relationships with the President. Don [James D.] Hughes--we brought him in as the chief Military Assistant to the President, but Don had been his personal aide when he was Vice President. He was just intimately close to him. He'd travelled with him everywhere and all of a sudden here he was over in the Military Assistant's office and had to make appointments to get in, and stuff like that. It was hard for him.

It was very hard for Rose Woods. There's been a lot written about how I supposedly clobbered Rose Woods or pushed her aside. You've read my journal. I think you can see that I was dealing with problems on both sides vis-a-vis Rose Woods and trying to handle them as best I could. There was no desire on my part to move her out of her personal secretary relationship with the President. There was a strong desire on the President's part to change that relationship in some ways, not totally at all. We didn't change it totally. He totally relied on Rose: had complete trust and confidence in her and used her very effectively. But also he had broadened his base. Rose, going back to the old days, had a tendency to come in with a lot of problems from old pals, things like that, that the President didn't want to hear about. And from the family--from Don [F. Donald] Nixon and Eddie [Edward C.] Nixon and Pat Nixon, from time to time. Things that the President wanted to be protected from. He decided he didn't want Rose sitting in the office outside his office, controlling the gate, because she would slip

in people that he didn't want slipped in. My people would take my orders, which were Nixon's orders, as to who got in and who didn't and when they did and for how long and upon what basis and all that. Rose, based on her relationship with him, would second-guess a lot of those things, and he didn't want them second-guessed any more.

He had changed: he wasn't the lawyer in New York that she had worked for; he wasn't the Vice President of the United States that she had worked for; or the Senator; or the candidate. He was the President of the United States. And it was hard for her.... I recognized him as that, totally. She had a different, much stronger, long-term basis that she had to adapt. That was difficult for her to do. It created problems for her. But, in a lot of ways, Rose and I had a very good, very strong personal relationship. It was not.... There were problems in it because of the kinds of things I'm talking about, but there was not, on my part or hers, a hatred or a determination to "get" the other person or anything like that, that some people externally and the press have built up.

RHG: You were just--it sounds like you were faced with a good number of people who had had long relationships with Nixon, who were accustomed to dealing with him as a private citizen or as Vice President with a lot of time on his hands, and here he was now, a very, very intensely busy man, and that kind of relationship couldn't continue to exist.

HRH: That's really it. He used me as the way of changing some of those relationships, including relationships with his family, and

it put me in a very difficult spot, but it was part of what I had to do.

RHG: You look like the one who's coming between them.

HRH: Exactly.

RHG: I think some of them have said that, and written that. I read Stans's book recently, and he accused you at one point of isolating the President.

HRH: Right, and he felt that I did. And he told me that. Now, there it was not a personal thing at all. Stans and I had had, all the way through that, even when there were disagreements and all, a very strong and good personal relationship and mutual respect. The problem there was Stans felt my judgment was wrong. What Stans did not and could not recognize was that I was not exercising my judgment. The reason he couldn't was because he didn't want to. And that's true of Rose, it's true of Pat Nixon, it's true of lots of people other than Maurice Stans, including a lot of Congressmen; the Mel Lairds, the old buddies of the President--Bryce Harlow, senior top staff person, felt that I was, and told me so. The thing that isn't recognized is these people didn't--they bitched about it, and it sometimes got out to the press and to other people's books and that kind of thing, and so it's been written up, but they also told me. It wasn't a thing where they were fighting me because they believed I was intentionally doing something wrong; it was that they were trying to counsel me that I was making mistakes in judgment. What they were unable to recognize was that these were not my judgments.

RHG: You weren't making judgments at all.

HRH: I wasn't saying, "The President should not see Harlow." What I was saying (but I didn't say it that way) is "The President doesn't want to see Harlow." He [the President] knows Harlow's going to come in with a problem the President doesn't want to deal with. Therefore, I had to shunt that problem to someone else and get Harlow to handle it some other way, but not say to Harlow, "The President doesn't want to see you." And even more importantly to Rose Woods or to Mrs. Nixon or to Iricia or something like that: "The President doesn't have time to see you." I had to deal with it. The President would say, "I don't want her doing this," or "The President doesn't want you to go on the motorcade next week," or something like that.

RHG: And you couldn't say, "He doesn't want you to," so you'd have to say, "You can't...."

HRH: I had to say, "It's been set up a different way," and try and figure a way to handle it. Given the number of things I had to deal with and the intensity of them I'm sure that some of them could have been handled personally much better by me than they were, but I had to get all of them done and I did them the best I could. I was not overly concerned with whether people liked me as a result of it or not. I was only concerned that the result the President wanted got carried out. In the process I became the focal point, understandably, to a lot of people, for what they felt was wrong. [They] didn't want to say Nixon was wrong, so I was handy to blame it on instead.

RHG: Now, you oversaw the President's schedule, and I know from your journal that he found, would periodically get very upset about

the way the schedule was being conducted. Can you describe some of that problem?

HRH: Usually it was that I was giving in to too many of these outside requests. What he was saying is, "I've got to have--you can't pile up all this stuff on me. You've got to get these things handled other ways." There were times I couldn't see how it could be handled any other way. There were times the President was wrong: he may not have wanted to handle some particular thing but he had to. There were a lot of things I had to do in my day that I didn't want to do, and I made Higby do them. But there were some things Higby couldn't do. Higby could only carry out certain things. He couldn't deal with an Arthur Burns fight with Bob Mayo. I had to deal with those. I'd try to shunt them off on Higby or John Ehrlichman or somebody else just as the President tried to shunt things off on me, and through me to other people. My technique and procedure on that kind of thing was not to take all those things on myself but to move them through to the most appropriate person within the staff. There again, you had varying degrees of talent in dealing with those things. Some people were superb at some things and bad at others. So you had to live with the results of those, both pluses and minuses.

The scheduling--the President, as you can see from the journal, did a lot of juggling with [the] scheduling concept as time went on. We made a lot of changes in [the] scheduling approach. He would sit and analyze it. He'd say, "I need more rest. I need a longer break at noon time." Or, "I need to

be...." Johnson had told him he should take a nap in the afternoon, so he'd try that; then Billy Graham told him he should have a massage every afternoon, so he'd try that. Somebody else would say, "You ought to do this" or "You ought to do that." So we'd shift things around and we'd get these orders: "From now on there's never to be any of this, or that," and then we'd issue that order, and then it would change the following week to some other order. I tried to help guide him in those things: "I don't think this is going to work," so he'd say, "OK, don't." Or he'd say, "I want to try it anyway;" he'd overrule me. That ultimately is his decision: it's his life, it's his office, it's his job, and you've got to do what he wants done. But you do try to use your own judgment to counsel on what would be the best way of doing it. Because you're on the firing line you know what flak is going to evolve from certain things. You get down, as Ehrlichman would have to do from time to time, you'd say, "Mr. President, you've got to see John Volpe. And we've got to give him enough time to bring his briefcase in and at least think he's gone through a good part of it." The President would say, "No. Here's what you do," and he'd work it out. We'd go around and around, and he'd finally break down and see John Volpe.

But you'd get other scheduling problems. He'd have a meeting with the Congressional leaders and then, as he walked out of the Cabinet room into his office, some of Congressional people, who are very astute at how to do this kind of thing, would glomm on to him and cruise right into the Oval Office with him. They'd get the private appointment that they'd been told

they couldn't have. At social functions and official functions people constantly--Congressmen, Cabinet officers, sub-Cabinet officers, general public people who had been invited, press-- would get hold of him, corner him, and slip him notes. Jerry Ford was a master of it. He [the President] would often come back with a pile of notes that Jerry Ford had slipped him. That was part of the game. It was part of the way of providing a system, an escape valve, a way of end-running, because he'd [the President] take all of his notes--as soon as he'd get back to the office he'd empty all that stuff out of his pocket, call me in and say, "Take care of this stuff."

RHG: There are several mentions in your journal of "...got some more-- got a whole hatful of the President's little notes." Where all those notes he got from other people? Or did he do that himself?

HRH: No, both. There were also a lot of notes he'd make himself. At a dinner or something he'd have nothing to write on; he'd take his place card and write some notes: "Tell Bob no more soup at dinners," or "I'm never to be seated next to Mrs. Whosis again." Little things, and those would pile up. He didn't have a system for dealing with them, so they'd get into pockets. Then he'd discover them later in the pocket or something, and so big wads of them would come forth at times. At other times he'd just walk in; he'd hand you stuff as you were walking by or something. The aide that was with him--we always had one of our people like Steve Bull, the Appointments Secretary, one of our guys, with him as well as a military aide with him, and both of those aides were trained to.... When those notes evolved, when people handed him

notes or when he made notes, they were trained to take the notes and supposed to keep them, move them into the process right away. They still would accumulate in batches with the President himself too. You couldn't keep on top of all of them.

RHG: Did it trouble you as a manager that this White House structure, the way of doing business, was such a fluid absolutely human sort of thing, altering every day or every moment with all kinds of...?

HRH: It didn't trouble me conceptually, because I knew that's the way it had to be. It obviously troubled me operationally, because you had to constantly change things. The worst of that, and it was totally non-substantive, was the horrendous problem we'd go through, and I guess the journal reflects it, of deciding whether to go to Key Biscayne for the weekend, and if so, when to go, and if so, who to take. Once we got to Key Biscayne, as soon as a cloud would come up, he'd say, "Order up the plane, we're going back." Then you'd try to work out a, "No, let's stay, and see [if] the clouds are going to blow away." I'd have to have super up-to-date weather reports, and I'd have to do a little finagling with what the weather was going to be to try to get him to stay, because there was no reason to go back. That kind of flexibility really was disturbing because it was hard to.... We had programmed people to come down to Key Biscayne to meet with him or to meet with us, and then you'd have to change all of that, and unfortunately he knew that logistically we could do it. He had his airplane there, and Air Force One was always ready to go, so we could never use the excuse that we don't have a plane, or

things normal people can use. He knew that anything could be done that he said he wanted done. So it was a problem of trying to convince him that even though it could be, it probably shouldn't be.

RHG: I think the reorganization that you were talking about or just the change in the staff system was in September 1969...

HRH: That makes sense.

RHG: ...to judge from the journal: "Generally agreed on new staff structure per Butterfield chart."

HRH: I guess I had Alex draw up a chart. I had talked with Alex about how we could improve the staffing system, and how I could get more freedom. I was so tied down by the President that I couldn't get done what he wanted me to do. I didn't have time between times.... He would say, "Go get this done," and I'd go out, and as soon as I was starting to do it, he'd push the buzzer and I'd have to go back in. I went back in no matter if Arthur Burns or the Shah of Iran was sitting in my office talking about something. If the President buzzed, I said, "Excuse me," and left him sitting there. Once in awhile not. If it was something that I was doing for the President and I figured the buzz was-- I'd have to guess, I'd use instinct--figured the buzz was capricious in a sense, I mean not vital, then I would call Butterfield and say, "Go in and tell the President I'm meeting with the Shah," or "I'm doing this or that, as he asked me to, and does he want me to interrupt or can I come in later?" Our system with Butterfield was, the assumption would be I can come in later. If not, then Butterfield would call me back and say,

"No, he needs you right now."

Sometimes he did. There were sometimes overriding reasons, but often it was just he was sitting in the office and he had twenty minutes between appointments because somebody had left early or something had changed and he'd want someone to talk to. He'd just push the button to have someone come in and sit and listen to him. If it was that, and I wasn't doing anything else, that was fine, but if I was doing something else, I would see if I could get out of it. Sometimes when I didn't realize that that was the case and I'd go into the office and I'd see that there was no reason, I'd say--I'm sure this must be on the Presidential tapes, the White House tapes, where I'd say, "I'm in a meeting with this group; would it be all right if I come back in a half an hour when that's over?" He'd say "Oh, sure," or he'd say, "No, I need to get this done now."

RHG: Now, Nixon was a President that liked to conduct quite a bit of his business by paper rather than through discussion. What steps did you take to see that the paper that he received from the staff was of a kind that he wanted?

HRH: Be sure that I get back to the question, but let me deal with the hypothesis for a minute. The hypothesis that he wanted to deal with paper rather than discussion is not a totally accurate description in my opinion. We used the paper, dealing with things on paper--he wanted things laid out on paper in an orderly system, partly as a discipline to the advocates and opponents of things, to force them to go through the discipline of getting their case properly stated. But he also valued discussion. The

problem was, who was the discussion going to be with? He wanted the discussion to be productive discussion, not a discussion where it was a process of his having to educate someone else on something. Therefore, a lot of people who wanted to be in on discussions weren't in on discussions, and a lot of people who didn't want to have to be in on them were, because he wanted their opinion on something.

He never decided things in a Cabinet meeting by vote of the Cabinet. But he did at some times, even in the Cabinet, welcome discussion of things. Mostly he didn't, because the Cabinet was too cumbersome to provide a meaningful discussion and everybody was coming from too many disparate viewpoints and with disparate levels of knowledge. If you were discussing an intricate transportation matter, Bill Rogers and John Mitchell probably didn't add much to the discussion. And if you were discussing a serious foreign policy, diplomatic situation, there wasn't much point in getting John Volpe's view.

That evolved, became systematized into some of those sub-committees; of Cabinet committee kind of things where we could assemble a Cabinet group that was constituted as a committee on some particular issue that was all knowledgeable and at the same knowledge level or a higher, hopefully, knowledge level than the President, so that they could make a positive contribution to the President's thinking on it, rather than just a drain on his knowledge of it. But he liked to talk things over. It was a question of who he wanted to talk them over with, and he spent a lot of time, as you can see from the White House tapes, talking

things over with people that he wanted to talk over whose knowledge level was equal to his and therefore could track with him. He didn't have to bring them up to speed. Consequently he spent hours and hours talking to Kissinger about things and exploring things. That's what we tried to explain on the Watergate tapes, that he spent hours talking with some of us about Watergate things where he was exploring them. He was not saying, "Do this," in the sense of issuing a command. He was saying, "Do this," to see if this was something that was worth being done.

Those of you who have listened to other than the Watergate tapes I would think have seen quite a lot of that. Because there was a lot of that. So, there were people who spent a lot of time in discussions with him about issues, and he'd waver back and forth. He'd go all the way out, especially on Vietnam decision issues: the Parrot's Peak, and the Cambodian incursions, and the bombing and mining questions and things like that, the big questions. But also a lot of little ones. Where he would call General [Creighton] Abrams and talked with him about them, on the phone. Or he'd have Kissinger and Laird in and go through it. Or, he'd have [Chairman of the Joint Chief of Staff] Tom [Admiral Thomas] Moorer and all the Joint Chiefs in, not for an NSC meeting, a formal conference or council, but an ad hoc discussion. But he did also want the issue boiled down to a written document that laid out the pros and cons, the recommendations and the alternatives, and gave him an opportunity to issue a decision. Because a lot of decisions he could make

very rapidly. The issues were clear enough to him on that thing that [they] didn't need discussion. He knew what the discussion was going to say anyway. It wouldn't have served any useful purpose, except to waste time.

[End of side one]

[Beginning of side two]

HRH: You had a specific question, didn't you?

RHG: I started with the assumption that Nixon was a paper President.

HRH: Right.

RHG: And that the paperwork quality--I said, "What did you have to do to educate the staff to produce the paperwork?"

HRH: OK.

RHG: And then you corrected me and pointed out that he had lots of meetings but then he wanted the final document. So how did you go about getting that the way that you wanted it?

HRH: The responsibility for the paperwork that went in to the President was assigned within the staff to the senior staff person most directly responsible for that area. [If] it was a domestic policy issue it would come from Ehrlichman; and foreign policy, national security stuff, all came from Kissinger; Congressional matters, from Harlow, and so on. Then within their staffs they would assign it down to the individual person on a particular project; so that, if it were a matter relating to Indian affairs, it would be the guy on Ehrlichman's staff that was currently handling Indian affairs and would be responsible for preparing the material for the President.

There were lots of routes and sources for the material

coming together, depending on the particular issue, but the staff person in the White House might (and did in many cases) assign or request the material for the proposal for a decision from a Cabinet officer or a Cabinet department or sub-Cabinet person or an agency that was directly responsible. The White House person would be involved to some extent in order to get the material into the proper format and be sure all the proper content was there. The objective there was to get down to the essence of the issue before the President [and] eliminate the secondary questions or, if not eliminate them, at least put them in the back-up reference material instead of in the on-top presentation. Then get the material collected so that there was an adequate and complete, to the extent that was necessary, statement of the issue itself, and a background explaining how it got to be that way, if that was relevant, if that mattered. Then a statement of the alternatives that were available (the alternative courses or alternative decisions that could be taken) and then a recommendation by the senior staff person responsible for the route recommended by that person, but with a statement or presentation of the alternative recommendations, if there were some, from other people. If there were conflicts, in other words. Normally there would be, because if everybody agreed, "This is what we ought to do," the issue would probably not have to come to the President anyway; it would just be done. The reason it's coming to the President is because there is some issue to be decided.

So it was not a matter of just presenting him with the

alternatives; it was the alternatives with a recommendation, but it was incumbent upon the person responsible for preparation to be sure that the opposing views were at least adequately presented. At least as well presented as the proponents' view. Then there was a little format where the President could sign either "Yes" or "No" or "Approved" or "Select Option A" or "Option B" or "Option C" or however the issue presented itself. The effort and the objective all the way through within the White House staff was to function as an honest broker on all issues, to be sure that all of the relevant views and facts were brought into the presentation. The President then had the opportunity not to be pushed into a decision because someone else believed that's what he ought to do, but to be convinced of the decision because of the clarity of the presentation. [There was] a recommendation, so that if the President was inclined not to try and decide the issue himself and was inclined to accept the recommendation of a particular individual in this particular issue, he could do that.

I think it worked very well. I think we succeeded in doing that most of the time. That paperwork, prepared by the outside Department or the inside staff person, went to the Staff Secretary. It was his responsibility to be sure it was in proper form, to be sure it had been staffed out properly. In other words, the Staff Secretary had another round of review that was a non-participative review in that he was neither an advocate nor an expert on the subject at hand; he was only an expert on how to get material to the President. It was the Staff Secretary's

office job to be sure that everything was properly there, that all of the relevant materials were attached, [and] that, if there needed to be any possible secondary follow-up, that was indicated. Perhaps the President, rather than deciding it, would prefer to refer this to somebody for additional work, or something like that. When all that was in proper form in the Staff Secretary's office, it was then put in in the form of an Action Memorandum to the President, logged by the Staff Secretary, so he knew this particular recommendation by subject and source was coming to the President. Then it came in to my office, was quickly reviewed by Higby, put into the stack of materials to go in to the President (this would be in the folder for action). I would review those very quickly, usually, flagging anything, frequently rejecting stuff, [and] sending it back, because something was missing or I was in a position to know that some other direction that the initiating parties didn't know about was working on this same thing. I could re-refer it back for additional staffing, or something like that. Once approved there, that folder with all the other materials to the President (the signing folder and the reading folders and all that) which had also been reviewed by my office and by me, went to Butterfield for presentation to the President.

Butterfield's job was neither substantive nor presentative, let's say--he was not concerned with either substance or format. He was concerned with just mechanically getting that to the President, in timely fashion, getting it acted upon or not acted upon, and brought back out. He processed material that you

archivists have seen lots of: he had little stamps and things that said "President has seen," or whatever. Those folders would go in to the President. The President would review them in his office or take them back to the Residence in the evening, go through them in the evening, signing stuff and so forth, and then it would be in his "out" box.

From the "out" box Butterfield marked his stamp on it ("The President has seen," or whatever) and the normal process (this changed over time in various ways) basically was that it would come back out of the President's office, be stamped as to what had happened with it by Butterfield, and then would go to the Staff Secretary for assignment. If it was an Action Memo with an "Approved" or "Disapproved", the Staff Secretary would then send it back to the originator, indicating the action. If it was a directive from the President saying, "Get something done," it would go from the Staff Secretary to the person that was to do it, with a time schedule set: "The President has asked that you do so-and-so," a standard buck slip with a reference number and a due date. The Staff Secretary would follow up on anything that wasn't done or wasn't reported back by due date through a tickler system. It pretty well kept track of things. When the President said, "Where the hell is this?", I could call the Staff Secretary and ask the same question and get a quick answer back to the President: "It's back at Justice being reviewed," or "It's been carried out," or "There's a problem on it and they're trying to-- they've got another recommendation coming," or whatever it might be.

RHG: So you worked very closely with the Staff Secretary then?

HRH: In a way, but not on a.... I did in the sense that everything came to me from the Staff Secretary and the Staff Secretary was my source for information on follow-up if I needed any, but he.... Once we got the system in place and worked out, whoever it was--John Brown, Ken Cole, various people, Bruce Kehrli--who had that job, basically handled it on [his] own and it was pretty routine, [a] lot of work. A lot of follow-up, a lot of phone calls on their part to keep everything rolling as it was supposed to be. I didn't on a day-to-day basis get involved in their actual activity.

RHG: At the point in the process when the memoranda would come through your office...

HRH: Yeah.

RHG: ...where you would examine before it went into the President, is that a time when you would have checked to see the way the particular staffer was doing the assignment and conduct your continuing education as it were? Memos saying, "You're not doing this right--we need it in this form," and send it back to them?

HRH: Yeah. Hopefully that would have been done before it got to me because the Staff Secretary should be doing that. They know by the process we go through, but if not, yes, it would go back and that would go back through the Staff Secretary so they'd see what I was putting on there too, and that's what a lot of those things with Haldeman notes in the margins, some of which caught up with me. [Laughter]

RHG: I've seen quite a few of your notes on memos saying, "You didn't do this right," sort of thing. What type of attitude did you...?

HRH: A lot of those were internal staff memoranda within the staff, though, not memos to the President. Some of them were probably also memos to the President.

RHG: What kind of an instructor did you try to be with the staff?

HRH: I don't know that I gave any thought to trying to be any kind of an instructor. What I was trying to do was try to get the staff work done the way we had decided it ought to be done and to instruct in whatever way would succeed in doing that. I tried to provide guidance so people would know what was expected, and then I expected that they would do what was expected, and provided substantial positive and negative encouragement to doing that. I was not tolerant of continuing failures to do things right. I could understand someone the first time around approaching a thing not knowing how to handle it, but, once done and into the process, people were expected to remember how to do it, know how to do it.

RHG: Did anyone ever look you in the eye and say "I don't want to do it that way, I want to do it a different way."

HRH: No, I don't think so. Not that directly. We were wide open to suggestions for change. We made a lot of changes as we went along. People often said, you know.... Procedurally, there wasn't much question, because somebody had.... There really isn't a right and a wrong procedure, there's a just a best procedure and, once established, it should be followed because it makes everything in the process simpler for everybody concerned,

even if somebody feels there might be a better way of doing it. If there really was a substantive better way, I don't think anybody would've hesitated to suggest it.

RHG: One of the ways in which the President's directives got to the staff was through the News Summary. How did that idea come about?

HRH: It just happened. The idea of the News Summary was that--it started during the campaign, and just continued into the White House. Pat Buchanan had that assignment at the outset and then trained other people to pick it up. [Lyndon K.] "Mort" Allin was the famous longest term News Summary editor, I think. The News Summary itself was an effort to provide the President with a very broad sweep of what was being reported in the news, covering a number of [news]papers, a wide range of papers, magazines, various periodicals, and the television and radio news and commentaries. This would come to the President the first thing in the morning every day, and as he had opportunities to go through it--there was no plan for it--he just started making margin notes as he'd read something, and say, "Why did this happen?", "Get somebody to talk to him about this," "Call so-and-so about that," put his notes in the margin. We simply picked those up and through the Staff Secretariat system, those became Presidential directives for follow-up and were done.

That also happened on briefing memoranda and meeting memoranda. All kinds of paper that came to the President would often be annotated by the President, and the annotations would become directives. He also did a substantial amount of

dictation, [either] into a tape recorder or directly to Rose or another of the secretaries, of memoranda that would be directives from him to various people to do various things. There were often times when he would tell me--and that's what a lot of my yellow [legal pad] notes are, which I made in every meeting with the President. [They] were directives to people to do things, and other staff members had the same kind of experience. In a meeting with the President he would say [to] have somebody do something, and what they were supposed to do at that point was run that through the Staff Secretariat system, and generally they did. Often people would either forget or just not bother to and would simply carry it out themselves, which usually worked OK, but it was not the best way to do it, again, because there wasn't the systematic follow-up that the secretariat provided.

RHG: For some reason Nixon decided to stop using the News Summary annotation system in the summer of 1973.

HRH: Really?

RHG: I'm not sure why, except that's the end of our series of them. I think it was in August.

HRH: Maybe [Chief of Staff Alexander M.] Haig decided not to give them to you [the National Archives]. Not to save the annotated News Summaries.

RHG: Maybe, maybe. I found a memorandum from after your tenure in the White House, Bryce Harlow writing to Alexander Haig, September 1973, but he's referring back to this period, actually just slightly later, that we were discussing here. Talking about some of the problems that had started occurring in the White House in

the last part of the term, and he says here, "This problem," (I'm not sure what he's referring to but it becomes clear enough here) "is a direct outfall of the excessively large and uninhibited White House staff developed during the first term and culminating in Watergate, et cetera. I earnestly warned Bob Haldeman in late 1969 and I'm leaving in December 1970 that our staff size and activities were certain to become political difficulties of the first magnitude." Did this question of the size of the White House staff come up in this early period, and were you concerned about it?

HRH: I'm not sure it came up in the early period. Well, I'm sure it did. I don't know specifically when within that period it came up, but, yeah, the size of the White House staff came.... The President started out with the determination we're not going to have one of these huge staffs like everybody else. We were just going to have three or four people, and all that. That didn't last very long. Didn't last at all, because we never got down to any small staff kind of thing. We followed the practice that had been developed very extensively by Johnson and I guess his predecessors of (A) staffing to our full budgeted limit, and (B) detailing a lot of staff from other Departments to the White House, people that were carried on other departmental payrolls but assigned either permanently or temporarily to the White House either for specific projects or ongoing assignments, and there were a lot of them. Bryce--I'm not sure what he's talking about there, that's sort of a vague comment--Bryce, given his sensitivity to Congress and his responsibility for Congressional

relations, was always concerned with budget oversight issues and obviously the opposition in Congress was always interested in hitting Nixon for having this huge staff and all. I've got to say that that's people in glass houses throwing stones to the nth degree, because the proliferation of Congressional staff is mindboggling compared to what we accomplished at the White House.

Nixon did not want a big staff. He didn't like the concept of big staffs. He never had. Back in the early campaign days he never wanted a big campaign staff. But he wanted a lot of stuff done by people, and the only way to get it done was to have people to do it. We had staff of substantial size because we had things to do of substantial size.

That gets into the question of "Was it too big?" I would guess it probably was, and the reason being, we took on too much. If I had all my druthers and could call the shots, I would say that more things should be moved to Departments and agencies and other parts of the government and about eighty percent of what the government does it ought not to be doing to begin with. So, that's how you would cut, but that isn't realistic.

Congress is a major part of the problem, in my view, because they statutorily, legislatively, put a lot of demands on the Presidency. They set up Departments and agencies and commissions and projects and all kinds of things that have to report to the President, but then [they] don't provide means for the President dealing with that responsibility. I think that's why it proliferates. I don't know how you turn it around, except to get a President who knows something about the government, like Nixon

did, and who is determined to turn it around, as Nixon said he was. But then who does something about [it], which Nixon didn't. [Ronald] Reagan's been much worse, actually, so there's no progress in that direction. I think there should be, but I don't know how. At some of these Presidential staff seminars and things this is always a subject that seems to come up. There always seems to be disagreement amongst the scholars and the practitioners both as to whether the staff is too big or too small and what ought to be done about it either way. Harlow's concern though was, I would guess, sensitivity to Congress. He was concerned--there must be some issue that somebody's raised that he's not sure how you're going to deal with it from a Congressional interference or oversight or probing...

RHG: Right. In fact, I think....

HRH: ...basis. And if that's at Watergate time obviously there were all kinds of sources of Congressional probing. The whole executive privilege and separation of powers issues were bouncing around, and Congress was feeling its oats, and getting its nose under the tent.

RHG: In fact I think the subject there was the appropriation for the operation of the White House.

HRH: For the White House Office. We always--we went through a problem there. We did, in earlier years, I don't know whether it was in the shakedown period, I don't think it was in '69, but I think probably '70-'71. As we went up for our appropriation and Bryce had to carry it on the Hill, there was the problem of how do we justify the staff. The President would be horrified at size of

the staff, and we'd make the point that most of these people aren't "White House staff", that they're actually doing departmental work within the White House.

You've got the problem--the President, President Nixon certainly was not inclined to have an automatically positive attitude towards what a Department or agency might be able to accomplish in carrying forth his objectives. The natural inclination is to set up your own people, your own unit, [your] own task force, your own project group to get certain things done that you want done, rather than assigning them somewhere else. You get into the coordination thing. This question, for instance, of whether.... I saw Nixon got into this, on the drug thing, on his television interview. I haven't seen it but I read in the paper that he got into this on his "Meet the Press" interview that, on drugs, there ought to be a White House czar on the drug operation. What he's saying there is, "We should expand the White House staff to take charge of drugs." He's probably right, and we tried to do that. We poked.... Ehrlichman spent a lot of time on that, because you have--[handling of] the drug problem is just spread throughout the government: Treasury Department, Justice Department, Interior Department, Agriculture Department. All of them have drug law enforcement assignments and projects and it's not coordinated. It does need, at a major level, a focus brought on it. But the problem is, you pay the price for that. If you're going to do that, what you need to do is have the guts at that point to say to all those proliferated departments, "You're through." Close them down. End. "The

White House czar is going to take this over. He'll take one staff person here, and one staff person here." You can do it with half or less the people in a central unit, but then you're back to this structural problem of bringing all of the responsibility and activity into the White House, instead of spreading it out to the Departments.

The other alternative is along the lines of our reorganization plan where you go to the super Secretary thing where there would be one "super Cabinet" officer (that's bad terminology), but one person who was responsible for coordinating that area so that you wouldn't proliferate. We don't succeed very well in doing that kind of thing in our government.

RHG: What were your responsibilities after this staff reorganization in September 1969?

HRH: Basically the same responsibilities, just I was able to work on a level above the detail and procedural level and more on the problem-solving, working on specific areas where things weren't going right or there was a conflict or things like that. Riding herd on the President's directives and keeping the staff on track in the direction that he wanted them going, and through them, the other elements of the executive branch.

RHG: I think that, the times when I can recall in your journal your quoting Nixon as mentioning your responsibilities to you, you usually would mention public relations and politics.

HRH: Right. But that always was a major part of my responsibility and it was in a.... The public relations thing is, we've got to explore in depth....

[Interruption]

The President had a strong feeling that PR and public relations in the way that he talked--what he called public relations and thought of as public relations and politics--were vital elements in the President's ability to govern. That he needed to carry public opinion and develop public opinion on the issues, and he needed the political stroke to be able to get things done. To get things through Congress, to get things accepted by the people, to sell programs, or to sell the elimination of programs. In a democracy a leader does not have the opportunity to issue orders. He only can try to persuade, really, ultimately. He can issue orders but they can be overridden by other people, and therefore, for his orders to be effective, he has to have some means of keeping the population in general and their representatives as the legislature in tune with those things. He needs to be able legislatively to sustain vetoes when he's trying to stop something that the legislature is doing, or to sustain a positive vote when he makes a proposal that requires Congressional approval or Congressional funding. Our leaders, our Presidents, have to be responsive to the body politic and, as leaders, have to lead the body politic. Or have to persuade the body politic and hope that in the process they'll successfully persuade them so that they will follow, that he will be a leader. Otherwise he's going to follow. He's going to govern by public opinion, and the thing that's wrong with that is that public opinion is often not adequately informed on the specific details of a particular initiative or measure.

RHG: I want to talk about this at some length and depth, probably tomorrow, but the fact that you were given in the fall of 1969 a greater responsibility to concentrate on this suggests an increased awareness of its importance.

HRH: I'm not so sure that it was an increased awareness of its importance. I think that awareness was always there. I think what it was was an increasing lack of satisfaction with the success, with the results. A concern that there wasn't adequate high level attention being given, by me or other people, and that one of the reasons for freeing me from what had become, through the system, routine duties [was] to get into dealing with the PR and the political aspects of issues; [that] was an objective. It was, I think, not a new awareness but simply a culmination of a growing concern with the need to be doing something more about it. It popped up a lot of the time.

The President never understood the difference between advertising and public relations, and because I'd been for twenty years in the advertising business, he figured I was a public relations person. There is an enormous difference. Advertising is carrying commercial messages in paid space that you totally control. Public relations is relating with the public in all kinds of ways, and what he really meant was promotion of ideas. He didn't even mean public relations. That was not my real background or strength, and I recognized that. I don't think I ever totally convinced him of that. His view varied. You can see it as you follow it through the [Nixon Presidential] papers, follow it through the journal and through his own papers and

tapes, that he would get very discouraged. We had Herb Klein as Director of Communications. He was supposed to be communicating what we were doing to the world at large in all of its aspects. Ron Ziegler was the Press Secretary. He was supposed to be keeping the press informed on a continuing day-to-day basis [as] to what the President was doing and thinking and so forth. My view there was different than his, and I don't think I ever successfully persuaded him of my view at all, which was that you don't.... He said, "We've got to find a good PR man and put him in there. You got to be it." I would say, "No, I'm not the right person for it." Then he would say, "Well, then you've got to find somebody. Get somebody in here who's the PR person." My point was that in government PR is not a separate thing. PR is the essence of what you're doing. The people who are responsible for PR have got to be the people who are responsible for the programs. If somebody is in the State Department, in the Justice Department, wherever anybody is developing a program or carrying out a policy, [that person] has got to be responsible for--"selling" is a bad word--but for presenting and arguing that the benefits of that to the public themselves. You've got to take the people that are knowledgeable in the subject area and that are sold on it and have them transmit their knowledge and their conviction to the populace at large. You can't take a professional expert, so-called PR person, and have him do that. The President never understood that concept, I don't think. I tried to make that point a number of times. His point was, "Yeah, that's probably right, they should, but they don't. And

they don't know how to, so we've got to hire an expert to do it." We went through a lot of different people and processes trying to do that, because he was constantly dissatisfied.

I think it's inevitable that every President has been, is, and will be constantly dissatisfied with his public relations, no matter how good it is, because he'll always think, "People don't understand what we're trying to do properly, or they'd be all for it." And that never happens. You never have everybody "all for" what you're doing. You have some people for it and some people against it, and most people don't care one way or the other.

My approach to that was to take the specific things that needed work, like the ABM, which I mentioned earlier, the ABM issue--was that at this time?

RHG: That was right in the beginning. I think you inherited that from the Johnson administration.

HRH: Because the whole ABM issue, when the President made the decision to go ahead, was one that was not well understood in the Congress or the country, or the government, for that matter. It was a highly controversial issue. It needed a lot of work. We set up a task force of highly knowledgeable people to work in that area. [The] task force combined with Defense Department people and NSC people and White House staff people, and PR (so-called) people. We went through all kinds of things, as I think back on it--I'd forgotten about some of them. We had the Saturday Group and the Friday Group and Bill Safire, who was a PR man by trade before he came into the White House as a speechwriter, and Dwight Chapin, who by nature is a PR man, and other people like that that spent

time trying to figure out ways to present that issue in its most compelling light and to convince Congress, the public, and the world at large that what we were doing was the right thing to be doing and to back that effort. All Presidents are faced with that; all leaders are faced with it. They have to find the ways of doing it and we went through all kinds of ways.

The standard way--Kissinger's automatic approach was, "The President's got to go on television and convince the people." That's taking your silver bullet and firing it too often. You've got to be very careful about how you do that. All the different means of PR--we ought to explore this as an in-depth subject rather than my trying to skim through it now, I'm sort of launching into things. I think we ought to go through it on a specific basis.

RHG: We could do that tomorrow morning, yes.

HRH: Yeah. But definitely in this start-up period, shakedown cruise period there was a lot of floundering around: how do we handle PR; how we handle political relations; how do we deal with the political implications of non-political activities, such as the foreign policy things, which have enormous political and PR implications? Certainly the conduct of the war did. Through this whole period we were faced with the demonstrations and the [anti-Vietnam War] moratoriums and all that stuff that was building up on the war issue. That was a monstrous PR problem all its own.

RHG: I should say it was one of the most important revelations that came to me when I was going through your journal was the

importance that public relations had. I think I entitled the section "Public relations and the ability to govern" because you slowly made me realize that it wasn't just a matter of appearances, that the President wasn't free to act unless the people perceived him in a certain way. That if the people perceived him in a way that was contrary to his idea of how he wanted to act, that he just simply couldn't act in that way, unless he wanted to cause a lot of trouble.

HRH: That was sharpened enormously by the dissent within the country on Vietnam, which made all the other PR efforts that much more difficult. I think Nixon gets a bad rap. It used to drive me nuts: we'd talk about this ad nauseum, as anybody [who] listens to the overall White House tapes will discover. I think that the journalistic impression that's given is that--when you talk about this area, when you talk about PR, it's a bad terminology to use. I don't know what the right terminology is, but PR sounds like promotion and hype or something sinister, that you're trying to con people and all that kind of stuff. That wasn't what he was after at all. What he was after was a true perception of what we're doing, how we're doing it, why we're doing it, with the conviction that if people understood that, they'd be for us and for what we were doing. But that they didn't understand it because it wasn't being clearly presented to them. Things were being distorted. They were saying... The thing that drives me up the wall with Ambrose, whom I respect in general as a Nixon historian, is he keeps talking about "Why did Nixon decide to prolong the Vietnam War? That was his serious mistake--

accelerating the war in Vietnam." Nixon did not accelerate the war in Vietnam; he decelerated it from the day he took office, and he did not.... His objective, although the net result was that the war was prolonged for four years, but that wasn't the objective nor was that the reason behind any act that he took. Every act that he took was to shorten it, to end it. He was determined to end it only within a framework of certain essential conditions. That you can argue, that point is a debatable point: were the conditions under which he was willing to bring the war to a close necessary and sufficient conditions, or should he have demanded more, or should he have been satisfied with less. That is a debatable point, but to oversimplify that into saying "Nixon's decision to prolong the war" is a distortion of fact. There was never a decision to prolong the war. That was an outcome--an undesired, undesirable and unforeseen outcome--of decisions that were made. But it was not the decision that was made at all. It's easy after the fact to say, "Why did somebody burn his house down?" The net result was he burned his house down, but what he did was drop a match and didn't plan to at all. You've got to put things in the context of their own times, I guess is the thing there.

The PR thing was, it wasn't that it became important, it was always important. It was important during the campaigns, and Nixon and I had gone through these kinds of talks for hours and hours in '62 and in '68 and in general conversations in the years in between and all that. So it wasn't something new that popped up in the fall of '69 that we got to do something about PR, it

was simply.... And there were other times when--and when we get into PR we'll see that--we'd bring someone in to do this; we'd bring someone in to do that; we'd set up a system to do this; we'd set up something else to do that. All this constant effort to try and do a better job of presenting our story, our rationale.

RHG: All right, at the end of the shakedown period, I find this, towards the end of it: you're talking about, "Nixon says he really feels frustrated because he knows people disagree with his orders and just don't carry them out. With others in the office he several times cracked that, 'Your staff never follows up on anything. So of course this won't be done.' Trouble is he's generally right, so it's hard to argue. As Harlow says, 'All Presidents go through periods of "nobody is doing anything but me.'" So, despite what you could do with structuring the White House staff, it still was not an automatic matter for the President to just say what he wants done and it would become accomplished.

HRH: No. And part of that, one of the factors in that is the thing that has been talked a lot about and written a lot about which is the question John Chancellor raised at the San Diego Presidency chiefs of staff symposium, "What do you do when the President issues a damn fool order?" That was Chancellor's first question. "How do you handle that?" And Harry MacPherson's answer was, "Very carefully." Some of what he's [President Nixon] talking about there would fall into the "damn fool order" category. In other words, where he was saying, "Do this," and then he says, "I

know you won't, because your staff never carries anything out." That's a rhetorical over-statement to make a point. He didn't by any stretch of the imagination mean literally, "Your staff never does what they're supposed to do." What he meant there was, "When you don't think it's the right thing to do, you find some way not to do it." In that sense he was right. And he was frustrated because there was something that had fallen into that category, would give rise to that sort of thing.

We were, in the early stages, we were not totally--it took time to get the procedures in order, to make sure things were being carried out, to find out how you reach past.... Our own units were getting done usually what they were supposed to be getting done, but things didn't get followed through all the way through Departments and all. We got better and better at that as we learned how to deal with the Departments, as we learned who to deal with in the Departments, how to push the right buttons. But it took time. We didn't just come in functioning a hundred percent effective on day one. We weren't one hundred percent effective on day thousand or whatever it was when I left--1400 or something like that, 1500.

[End cassette two]

[Begin cassette three]

RHG: I wanted to just go through these notes that I've taken on "Nixon, Man and President", and they're a little bit disorganized because I put several categories in a chronological order but the purpose of all of them is to try to understand President Nixon, both on a personal level--where he lived his life, some things

about his life--and others having to do with the way he perceived his office. You were very close to him. They range from the rather trivial to the rather more important. The first one on the list is a small thing; an important thing for an individual person but I didn't realize this: that you gave Nixon King Timahoe.

HRH: Right. Not me personally. The staff did.

RHG: Oh.

HRH: It was a staff gift to the President--what was the time? I guess it was just a gift from the staff on the occasion of his taking office, pretty much. Because it was within the first few weeks, wasn't it?

RHG: Yes.

HRH: We had decided to do it quite a bit before. In fact we gave it to him for his birthday, which was prior to his taking office. That was it. His birthday is January 13th, isn't it? I think so.

RHG: January 9th.

HRH: January 9th, you're right. It's January 9, 1913. We told him on the occasion of his birthday, which was pre-Inauguration. I think this is right. We told him that we were giving him an Irish setter. He had had an Irish setter when he was a boy, and he loved the dog, and he talked about it a lot and what a terrific dog it was. So we picked that up and figured that would be a great thing for him to have, go back to his.... I think the setter that he had when he was a boy, his name was King. The reason this one was called King Timahoe was Timahoe County was

the county in Ireland [from] which Nixon's family came; we later visited when we went to Ireland. That was the reason for the gift. [Charles B.] "Bud" Wilkinson's son, Jay Wilkinson, was one of the staff guys in the early period, and one of his assignments was to find a good Irish setter to give to the President. He found King Timahoe and had him all lined up; knew all about him. Gave the President the information in January. But the dog was too young; and we didn't have the place for him. We got the dog after we got to the White House, and presented it to him at the White House. It was from the whole staff. I think Rose Woods and I made the presentation, but the idea was a birthday present from the staff. I think he was very, very--I know he was very pleased with it.

He had a problem: it's a little hard to adapt a dog.... I think Reagan's had some of the same problems, same kinds of problems. Johnson had his own problems with his dogs, too. It's hard for a dog and hard for the President to adapt. The Nixon girls had a Yorkshire terrier--I think it was a Yorkie. A little dog. They brought him to the White House, and then we brought King Timahoe also. There is a fellow on the White House staff--he's an electrician on the White House staff--who had become the unofficial kennel keeper. Also [he] had kept the Johnson dogs and took over with Timahoe.

RHG: You present a nice picture here of Nixon rather hesitantly trying to both warm up to the dog and get the dog to warm up to him, throwing biscuits around the Oval Office.

HRH: Yeah, he was trying to lure him into things with dog biscuits,

and the dog was a little overexcited. He had a tough time trying to get him to come up to his desk and all that, so he did the biscuit thing to try to do it. It was a funny scene because there was one time--Nixon would throw the biscuit to him over at the far side of the office trying to get him to come over to the desk to get the next biscuit. I see in the note here the point that he hit the grandfather clock with one of the biscuits as he was tossing them around. That was one kind of human episode, and King became a terrific dog after he'd gotten used to things and settled down.

RHG: Now, I think you were also responsible for the, in some ways anyway, for the purchase of San Clemente.

HRH: Yeah. One of the early assignments when we were at the White House that first year during that shakedown cruise period was to find a place on the California coast that the President could buy that would be a retirement home for him ultimately. But in the meantime, [it would be] a place to come during the time he was in office, a place to come visit in California. My brother-in-law at that time (he's since deceased) was in the real estate business out here and had worked with President Nixon on some other house-hunting things and knew the President very well, and so we asked France to take on the assignment. He scouted the whole coast, up the coastline and down the coastline, and came upon the San Clemente place, which turned out to be just absolutely ideally situated, because it was right at the border of a Coast Guard LORAN [Long-Range Aid to Navigation] station, so there was a big piece of government land adjacent to it, which

provided security facilities. It was a big piece of land itself, and had secure area around it, so it had all of that. It was right on the ocean, you could walk right down to your own beach there. It was on the bluffs. And it was an old Spanish style home, the kind of thing that the Nixons liked. So it turned out to be ideal.

We came out during the Santa Barbara oil slick; the President came out for an inspection of Santa Barbara, and then we helicoptered down to San Clemente. I think that was the first time he saw it. I had come, Jo and I--my wife and I--had come out and looked at it before, and I had felt that it was exactly what he was looking for. I'd given him a lot of plans and descriptions of it, and on the basis of that he was interested in buying it, but obviously wanted to see it first. He and Mrs. Nixon came out, spent a night or two down there, and on that basis they did decide to buy it.

RHG: The financing was later quite controversial.

HRH: Yeah.

RHG: How did that happen?

HRH: Well, the financing was worked out on a basis where it was a large piece of property and Nixon bought the core part with the house. "Bebe" [Charles] Rebozo, his friend, and Bob [Robert] Abplanalp, another friend, put together a little consortium of people who bought the surrounding property so that there would be the buffer zone. They could buy the whole property, but they in effect subdivided it. Nixon bought the house and immediate grounds and the others bought the surrounding area. They set up

a trust of some kind so that that could be turned over to Nixon in the future or could be subdivided and sold off or whatever, at some later time. That made it possible for him to make the whole purchase and retain effective control of the whole property without having paid for it. I don't think there was any particular reason for the controversy on it except that it fell into that intensive investigation period where they were making controversy out of everything. They made controversy out of all his houses. His house in Washington when he was Vice President, his house out here that he built in Truesdale Estates in Los Angeles, so it was just one more sort of harassment point.

I see now the Reagans are going through exactly the same thing. Some friends have bought a house for them out here and they're going to rent it from them. Now they're raising questions about that. I really find that kind of a cheap shot.

A President of the United States does not have the opportunity to amass any great amount of capital as President, at least most of them don't. There have been some that I'll leave nameless that have succeeded in doing that by what I would consider questionable means. Nixon wasn't in a position, he didn't have.... He had moved up, he had made a substantial amount of money in the law firm and he had bought the apartment in New York [City], which he then sold, I guess, and used the proceeds from that to buy San Clemente, to buy his share of the San Clemente property. Because he had that apartment on Fifth Avenue in New York where he was living prior to the election, until he moved down to the White House. Then, of course, he

bought the Key Biscayne house which was--I guess he had had that before. I'm not sure; I forget how that one worked. I don't think there was any valid impropriety. I guess everything a President does is validly questionable--I mean it's valid to question anything the President does, because he's a public figure, but I don't think there was any validity to the questioning on the San Clemente purchase.

They did intend to retire there. Our original plan was to put the Nixon Library on some property just on the other side of the freeway, up on a knoll above the house. The whole set-up looked like it would work out very well. After he had his health problems and Mrs. Nixon had her stroke and he was in retirement here, they decided that living in California was not a good idea. And it wasn't. He was off the beaten path; it was very hard for people to get to see him, and that was the one thing in his post-Presidential period he obviously was going to thrive on: the opportunity to maintain the contacts with the kinds of people that he had known over the years. New York was the place to do that, so he opted to sell here and move back to New York.

RHG: Did Nixon pay much attention to his personal finances?

HRH: Not really, no. He had an accountant that took care of his finances for him, and he was in the general sense aware of what he had and what he didn't have, but that wasn't a source of either great interest or great concern to him.

RHG: Was the accountant's name Hume? Do you remember?

HRH: No. Vinnie Andrews.

RHG: Andrews. And he continued with that assignment while Nixon was

in the White House?

HRH: For awhile. And then I think it was changed and someone else took over his finances. I'm not--that's funny, I don't remember.

RHG: Now Nixon, as President, you say several times, was unable to relax. Had a lot of trouble relaxing and used to examine theories that one could do without sleep. Was that a continuing problem with him?

HRH: It wasn't so much a problem as it was an interest. He was fascinated with how.... At times, not on a continuing basis but periodically, he would become fascinated with time management, the time management issue of his own time, and the question of how to balance relaxation and recreation with work and concentration. Somebody would give him a theory on it and he'd pick that up and explore it for awhile. Lyndon Johnson had given him some strong views on that, as I mentioned earlier. So had Billy Graham. Others also. Of course you go back to Benjamin Franklin and people like that who apparently didn't have to sleep at all, and one of Nixon's things was maybe you don't have to sleep as much as we think we do, and "Maybe I could add hours to the day by not sleeping." Carrying that to the minute degree, he was extremely pleased with a decision he made prior to taking office, which was that his official signature would be "Richard Nixon", not "Richard M. Nixon." Given the number of times he would have to sign his name during the course of his first-term four years, the time spent writing that "M." in his signature would be an enormous amount of cumulative time, and he thought, "There's a real time saver." And he did. He did not use the

"M". His official Presidential signature was "Richard Nixon", and the reason was just eliminating the "M".

RHG: Just make the name shorter.

HRH: Yeah. Save time on writing the name. He used "RN" an enormous amount of the time. He did a lot of initialling of things rather than signing the full name, again for the same reason. I picked up that same theory, which I've used all along in memos and everything else: I always sign my name simply as "H", and all my staff people were all identified by single letters. Chapin was "C", and Higby was "L" for "Larry" and Ehrlichman was "E" and Kissinger was "K". We used that sort of shorthand all the way through the White House operation.

RHG: Now, Nixon had some difficulty in his Presidency with his family, some of his old friends, and some of his old associates, just not ever very successfully becoming part of his Presidency. Could you talk about that a little bit?

HRH: I think that's probably a thing that all Presidents have, in that they.... When you become President you move out of the ordinary circles that everybody else moves in. You have trouble relating to them. It's not just family and friends; it's business associates, former associates and all that. The thing is, the President is working so intently (and I found the same thing in my position as a staff person)--you're moving so fast through so many things and you have such cumulatively vast support mechanisms, information services and systems to bring you up to speed on things that other people can't keep up and even your own people can't keep up. Nixon was about as conversant with the

range of national security affairs on an hour by hour, minute by minute basis, as Kissinger was. But he also was about as conversant on the range of developments in domestic affairs as Ehrlichman was, and on Congressional affairs as Harlow was, and so forth. But Harlow never could get up to the same speed that Ehrlichman was on domestic or Kissinger was [on] foreign affairs. Ehrlichman never got up to Kissinger's speed on foreign affairs or Harlow's on Congressional. In other words, the President moves at a speed with resources that nobody else has. To a degree I had them because I was functioning in tandem with him. One thing that I guess illustrates this in a way that might be helpful and maybe I've covered this before--did I?--when we talked in that oral history thing earlier about Franklin Murphy's proposal?

RHG: I don't remember.

HRH: Franklin Murphy was the publisher of the Los Angeles Times [and] former chancellor of UCLA. [He] had, interestingly, been one of Nixon's strong choices for a major Cabinet post prior to going in. Murphy almost took it and then declined it and stayed in Los Angeles as Chairman of the Times-Mirror Corporation, [which] actually was what he was--not publisher of the Times. He was Chairman of the Times-Mirror Corporation, who in turn owns the Los Angeles Times. Franklin Murphy [was] a very insightful, very creative guy and had a substantial interest in President Nixon. Nixon put him on the [President's] Foreign Intelligence Advisory Board to give him at least some tie to ongoing things and a reason to be in Washington from time to time. Murphy was a good

friend of mine, as I had been President of the alumni association at UCLA when he was Chancellor and on the Board of Regents and had a lot of good ties with him going back. He had suggested to me during one of his Foreign Intelligence Advisory Board visits to Washington, "You know, the President needs some means of maintaining ties to reality, to the outside world, to the thinking of people like me and other people throughout the country who are thinking about important things and about the President's relationship to them. He ought to be talking with us. We ought to set up a little group that maybe comes back here," and the Foreign Intelligence Board was what gave him the idea. He said, "That's just related to foreign intelligence. We ought to set up a little group of a few people that could come back on a very informal basis, maybe once a month, and have dinner with the President or something like that, and a group that he could let down his hair, raise questions with, and they could offer him views and talk things through."

It was a good idea. It sounded great, it appealed to the President. But what we found in trying to implement that, in a few efforts to do that kind of thing, was that there was no way for these people to be up to the knowledge level that the President was at, and that such sessions inevitably became briefing sessions for those people, to get them up to speed with the President. By the time you'd done that, the session was over, and the President never got anything out of it. It was just an effort on his part to educate some other people, which wasn't really productive, from his viewpoint. There is a real

problem there. There is an enormous knowledge gap between the President and virtually everybody else. To utilize that kind of communication with people that were just generalists and had a general background of information to provide him, you couldn't get them properly briefed up to speed so that they could step right in in sync with the President. That's why the President really has to work with his own staff, the people that have the same resources that he does. And there's an unfortunate aspect to that, which is that he's not getting outside viewpoints. We were all locked into the same cocoon in a sense that the President was, and yet it was difficult to set up ways of communicating outside. And that was true with family and old friends too. How do you deal with them? You've passed them by.

RHG: Right.

HRH: Business executives find this all the time. Guys that are very successful in business find that they've passed by their former business associates, their wives, often, and their families, and moved into circles of other business people in those levels that tend to cut out their past associates. Not because they want to but simply because they've outgrown them. Almost by definition any President outgrows his former associates by becoming President. I think they've all got that problem, in one way or another. Reagan has the ability to overcome that to some extent and to go back to his old cronies because he's more comfortable with the old days than he is with the Presidential days. Nixon, on the contrary, was more comfortable with the Presidential days than with the old days and had no desire to go back. Or to even

hang on to the past ties. He would have liked to have brought them along with him, and he tried to. Interestingly, Bebe Rebozo stayed very much in the Presidential picture all the way through the Presidency because the President could fire stuff off to Bebe without trying to bring him up to speed. Bebe didn't try to get into substantive stuff. He just became a good listener, a good-- as I was--a sounding board to the President to talk things through with. There was somebody's unkind remark that Nixon prefers to be alone, Bebe Rebozo was the closest he could get to that. There's something to that. Nixon needed to talk things through, and Bebe was a good listener.

Other people tended, in their own well-meaning way--lots of other people, and the [Jack] Drowns were a prime source in this. A lot of stuff in the tapes and all has been very painful to the Drowns because of their feeling that they were old family friends and that.... They saw the role of an old family friend as being "my best friend and my most severe critic" kind of thing. They felt they should explain to "Dick" what he was doing wrong, and all this kind of stuff, and "Dick" didn't want to hear what they had to say about what he was doing wrong. It posed some real problems in dealing with it. And they couldn't understand it. They felt they were doing him a favor by going through things. The problem is, they didn't know the reasons, and he didn't want to get into having to explain the reasons to them for things, because they didn't understand. It was that knowledge gap thing again. Bebe didn't pose that kind of problem to him, most of the time, so Nixon could maintain that contact with Bebe, and it

worked out fine. It did not work out so well with some of the other people.

RHG: I know that I'm just thinking as you explain this to me that we now have a very successful Nixon opera, a serious opera, on China [John Adams's Nixon_in_China], and that in some future year there'll be a comic opera with Nixon and Helene Drown. To an outsider that's very funny--the glimpses that you get.

HRH: Well, it's sad, really, because to me it was tragic--the Helene Drown problems as they were happening. It was a thing where the President of the United States, the leader of the free world (and I probably said something of this in some of my notes; I don't know that I did) couldn't go home, because Helene was there. She'd trap him and start telling him, "You've got to do this," and "You've got to do that," and "You've got to write more letters to the Republican women's clubs," and all this kind of thing that he just didn't want to have to sit and listen to.

RHG: And she, it sounds as if she would almost lay in wait for him in some hall somewhere.

HRH: It certainly seemed that way. It was a tragic thing. We'd be walking across the parking lot at San Clemente and he'd spot Helene coming, and we'd hide behind a car or something. It was that kind of thing. I remember the time of Julie's wedding--pre-Presidential. The Drowns were back in New York for the wedding, and Nixon wouldn't go home; he'd stay at the Pierre Hotel on into the night. The night before the wedding he wanted to be with Julie and felt he couldn't because the Drowns were there for dinner. That kind of thing. It's sad, because the Drowns are

wonderful people and have the Nixon interests totally.... There were no two more loyal, dedicated Nixon political workers and personal friends than the Drowns, but they didn't understand the change that Nixon did go through, and he felt he had to, on becoming President, in terms of how he could spend his time. He disciplined himself not to listen to the kinds of criticisms that he couldn't do anything about and were not important to his conduct of his Presidency to such a level as would warrant his spending time trying to get things done about them. It was a misunderstanding sort of thing.

It was that kind of problem with the Finches and the Kleins and the Maurice Stans's and those kinds of people, too, who were in the administration, but [only] in certain segments of it. [They] were viewed by Nixon differently than they had been viewed by Nixon in earlier associations, and it was hard for them to adjust to that new relationship. It was hard for Pat Nixon in lots of ways to adjust to being wife of the President. It was hard for Rose Woods to adjust to being [in] a different role as secretary to the President than the role she had as secretary to Richard Nixon over so many years.

HRH: I got the impression that Rose Woods's place in the White House was never a very happy one. That, although she was there through the entire Presidency, that she never did adjust.

HRH: I guess that's the case, from what I picked up from other people and from time to time from Rose. I don't know, maybe there was something I could have done to help in that. I don't know what it was; what it would have been. I tried to. I tried to keep

things on an even keel, that kind of thing, and I was sensitive to Rose's concerns, but I also had made a very firm decision in my own mind that my job was serving the President, not solving the problems of other people. That included his family and his friends as well as Rose and other people within the administration.

RHG: Researchers that use our documents sometimes see this--and who listen to the tapes will hear this--Mrs. Nixon referred to typically as Mrs. PN, which doesn't sound very intimate. Can you describe the relationship?

HRH: Referred to by the President?

RHG: Yes.

HRH: As Mrs. PN?

RHG: Perhaps I'm wrong. I think that's what I have seen.

HRH: That doesn't strike a familiar chord, really. In my notes and stuff I would use PN as the way of doing it, and in my dictation and here I irreverently referred to [her] as Thelma at times, which was her real name. It was sort of a code name, when we were dealing with problems. And Mrs. Nixon, like everybody, had problems in dealing with the Presidency. Betty Ford and Nancy Reagan and Jackie [Jacqueline] Kennedy and all the rest of them. Bess Truman. I guess Lady Bird [Johnson] didn't. I think Lady Bird coped with it pretty well. She....

RHG: Eleanor Roosevelt too--I think she enjoyed it.

HRH: Yeah, I guess so, but she lived her own life. She did her own thing. She had some unhappy times too vis-a-vis some of Franklin's peccadilloes, which was not Pat Nixon's problem at all.

Hers was simply the typical problem of the wife of a man who's totally absorbed in his work.

RHG: Thinking about Franklin Roosevelt, there was one item here on the topic which I didn't think too much of, except that it was sufficiently amusing that.... I guess Nixon's talking about the girl in bikini that he and Bebe saw on their boat trip but....

HRH: I don't remember that. Do you remember what I said on it? I don't know what it was.

RHG: No, I don't think there was much context.

HRH: Just kidding about it.

RHG: But that was not something Mrs. Nixon had to worry about.

HRH: No. Bebe had more interesting girls in bikinis than Richard Nixon did.

RHG: There was another item I can recall. When the Vietnam peace accord was signed, and Nixon says to you to call Rebozo and that he would get a list of women under thirty for Kissinger as a reward--a list of phone numbers, I guess. Was that something that Rebozo...?

HRH: That was a joke.

RHG: Oh, that was a joke.

HRH: We were kidding. Henry was--there was no secret about his joy in discovering that his status gave him appeal to attractive young women, and Jill St. John being the.... The thing with that he was highly offended at was that somebody, Ehrlichman or one of the staff guys, came across a nude picture of Jill St. John that they had blown up to life-size proportions and put on the wall of Air Force One. When we got on board for a trip, Henry didn't

think that was funny at all because he was dating her at the time.

RHG: I remember an incident concerning Henry Kissinger in one of his, one of the times when he was ranting and raving, was convinced that Rogers was spreading Jill St. John stories to the press in order to discredit him.

HRH: Henry saw a lot of ghosts in the dark out to get him all the time. Rogers was the source of most of them, and the State Department in general, or as he always said, "The God damn State Department;" it was never just "State Department". Henry felt they were out to get him at times, and I suspect that he was not totally wrong. I think there were people that were trying to sabotage Henry, probably. Some people probably for good motives feeling that Henry was a bad influence or was getting in the way of the proper conduct of a foreign policy. I don't agree with them, but I can see how that could happen.

RHG: Can you describe the way that Eisenhower's death affected Nixon?

HRH: It affected him very, very strongly. We had been anticipating Eisenhower's death for a long time, because Eisenhower had been wavering, and during the campaign there were periods where it looked like Eisenhower was going to die, and Jerry Persons was keeping--I was in touch with him on a continuing basis at times. We had airplanes on standby at times so that if Eisenhower were on the brink of death, Nixon wanted to pay a final visit to him, and so he didn't want him to die unknown to Nixon. We thought about it, talked about it some, so it didn't come obviously as any big surprise to him. But it was interesting that it did

affect him very strongly. When we went in and told him that Eisenhower died he was in a meeting with Mel Laird, I think, and Bryce Harlow, in the Oval Office. [Dr. Walter] Tkach caught me in the corridor and said that President Eisenhower had died, and we went in--just walked in the door, interrupted the meeting, walked in the door from the main corridor, which we never did (normally we would go in through one of the side doors) and told him. He was clearly very emotionally affected by it. I was just looking at this thing in my diary. I don't seem to have written it, but maybe it's in there and you didn't pick it up. It was Rogers and Harlow that were in there. I think Laird was there too, in the meeting in the Oval Office that Nixon was in when we told him. But I know Nixon got up and walked over to the window, turned his back on the people and walked over. He was sobbing, he was crying. He very much was overcome. We went up to Camp David right afterwards; he wanted to get away and spend some time thinking about it.

There was a very close bond there in spite of the sort of--I don't know what their relationship was, really, when Eisenhower was President, and Nixon was Vice President. I've never really gotten that clear. There was no question that there were some strains in that relationship, but also some strong ties in it, stronger than often reported journalistically, at least.

Nixon felt that one of the things that kept Eisenhower alive was [that] he wanted to see Julie [Nixon] and David's [Eisenhower] marriage completed, which was done prior to the Presidency, and he wanted to see Richard Nixon become President

of the United States. Nixon did visit him at the hospital and he had other people, he had Henry go over and talk with Eisenhower, and other people to get his counsel in a general sense on dealing with their jobs in the administration, and that kind of thing. Of course, he had established the family relationship with Julie and David's marriage. President Eisenhower was extremely close to David, and the President and David are close, President Nixon and David Eisenhower. The effect was strong and lasted for awhile. Eisenhower was a strong influence on Nixon. He frequently came up with Eisenhower-isms of one kind or another. He had learned things from Eisenhower, and he referred back to them. I don't think that it was a father-son relationship at all; I think it was, from Nixon's viewpoint, a mentor, an idol. Nixon had heroes, and I think Eisenhower was one of them. [Winston S.] Churchill and [Charles] DeGaulle and, in an interesting way, Chou En-lai, were others. Those were all people he knew, had direct personal relationships with in one way or another. And there were some others I think that don't jump to mind immediately.

RHG: I was interested in this episode because I think just as it's almost inevitable that a President will lose his friendships or at least have them severely strained--his personal friendships--I think it would be very easy for a President to lose contact with his emotions in the office, too, and of course Nixon has been accused of this. And just get so accustomed to dealing with people as with everything else as something to be manipulated towards the ends that he's trying to reach in his office. This

suggested to me that there was a man who hadn't completely lost touch with his emotions.

HRH: He definitely had [emotions] and there were strong emotional ties within the family that he didn't lose at all--with Pat and with the girls and with David and Eddie, his sons-in-law, in his own family, despite the problems that he had had.... There was a very strong emotional tie between Nixon and his mother. Of course, she died long before he became President. His father died first; died long before, and then his mother died not long before. Mother died in '68, I think.

RHG: I can't recall.

HRH: I think she did. He had strong emotional reactions to lots of things. Very strong emotional reactions to the POW wives and family concerns.

RHG: That's the other incident I remember, when a little girl came--I guess she--oh no, that was somewhat different. Her father had been the last soldier killed in Vietnam. And she was 17 I think, but she came in the Oval Office and kissed Nixon, and he had to excuse himself and was all choked up by it.

HRH: He was at the Congressional Medal [of Honor] ceremonies, too. He gave some just incredibly eloquent remarks at some of those posthumous Congressional Medal presentations, and those things really broke him up. They were very, very hard on him. He had very deep feelings about a lot of things.

The Eisenhower thing--part of it was [that] Presidents of the United States are a very small fraternity. Nixon joined the fraternity while Eisenhower was still there, and then Eisenhower

was gone and Johnson was the only one left. There was a strong rapport between Nixon and Johnson in their own way, although totally opposed politically on lots of things. The first thing Nixon told me to do on the peace in Vietnam thing was to call President Johnson and tell him, which I did, and that was just before he died.

RHG: He even seemed to be very solicitous of Harry Truman, who didn't like Nixon.

HRH: Didn't like him at all. Again, it was that fraternity of former Presidents. Then Truman died, Johnson died, Eisenhower died. There was no former President until Nixon became the only former President.

RHG: Did you ever feel occasion to feel dissatisfied with the way Nixon was behaving towards somebody?

HRH: I don't know. Did I cover any specific things in here that...? I don't remember anything specifically. He was unreasonable at times, and that annoyed me. Where we had really busted our tails to do something, and he jumped on us instead of appreciating it, because we hadn't taken one more step to make it exactly the way he wanted it. He could be very tough on people, but I excused that in the sense that he had to be. I was very tough on people, feeling that I had to be, also. My wife feels, and now in retrospect I think she's right, that I was way too tough. That I would have gotten more and better performance out of people by being more understanding of their inability to perform at a 100% level, because nobody can. Sometimes motivating people by fear is not as good a way to motivate them as by desire to please, and

some of the other motivations that push people maybe more strongly even than fear does. There's something about the Presidency that you--I've been ridiculed from my picking up the Navy term of "zero defects" concept--that you have a feeling that you do have to operate at as close to zero defect as you can. Most of the people working in the office did work on that concept, and with total dedication. You can't achieve zero defects, and that's a non-obtainable goal which you have to recognize and be prepared to settle for the best you can get on it, and not for the totality.

RHG: There were two episodes in here which I particularly enjoyed as showing a rather whimsical side. One was where you and Kissinger and Ehrlichman, I think it was, were to go swimming with Nixon down around San Clemente somewhere. I'm not familiar with the setup down there, but there was someplace where you were to go to change your clothes and then you were to come out and meet him and he was going to drive you there. And he left you sitting in the changing house for about an hour and a half, and he drove off somewhere with the Secret Service and was having a very fine time.

HRH: Yeah, that was a.... There were some bizarre episodes sort of on the beach. Sometimes Nixon got into sort of a mystical mood kind of thing, and that was one of them. I made notes on those, the ones that I remembered and that I covered in my journal entries. That was one of them where it was at San Clemente. He had said, "Come on, let's all go down to Red Beach," which is where we went, down at Camp Pendleton. [It] was a good swimming beach,

the surf was good and a good sandy beach there, which it wasn't all that good at San Clemente. There was a beach there but it was not as nice to use. As I say, he took off, and when we took another car and got down there--I guess he got tired of waiting for us and thought we had gotten held up or something. I don't really know why he did it. Or maybe he just forgot he'd asked us to come. We'd get down and go in to change, and he sees us arrive and he--maybe he just wanted to be alone, after having asked us to come, got to think, wanted to spend some time by himself thinking something. He did disappear and leave us sitting there.

There were other incidents like that from time to time in the non-official parts of things when we'd get into the relaxing phases, down at Key Biscayne or San Clemente. Unaccountable ones.

RHG: Another thing that I recall is that you once were part of a--this was in February 1971--a briefing, a discussion on Laos that Nixon gave while sitting in his shorts. The way I read this was initially that the doctor was doing something with him and that was why he was in his shorts, but then the doctor finished and the discussion went on. There's the President of the United States sitting in his shorts, somehow.

HRH: That was just one of those things that's sort of a mind-boggling recollection. He had a Dr. [Kenneth] Riland who came down from New York on a regular basis. He was a chiropractor. He'd do the bone-cracking and stuff on Nixon.

[End of side one]

[Beginning of side two]

HRH: Dr. Riland was a chiropractor, a bonecracker that worked on Nixon and came down from New York. He was [Nelson] Rockefeller's doctor. He solved some problem that Nixon had with his back, that bothered him from time to time, very effectively, so Nixon had this treatment on a regular basis. Riland would set up a table in the outer office of the [Old] Executive Office Building office. Nixon would take his clothes off, and Riland would do his work on him. If Nixon were involved in something at the time when Riland came along, it would often continue right through the Riland treatment, which is what happened here in this February incident, where the President got into a big discussion on Laos and went right through the Riland thing. Then when Riland finished, Nixon just sat there in his shorts. [He] never got around to putting his clothes back on. Went on with the discussion. It was just sort of a bizarre thing: you're sitting in the Executive Office Building, the President's office, and here's the President of the United States in his shorts giving you a long discourse on the problem of dealing with Laos. You feel kind of funny.

But he was totally unconcerned with that kind of thing. When he was going to go play golf, you'd be in a meeting with him. He tried at times--one program he went through was "I ought to play golf once a week." He'd line up Bill Rogers or somebody to go play golf with him, and we'd be over in the EOB office with him discussing something. It would be time to get ready for golf, and he'd just get up and take off his clothes and put on

his golf clothes and go out, and you'd just be sitting there. It was never as gross as some of the stories about Lyndon Johnson's bathroom meetings with people on the toilet, but it was still a strange sort of episode. There was one at some point where he had a couple of the press people over to the EOB office building and he'd mix martinis for them. He'd tell them, "This is the special Nixon martini", super and everything. He'd make a big hoopla about exactly how to mix a Nixon martini, and he wouldn't let Manolo [Sanchez], who usually did that sort of thing, do it. He had to do it himself for Helen Thomas and a couple of the other press people. Funny little things like that, but it was just [that] he was absorbed in what he was talking about or what was going on and the external surroundings didn't really concern him much.

RHG: Let's talk a little bit about his concept of office. You've got several entries in your journal where you record him discussing in very general terms the way the President should conduct his office. Do you want to talk about that generally, or would you like me to go through and pick a few out?

HRH: Why don't we pick some and maybe those will trigger [memories] because I don't have any general thought at the moment.

RHG: OK, OK. Let's see. Here's one. This is February 24, 1970. "He said he's done a lot of thinking about his three classic roles: leader of party; chief of state; head of government." The first....

HRH: Well, party leader is really part of being head of government...

RHG: So he had just two.

HRH: ...so there's really only two roles: the king and the leader.

RHG: He says that he prefers to be the leader and to leave the "king" part of it to a minimum. And then he seems to....

HRH: By "king" there he's meaning ceremonial, not dictatorial or imperial.

RHG: It seems that he had a concept of the Presidency, at least at times he entertained the concept of a Presidency which would have given him a bit of a distant, secluded role as leader, where he's formulating great ideas and preparing speeches and the like, in a certain amount of seclusion. Is this something that appealed to him very strongly?

HRH: Well, at times, the necessity for doing that, but I don't.... In saying that he preferred the leader role to the king role, I think what he was saying there was that he preferred the substantive parts of the Presidency to the to the ceremonial parts of the Presidency. He had talked at various times about the desirability maybe of separating the two and letting the Vice President in effect be the head of state, while the President was the head of government. He would really prefer to be prime minister and run the government, with some ceremonial trappings to that too, which you can't avoid. The Prime Minister has those in England, but the King or the Queen has the basic ceremonial role.

A case in point is the receiving of diplomatic credentials: [it] is required that the President as head of state receive the credentials of each new ambassador, the senior diplomat, posted to the United States from a foreign country. That was a

ceremonial procedure that he found totally ludicrous and a total waste of time. We did set up a very highly efficient, speeded-up procedure for doing it, but it was a way of getting that done in the least amount of time possible.

The state dinners bored him, but he saw there a possible, in some cases at least, asset in the head of government role as well as the head of state role. They weren't just ceremonial functions. They had some substantive aspects to them. What he preferred was the head to head meetings with other heads of state, not the ceremonial trappings: the speeches on the South Lawn and the bands marching and all that, but he did recognize that there is a need for trappings, that people need some aura of mysticism and so forth about the Presidency and about the President, and that the glamor of the ceremonies did have some value. As they do in the European governments where they have a separate king, a separate head of state and head of government, and as you have in the military ceremonials and rites and in the ecclesiastical. The church clearly recognizes the importance of costume and ritual and ceremony in terms of the influence on people, and that sort of thing.

It wasn't a clear-cut thing to him. This was a rumination type of thing where he was thinking through the problem of dealing with the three roles and whether there was a way of combining them or eliminating some parts of some of them. He poked around with eliminating, speeding up, and so forth.

I see that I concluded in my notes with the comment, "Main problem" (this is my own comment) "is how he'd use the time if it

were made available." Because the other side of that is that he wasted an enormous amount of time. He would spend a lot of time complaining about how he didn't have time. Wasted in the sense of no direct line of productivity to a given segment of time. I tend to be very productivity-oriented, where he was not, in that same sense. He needed time to ruminate, to think through, to chew over. To work on his yellow pads painstakingly and develop concepts and speeches and divide the pad and do "pros" and "cons" for decisions and then to sit and talk them through with people on a freewheeling kind of discussion basis. That was not, in direct productivity terms, effective use of time, but [it] was essential to the level of decisions that he had to make and the things that he had to think through.

I got very frustrated in dealing with Congressmen. Once in awhile we'd have to go up to--I'd be told by Harlow I've got to come up and sit with the Republican leadership or with the committee chairmen or something for a discussion, and it used to drive me up the wall because things never got to the point. They just seemed to just gab. They didn't have an agenda. They just wanted to sit around and talk. What Harlow tried to explain to me in his wisdom was that that was the way the Congress works, and that that's part of the genius of our system. A dictatorship is efficient and effective in the way that I regard efficiency and effectiveness. That's not desirable, because they get things done quickly but they may get the wrong things done. The genius of our system is that Congress does take all this time to chew them over and think about them and spit them out and vote them up

and vote them down and go through all their gyrations. In the process they avoid doing things that ought not to be done. They take enough time to get to the point of deciding to do them that hopefully you work out the bad things and strengthen the good things.

I think there's a lot to that. I think there was in Nixon's use of time. We went through the "free day" plan, the "give me [Nixon] Wednesdays off," which I think was a stroke of absolute genius. It gave him a day in which he wasn't scheduled, where he could use his time any way he wanted. It used to frustrate me sometimes because it seemed to me he wasted that time, but it was good for him to have the luxury of wasting that time, because we programmed him very intensively during the time that we did program him. And he wanted to be. We set up this Congressional half hour thing: Congressmen were constantly making requests for appointments to bring in an important constituent or a business leader or a "Miss Cotton" because the cotton industry was important. The normal thing was to set those as normal appointments. What we did was get this Congressional half hour where the Congressional liaison guys had a half hour certain days of the week where they could bring in any chain of Congressmen, and you'd run them through. And that was all the Congressmen really needed. They would have liked to have sat and chatted with the President for an hour, but what they really needed was to be able to show their constituents that they had been at a meeting or that they could bring the constituent in to meet the President. Once met, there wasn't an awful lot that needed to be

covered beyond that.

Those things worked pretty well and our speed-up of diplomatic ceremonies worked pretty well. Things of that sort. My comment here is, "What would he do if the time were made available? Right now he'd generally waste it in trivia." That was my feeling at the time. It was an accurate feeling: he really did waste a lot of time in trivia. But those were needed, that was his relaxation time. That was his equivalent of Eisenhower reading Western novels and Kennedy chasing girls and Reagan going home to Nancy, and it worked.

RHG: Was Nixon inclined to want to be an aloof President? I don't mean the relaxation time, but when he was working, would he have liked to have just holed up in an office and worked out his speeches and his programs and his ideas?

HRH: Not totally. He wanted time, he needed time, and we gave--he had time, he used time that way. He needed time alone to work things through, but he also needed time with people to talk things through and to get ideas, develop things, and all that, so I would say "no." That needed to be part of the program, but there was no feeling that the ideal setup for him would be not to ever have to meet with anybody at all on anything. That was not his concept at all. It was simply that you could go way too far the other way, and watching Gore Vidal's Lincoln on TV you get sort of an effect of how a President can be bullied by other people so much and buffeted by other people so much, and you needed control of that. What he was looking for [was] balance between time alone, time with people, time scheduled intensively for

productivity, and time left to just ruminate and germinate and rumble about and let things kind of stir up.

We scheduled a lot of evenings on the Sequoia, and he enjoyed those very much. Informal, quick pick-up: three or four people, or half a dozen people, get out on the Sequoia and sit up on the upper deck for cocktails as they cruise down the river and then go down below and have a nice dinner and then sit and chat for awhile when you got back over cigars and brandy and then go on home. Those were good evenings for him. They were with Cabinet officers, Congressional leaders, out of town business people, various kinds of things, but quite informal. Non-structured, no specific purpose to them, just an evening of chatting.

RHG: There's one item here. This is early 1969. You say, "The President is very inclined to agree with whatever these guys propose. May become an enormous problem. Somebody's got to be in all meetings if only to shortstop Presidential commitments." It's on the first page.

HRH: First page?

RGH: Middle. February 6th.

HRH: Oh, that was when [Raymond] Shafer got in, Governor Shafer.

RHG: Was this a continuing problem with Nixon? Did he tend to say "yes" to whomever was talking with him?

HRH: At times. He realized the problem and worked effectively to correct it. But it is a problem because the politician part of the President doesn't want to say "no" to important people with what they believe are important requests or ideas or proposals,

or whatever they might be. There's a real problem of people coming in with a very compelling argument and nobody making the counter-arguments, and the President getting caught up in the enthusiasm of the moment saying, "Gee, that sounds great. We'll do it."

He'd get caught up in his own ideas that way too. He, for instance, at one point told the Congressional leaders he wanted them to start using Camp David. He said, "You know, it's a great place. You guys will love it. You've got to come up and enjoy Camp David." Then he realized to his horror that he was, in trying to be nice, and genuinely so.... Because he loved being up there and figured they would, he didn't really think through the problem that that created. If they started using Camp David, it would preclude his use, effectively, of Camp David for what he used it for, which was a chance to be either alone or with his own family or with specific people that he wanted to be with for a specific time for some reason. We had to sort of be the devil's advocates in that kind of thing (this is sort of an example of it) where he was his own worst enemy. He would tend to be overly accommodating and not realize that he was digging a hole for himself in the process.

RHG: All right, let me find something else here. I notice there was an emphasis on more than one occasion that Nixon would show a preference for a very strong and dramatic action. And I know by the time you got to the end of the first term you were running on what were called "big plays". Was this something that was in his blood, to take these big steps?

HRH: Yeah, and part of that was an instinctive recognition that the big plays are where you build a following, a rapport, and a consensus. That people rally to the big plays, and that they also force the press, the media, to cover and in effect to rally to them too. When you make a grand move, it's very hard to carp at it because it sounds like petty carping; [but] if you do a lot of little things, [the media] can hack them away, hack them to death one by one. You make one big thing [and] it's hard to attack, hard to take on. It was an instinctive thing that he had that he saw the value, he instinctively felt the value of the big play, and he would argue that we needed to make the big play.

I see some other comments here on this whole thing on scheduling where I'm saying (and it was picking up what the President was saying) one day in May of 1969, thinking about scheduling: "He feels that he should be more aloof and inaccessible and mysterious like DeGaulle was." That's a mystique, that's not a scheduling thing; it's a thing of you command more.... I don't think he realized, to begin with, how much presence he already commanded. All you had to do was watch anybody go into the Oval Office who wasn't a normal denizen of the place like we were, and the awe that struck the biggest people in business and religion and politics and anything else, when they stepped into the Oval Office, and the President.... They are awestruck by being in the presence of the President of the United States, and I don't think he realized how much of that mystique there really was. Part of this was a reflection of the mystique he felt when going into the presence of DeGaulle. See,

this was in May of 1969, which was after the European trip where he had met with DeGaulle, we all had. There is an awesomeness about some people, and DeGaulle was certainly one of them. I know I felt that going into DeGaulle's presence; [but] I didn't feel [it] going into Chancellor [Kurt] Kiesinger's presence in [West] Germany, who was the head of government in Germany but didn't have the mystique that DeGaulle had or that Chou En-lai had, or to me that Haile Selassie had. To me [General Francisco] Franco didn't have--Franco, similar in some ways to Haile Selassie, but didn't have anything like the mystique that Selassie did. I think Nixon felt, that there are some people that have this aura about them. In a way Eisenhower had that aura but Truman didn't, and yet they were both President of the United States. Johnson didn't, to me, at all. I didn't feel in awe of Johnson. You realized he was a commanding presence, but not in the mystique kind of way. It was all on the surface there. Where with DeGaulle there was a mystique, there was a mysteriousness, there was something behind there that was awesome, and there was with Chou En-lai.

I think Nixon felt that and felt that as he fought through these things that maybe the ability to govern was enhanced by that, and the ability to sway opinion and bring people along and try to get them behind you was a factor to him.

RHG: So the aloofness was not so much just because he liked being by himself as it was part of an attempt to construct this mystique.

HRH: Yeah, I think it was, I think that's what he was saying there. It wasn't really his style. The thing that I argued with him in

that respect (at least I think I did; I intended to) was that each person's got to be himself and that you can't be charismatic like Kennedy and you can't be gross like Johnson. Eisenhower, because of the grin, had the appearance of being everybody's grandfather and everybody's buddy, and yet he was one of the coldest, toughest, hardest men around in a lot of ways. In another area I saw that with Walt Disney. Walt Disney was a very tough guy, but nobody envisioned him that way.

You are what you are in those kinds of things, and PR doesn't change it and other things don't change it. Some of your actions do, and I think [that] Nixon had a certain amount of mystique and awesomeness and that it was valuable that he did. I don't think that he had it in the degree that DeGaulle or Chou En-lai did, simply because he wasn't DeGaulle or Chou En-lai or Mao Tse-tung, who also had it.

RHG: In the middle of page six, April 15, you comment at the end: "Nixon really needs crises to deal with and is not at his best with a period of general erosion, such as this." Apparently just a slow period.

HRH: That's true. That's an interesting point, and I agree with what I said there. It was part of the concept that Kissinger was talking about when he said he was superb in defeat and miserable in success. He could deal with big problems but had trouble dealing with little problems. He could deal with the global concept of disaster but not with the face-to-face human concept of disaster. It was very hard for him to handle the petty problems, the bickering and that kind of stuff in the staff. He

could handle [Nikita] Khrushchev coming on at him full tilt with great aplomb. I see I said here, "Seems to have lost a lot of the basic feel of the job that he had." I think that it was just erosion--the multiple, insoluble problems bearing in and partly a function of less newness in the job, and there was that too. Fortunately, if you can call it fortunate in this Presidential thing, the crises do come. If there isn't one now, you can rest assured there will be one shortly. I think the President has to coast through those things and then come back up to them then. And he did.

RHG: Let's see what you meant here. April 24, 1970, which is on page 7, talks a bit about the isolation problem. Ehrlichman, Harlow, [Ronald] Ziegler, Klein....

HRH: This is a discussion in staff meeting, which I think was not with the President. I think it was our staff meeting. We were talking about the President's loss of momentum and leadership in the public eye, and all these guys were saying that the President's theories of isolation and remoteness that were sort of bearing in at that point were creating the problem. But I couldn't get--I said, "Well, you know, that's fine to bitch about, that but what are the positive ideas? What do you do to counterbalance this?" They didn't seem to come up with much. They felt strongly there was a problem, but they didn't see the solution. They wanted much more public Presidential stuff, press conferences and speeches and trips and out into the country, just to show that the President cares, and they were probably right. That kind of thing symbolically, I think, probably is important.

Yet, if a President doesn't feel that kind of thing, I don't know that just the gimmickry of doing it is very productive. And that was the thing we debated. We never really came up with the answer.

I've been talking with people recently about the Presidential campaign, this current one, and they're saying this baloney of the candidates going out and milking cows is really.... The public has sort of, that's become old hat, and maybe we're back to a point, coming full cycle, where we need to get to some really substantive issue discussion, which we haven't had in this campaign, and that we aren't going to have, I don't think. Because I don't think either party, any of the leading candidates in either of the parties, wants to take the risk. What they want to do is protect their franchise as best they can; at least hold on to what they've got and then build it carefully without running the risk of turning anything off. You do that by the non-important kinds of things. These guys [in the 1970 meeting] were saying, "Do some more of these non-important kinds of things. Get the President out." There's no question that there were the appearances or the feeling of isolation, and these guys were reacting to the comments that they picked up from the outside on the President being isolated and of course the press was.... I don't know that that early they were, but there were times when they were arguing isolation. May 1970--I guess that's Cambodia time, isn't it?

RHG: Just before. This is April, actually.

HRH: So it's a problem that I think that you've got in the job, and I

don't know that there's a clearcut answer. I don't think we ever zeroed in on it. I think in going through these daily journal entries you find it swings back and forth and try to decide what to do best at any given time.

RHG: Now were they reacting to something that Nixon was doing purposefully as we mentioned earlier, or for the reasons of trying to...?

HRH: I guess probably so, because I'm saying that "the President's theories of isolation and remoteness are badly aggravating this thing." I think that's responding to some of this stuff that I had in these notices earlier which I think they were also aware of. That the President feels he needs to be remote and he shouldn't.... There's a danger of becoming too common, becoming too old hat and available, I guess, that the President was concerned with. They're saying "He's gone too far in this. We need to get him out amongst the people more."

RHG: June 29th just past the middle of this page, 1970. "Nixon's been reading more books about past Presidents, and he's concluded that the whole trick in this business is to do something different and now to do it for TV coverage." So do something different and do it on television.

HRH: Do something that gets television coverage. That's part of that ongoing process where he's trying to analyze how Presidents and other people, other leaders, have been effective. What is it that they do that makes them effective, that makes them able to sway public opinion, to bring people with them, to get backing for their causes, and that kind of thing. He's saying, "You've

got to do it now to get--you've got to get television coverage because that's what affects people. You've got to do something different to get the television coverage in a way that has its effect."

It's all a part of an ongoing process that gets into this, into the PR thing again, because.... We're talking here about Nixon the man and the personal things, and yet a lot of this isn't really Nixon the man, it's Nixon the potential leader analyzing and calculating how to be more effective as a leader. Some of that goes totally against the Nixon the man stuff. Because he recog--the doing something different goes against him. The gladhand, happy boy stuff really goes against it, but that doesn't mean necessarily aloofness, either. It means a more planned and selective process of communication with people where the communication is really productive. He had communication with Andre Malraux prior to going to [the People's Republic of] China. That was enormously productive to him. There were other people that he got very excited about communication with, and there's a note in here somewhere about his needing an available intellectual that he could have, John Nisbit or somebody like that, to communicate with, that would give him the kind of stimulation. Rather than the people that come in and say, "Gee, Mr. President, you ought to be out giving more speeches in Iowa," which isn't very intellectually stimulating to him, and yet he feels an obligation to keep his blades sharpened, let's say--his wits on edge, and thinking creatively and productively.

RHG: It looks as if one of the marks of his Presidency is that it was

a very thoroughly self-considered office. That he was basically an intellectual man, and thought a lot about what he was doing, rather than--come from inside....

HRH: That was one of the things (it kind of reflects in my journal, I think) that in a sense bothered me: that there was too much of this introspection, of self-analysis and self-consideration stuff, and not enough of just doing, and getting out and just being whatever you are and figuring that's going to.... I had enough confidence in him that I didn't think he had to analyze and do this, that he could do what came naturally to do and that it would be successful. Most of the time when he did that it was successful, which in a sense proved my point. But not totally and not, I guess, to his satisfaction.

RHG: Here's one--this isn't too deep but this is one I rather liked--it's the last one and it's page eight, it's the last one at the end of the written journal. He wanted, he's in Paris and he wants to go to lunch and Kissinger tells him he can't. "The President then sulked, 'we never get him to do anything fun that he wants; he always has to do what's right.'"

HRH: I think that bothers lots of public people: that they can't kick up their heels, let's say. To him it would have been really fun. We had some time free in Paris, but Kissinger's view was that the appearances of the President just going off to a luncheon would appear to be frivolous and not taking the visit seriously. In that sense I think Kissinger was wrong and Nixon was right. I think Nixon's instinct was good, and I think it would have been better for him to.... See, Reagan would have gone. Reagan's

instincts are very good in that kind of thing; his natural thing that he does is usually good. Nixon's natural thing was sometimes good and sometimes not. It was sometimes over-heavyhanded. It was overly self-analyzed. He would do things that wouldn't come off because they weren't graceful. Reagan can't be ungraceful. Whatever he does is graceful. It's naturally good.

Nixon recognized that he needed some planning to do the right thing, but he then tended sometimes to overplan in doing it. In this kind of case the people around him also tended to overplan. I don't know whether I took a position in this or not. I guess I didn't, because I didn't indicate it. It was Kissinger who talked him out of going. I probably was in favor of going, partly because I would have liked to have gone to a restaurant for lunch in Paris, too. It would have been fun. I think you need to do some of those things that are fun. It makes you human. It makes you part of doing what other people would like to do.

RHG: This is the first page of the second group from the tapes, the recorded journal. I remember this in one or two other occasions as well, where Nixon is just--at the foundation of his Presidency he seems to be aware that it's a limited office, I mean in time. He has so many years.

HRH: Very much so.

RHG: And that you can't lose any opportunity to do something if the time comes.

HRH: He was concerned about the feeling that the White House staff, that they weren't driving. He wanted to see drive from them,

rather than just response from them to his drive, and his point was--and he made it very strongly, gave us all books at the start of the second term that were four-year calendar books, monthly, a page for each month for the four years, for 48 months. Each page showed how many days were left in the Presidency. [He] was making the point that the clock was running out, and what we're going to get done we've got to get done quickly or we aren't going to get it done.

It was disappointing to him that the first term was held back by Vietnam. The inability to do lots of the things, and he was doubly determined therefore going into the second term, which is way ahead, after this point in 1970, but going into the second term, "Let's don't waste a single day, because there aren't that many days left to waste." He really pushed this thing, that we have to get today's work done today, because we won't have another day to do it.

RHG: Here's an aphorism. This is January 15, 1971. "It's extremely important that the leader never be in the position to allow the impression that he was wrong." Is that something that you saw much of?

HRH: You've got to start with the start of that, which is "The basic rule is that you don't capture people by surrendering to them. They capture you." If you surrender to people, that's not the-- the way to win people is not to give in to them, because they then capture you rather than you capturing them. Then he's saying "The leader," (this is a rule that I'm not sure exactly how you apply it) but "the leader must never be in the position

to allow the impression that he was wrong. He must not show fallibility. He must appear to be infallible." That's an unobtainable objective, but it's a point to work towards, I think. The point he's making there is, don't appear, don't say you're making mistakes. Do the right thing and make it appear that you are right.

RHG: Another aphorism. This is from March 1971. It's at the top of page two. "Doing the prudent thing down the middle always loses."

HRH: Right.

RHG: "You've got to take the big steps. Put all your weight where it really matters."

HRH: That is an accurate reflection of a basic concept really that he felt in terms of the exercise of leadership. Compromising, taking the middle road, trying to satisfy everybody, is not the right way to go. The way to go is figure what is right, take the big steps, and move ahead. That's the difference between a leader and a follower or a middle-of-the-roader, and that he was seeking to be a leader. A lot of this relates to his desire to establish himself and re-establish the Presidency as the leadership of the Free World. It was a world leadership concept. He was picking a lot of this up from what he felt was needed in order to re-establish a position [that] had eroded, in terms of world leadership.

RHG: Was that one of the main goals of his Presidency?

HRH: Absolutely it was, yes. To establish the position of leadership and to establish.... The real main goal was the structure for

peace thing. It was not just ending the war in Vietnam, but it was establishing a structure, an institutionalized pattern that would be the means for sustaining peace, for resolving conflict without war. Resolving differences without war. For the elimination of war as.... Recognizing there's always differences in systems and desires and goals and approaches and concepts and philosophies and everything else, but that those can be resolved short of armed conflict. What you've got to try and do is build a structure within which those things can be resolved peacefully.

RHG: And that structure required that the President of the United States be the most important leader in the West?

HRH: Well, it requires that somebody be, and his view was that the logical.... There was an absence of leadership in the world, and still is, and that somebody has to assume leadership. A structure doesn't evolve out of itself. It requires leadership to develop that structure. That was the challenge and the opportunity that he had, to provide that leadership.

RHG: That's interesting to me, because of course one has heard from Nixon about "the structure of peace"; he used the phrase a great deal.

HRH: Right.

RHG: And I always thought of it as meaning the opening to China and the summit with Russia, and those are parts of it.

HRH: Those were steps, but they weren't the structure.

RHG: Were steps. It's not the whole structure, but it....

HRH: The structure went way beyond that. The structure went to setting up a means of communication and participation and

resolution of conflict between the great powers and the little powers. And dealing with the differences. Not eliminating the differences, but recognizing them and dealing with them. I haven't seen any of it yet, but from the excitement that he's expressed about the new book, I suspect that he deals with that in this 1999 that's just coming out now.

RHG: But part of this structure was his own office; what he was going to bring to this office.

HRH: Sure.

RHG: But he also wanted to institutionalize it. He didn't want to leave it--he knew that he was going to leave office, too. He had no illusions about being a permanent world leader. What he wanted to do was go past just the personal leadership, and get to a structural leadership, which he saw the United States as being able to provide or at least help to provide. That was a role that we should try to carry out: finding and institutionalizing, establishing and setting into a framework something that would last beyond his time or our times and would provide the basis for going forward in the future in a peaceful way.

RHG: Here's a lighter item. This is May 1971, and he's just been talking about SALT [Strategic Arms Limitation Talks] with Rogers, I really don't know if that's related. He looks out the window and he sighs and he says, "It would be God damned easy to run this office if you didn't have to deal with people."

HRH: [Laughter] A lot of people have said that in various ways. That's sort of a classic in management. You know, "I love to manage, but I hate people," which overlooks totally the essence

of managing, which is the art of dealing with people. That's the sort of dream of paradise that will never come.

RHG: He had presumably had some rather strong views about the leadership class in this country, and I see a couple of items talking that the leader class "is decadent, and educated people generally are decadent, and without character." It's put in this one point.

HRH: He felt that. That they had become soft. That affluence and prestige and all that was weakening the core of the leadership and that future leadership was going to come from the people that had to work hard to achieve what they did. I remember he was so infuriated with some young guy who came in with his father--I forget what it was--but the young guy had accomplished something and was coming in to be honored about it or something. He was obviously embarrassed by his father, who had no education, and Nixon was just infuriated. The father had made the education possible for the young guy, and the young guy didn't have the sense enough to see it.

[End of cassette three]

[Beginning of cassette four]

RHG: We were talking about the decadent leader class, and you were mentioning the boy who was ashamed of his father.

HRH: Right.

RHG: And how upset Nixon got. What was his response to this? Was it to be hostile to the leader class? Or to try to re-educate them?

HRH: No, it was to.... Let's see if I can come up with that right.... It's what I said here in this quote, picking up from that day,

which is: "Turn to the uneducated people for support. The leadership groups have no backbone. The country is in a moral crisis." I think what he's saying there really ties--this is going to sound ridiculous--in very broad scope to the whole history of civilization kind of thing. The cycles that civilizations go through, or that cultures go through, or nations go through, which is [that] they arrive at affluence and then the leadership classes do decay. What happens is [that] the barbarians take over, by whatever form. Either external or internal barbarians: the uneducated, the unpolished, unaffluent. They rise up in some form or another in the sweep of history; they always have. [They] overpower the decadent society, and then they become, over time, decadent themselves and are in turn overcome by another flow of barbarians.

Without getting that cataclysmic about it, I think what Nixon is saying here.... Again he's just ruminating; these are not statements of absolute moral certainties that he's coming up with. This is part of his thought process that I've recorded because I found the concepts fascinating. They aren't conclusions, and these are not things that are in my yellow page notes, where he has said: "Tell the uneducated people to rise up," or "Turn to the uneducated people for support," but he did. In the "New American Majority" and in our concepts of more inclusion of a broader base in the second term, there was a lot of thought [given] to the blue collar classes, to the....

When he's saying "uneducated" he doesn't mean totally uneducated. What he means in the non-supersophisticates, going

back to the basic base. Getting away from Harvard and Berkeley and into Iowa and Nebraska, the heartland. The people that have more basic values and who go back to the salt of the earth kind of stuff.

This next quote, a couple of days later: "Nixon feels teachers, ministers and other leaders are trying to tear the country down. No one gives uplift. Lack of the old American spirit. And the media is against this belief in the country. There's an obsession in the leader class to tear the country down. And Ehrlichman suggested a theme of new directions." Nixon's making the point, "The new liberals unlike the old ones are entirely negative. The intellectual elite is decadent." It's the same thing again. It's that anti-elitism that he's aiming at. The pioneer spirit needs to be re-invoked. And the let's get out and do something instead of sitting around carping about things. These were not carefully thought out concepts that ran to a three-hundred page conclusion. They were concerns and thoughts that were passing through his mind.

That was in July. Here's the middle of August, Nixon saying again, "The leadership class is decadent. Ministers, teachers and businessmen have all become soft. Billy Graham agreed." (Now this must have been in some discussion with Graham.) "But told the President he has to issue a challenge to the people. To call them to some special work." Now that's the positive response to Nixon's negative concern about the decadence. Nixon's saying, "We have to turn to the uneducated class." Graham's saying, "You have to issue a challenge to the people."

Obviously Kennedy felt that at the time that he took office, because he was calling for the sacrifice and the "New Frontier" and "ask not what your country can do for you but what you can do for your country." It's that sort of thing that Nixon's getting a feel of. Then he's saying, a week after that, "The powers of the office are enormous, and sometimes we have to use them for showmanship. Which is what this really was." "This really was" must be referring to some event that took place that day when he did something in a showmanship way. I don't know what took place that day. You pull out the calendar, and I'll bet there's something there that he did that he felt afterwards was the showmanship use of the powers of the office to accomplish, to lead the people in what he's trying to do. And what he's saying is, "What the people want is the appearance of action."

In a sense he's right, but what I would argue in that kind of thing, always, is, you can only get the appearance of action from the fact of action. What they want is the appearance, but the way you create the appearance is by the fact. You can't continually create the appearance of action without any fact of action. Therefore, PR isn't the solution; it's doing something that's the solution.

RHG: His response to this, of course, was to try to create the "New American Majority", people of a like kind...

HRH: Right.

RHG: ...dominant class in the country, and appeal to them. Would he just then have left the leader class in the minority, to let them do whatever they want to do, out of power?

HRH: Let them stew in their own juices, in effect. No, not totally, obviously, because you can't generalize to that extent. There were people in the leadership class that he highly respected, and that he would get cranked up to agree with him. It was the people like the Ross Perots, the guys that were doing something, as contrasted to the chairman of the board of the "Smug Corporation" sitting in his fancy boardroom, sipping tea in the afternoon, and deploring the common people messing things up.

RHG: Now an enemy, I suppose, could say that Nixon is just looking in the mirror and seeing his own image. He was a common man, and he was one of these pioneer, his family were pioneers, and...

HRH: I think that's right, and I think there's definitely a factor there of his feeling that he is looked down upon by the Harvard elitists as being a Whittier College clod from out West somewhere, who has no culture. He loved Agnew's "effete Eastern snobs" stuff. That's what he's thinking about, is the concern there. It is a problem.

RHG: Did you share his basic feelings in this regard? And I suppose this is related to his attitude toward the press.

HRH: I would say I did, but not with the intensity that he had. I think I did not disagree with the basic underlying concepts to any great extent, but I don't think I carried them quite as intensely forward as he did, in my own thinking. I didn't substantially disagree with him on any of these things. I just wasn't as intense about them.

RHG: Did you feel you had any influence on him in times like the ones we're talking about, I guess, where he's saying some of his

deepest convictions about his office, about the country? Were you someone that encouraged some of these feelings? Or were you just someone who listened to what he said?

HRH: I think it's both of those plus a third. I think in some areas and at some times I encouraged him. At other times I just listened, and at other times I strongly discouraged them. Took issue with them. Or tried to modify them. Took issue with the intensity level, at least. I wasn't in total disagreement. I couldn't have lived with him, I couldn't have carried on if I had been. But I also wasn't in total agreement. I was not averse, at all, to expressing my disagreement, at times. But I watched the times. I didn't intentionally disagree all the time. I intentionally did not disagree; I made sure that I didn't disagree all the time. Because I had to deal with him, and I felt he preached the philosophy of the foolishness of winning battles versus the importance of winning wars. I learned from him, as I learned from other people, the importance of losing battles sometimes in order to go on to win. Losing the little battles in order to win the big ones. He preached that; he didn't always practice it, although he did some. Nobody always does. But I think he recognized that that was a valid approach: to be willing to lose battles. I think he saw in me an inclination to want to win all battles, and I think I learned from him the concept of losing some. He changed my thinking in that sense.

RHG: Another aphorism here. "The bureaucracy has a vested interest in preserving the chaos in which it lives."

HRH: I'm working with a management consultant now whose whole concept is working with, trying to keep organizations from collapsing into bureaucracy. This guy's whole methodology and theory just is the epitome of that statement; or that statement is the epitome of the theory. I totally believe that.

RHG: Nixon in this case is in a meeting with Finch, in he's saying that this is the case.

HRH: Obviously because Finch at that point was still at--no, I guess not. He was out of HEW then. I bet they were talking about HEW though.

RHG: Here's something that you mentioned earlier. This is December 1972. Nixon's in a tirade. "The administration lacks a basic philosophy." (This is after a full term.) He says, "Not a single philosopher in the Cabinet."

HRH: Yeah. Then he says, which I have a direct quote on, and I think it's an absolutely classic quote and I can't explain it, except to say, I just find it absolutely fascinating, which is "The nation needs what I stand for, but I need to know better what that is." [Laughter] In other words, "I know that I've got the right idea, but I don't know what that right idea is. If I could only think of it, we'd be in great shape." [Laughter] Interesting that the two people he cites then are Buchanan and [Robert] Bork--Pat Buchanan on his staff and Bork being at that time, I think, Solicitor General.

RHG: Yeah.

HRH: Later to become famous as the rejected Supreme Court nominee.

RHG: It's interesting too in that we've been talking for the last hour

or so about Nixon's concept of his Presidency. He had a lot of ideas about his Presidency...

HRH: Oh yeah.

RHG: ...and about what he should do, but then you find this at the end of the first term, which sounds really rather desperate in the sense that at least half.... Well, he's been re-elected, so in his mind half his Presidency has gone by, and still he doesn't know what he stands for, but it seems as if, although he had so many ideas, he didn't quite have the ability to formulate them in a definitive way for himself.

HRH: Well, it's part what he says right there. "They need what I stand for, but I need to know what it is. I mean, I can't articulate it." There's an interesting earlier point. Quite a bit earlier, that was December. Back in August, Moynihan is doing a New York Times article (this is August 14) and asked Nixon to tell him what his plans were for the second four years, for the article, and Nixon's response to Moynihan's request is to say that his philosophy is coherent among his foreign, economic and domestic policies. That there is a coherent philosophic thread that goes through all of those, and that is a new philosophy, that "our new coalition" (and there he's trying that new coalition concept out) "has common hopes and philosophy. Will share a new coalition that shares these common views. Closer to nineteenth century liberals than to modern ones. Internationalism without imperialism. Building, not destroying, based on old values."

That's again highly inarticulate. It's a groping, or trying

to get to what it is he's trying to say, but he isn't really able to say it. It's an interesting point. It runs through all of this, that we need a basic philosophy. He thinks he has it, but he can't tell you what it is. I think that was a very frustrating thing to him. I think he knew, down in deep somewhere, "I know exactly what I stand for. But somehow you don't seem to know what I stand for. And why don't you?" I don't think he ever got it together, that whole thing, but I do think that he thought that he had it. He just wasn't able to define it.

RHG: And there were a lot of loose ends. It wasn't as if there was nothing. There were a lot of loose ends around.

HRH: That's it. I think that's a very good way of putting it. To say that he had no philosophy or no concept is absolutely wrong. He had it, but it was full of loose ends. It was not coherent and coalesced.

RHG: This is reminding me of something that I don't think I wrote this down ever, but I ran across it in your journal. On several occasions where Nixon would turn to you and say, "Now, I've got four great ideas for the election." Then he'd give you six.

HRH: Yeah.

RHG: It was just an untidiness there.

HRH: Well, what it was, at the time he started, he had four, and in the process of giving them to me he found two more. There was a very fertile mind there. And a very searching mind. He did a lot of reading, and he profited from what he read. Reading [Robert Blake's] Disraeli and stories of other Presidents and the

speeches of other Presidents, he got a lot out of that. It wasn't just reading for entertainment or diversion. It was reading for illumination, and it provided illumination, but it never came to conclusions. He was not academically disciplined. He couldn't start, frame a hypothesis, run his tests, and finalize his conclusions. He was always in the process, somewhere, instead of on a linear path to a defined end.

RHG: And I guess that's what he's trying to do now, really.

HRH: I think that. I think that's what all the post-Presidential books--not the memoirs, but after that--the little books are all a part of that. I think he thought--and I haven't talked to him for a long time and I don't know that he still thinks [this]--but I think he thought that this 1999 would be basically the definitive work. I have a feeling now that it isn't, but that it's another major step in his effort to try and coalesce all this.

RHG: All right. About the Nixon Cabinet. Nixon, you mentioned earlier, started the Presidency with very high hopes for his Cabinet. That attitude very quickly changed. By the end, the last entry that I have on the first Cabinet page, April [1969], only a few months into the Presidency, he starts off the Presidency wanting to work with this Cabinet, and then by April he's saying, "A President has to have a Sherman Adams to handle this, and keep them away from me." So Ehrlichman and Haldeman were to be the Sherman Adams, I guess, and you got the big four Cabinet officers, and Ehrlichman got the rest. Now, this happened very quickly.

HRH: It sure did.

RHG: Can you describe what it was?

HRH: Well, I think what it was, really, was sort of described in my reaction to the first Cabinet meeting, in January, where I said "The Governors among the Cabinet talked whether or not they had anything to say." I think Nixon thought, first of all, that he had selected good people for the Cabinet. And I think he did, basically. But he then thought that because they were good people and because he was so knowledgeable about how to deal with Washington and the Cabinet and all that and because we had done a very intensive pre-Inaugural briefing program with the Cabinet and with the senior staff to learn how our staff system was going to work. I conducted the session. It was a two-day session; the President participated but he didn't preside. It was basically an indoctrination thing. It was sort of teaching them how we were going to work, and how the President was going to work, and how he viewed the Cabinet and what he was looking to them for, and all that sort of thing.

I think he thought that saying that to them would be sufficient to cause it to happen. I think that it only took from January to April for him to realize that it didn't happen, and that he was stuck with the problem of these what he thought were big men acting like little men, seeking these constant Presidential meetings, opportunities to sit down with the President and go into depth of detail on their Departmental concerns. Or, to counsel the President on their global concerns and how they think the President should be conducting the office.

That's not what he wanted, and not what he expected. What he expected was that they would take a philosophical guidance from him, and they'd go out and carry it out. Much more rapidly than he thought might happen, I think they became, in most cases, trapped by their Departments. Became prisoners of their own bureaucracies or their own institutions and turned very rapidly from being Presidential envoys to the Departments rather than becoming Departmental envoys to the President. That wasn't at all what the President had in mind or thought he was going to accomplish. I think he just became quickly disillusioned with.... He never had any thought of having Cabinet government. He didn't have any thought that the Cabinet was going to vote on issues, or anything like that. But he did think that the Cabinet officers would be strong Presidential executors within their domains. He saw very quickly that that wasn't going to be the case in virtually all the cases.

He never expected Rogers to be that at State. He saw Rogers as being a negotiator who would handle negotiations for him, but the foreign policy would be established at the White House by the President. The President would be in effect his own Secretary of State with Bill Rogers as his chief negotiator.

RHG: Did Rogers understand that?

HRH: I suspect that he did not. I think that's the President's fault. The President and Rogers were too close and went back to far for the President to be willing to face up to Rogers. When the President decided to tell Rogers he couldn't be Secretary of State any more, it was [I] who had to do the telling to Rogers,

not Nixon. The irony of it was that then, when the President decided I wasn't going to be chief of staff any more, he decided Rogers was the one that should tell me. But Rogers wouldn't do it. Rogers, to his credit, did what I didn't do. I agreed, and I did tell Rogers. But Rogers wouldn't tell me. Rogers said to the President, "That's your problem, and you tell him." He made the President do it.

We immediately got into all this inter-squabbling. We got into the Cabinet officers being prima donnas. They were to deal directly with the President; they didn't want to take instructions or messages from me or Ehrlichman or Moynihan or Burns or any of the other staff members. You had the Burns-Moynihan squabble that went on. You had Volpe's classic briefcase full of stuff, and Romney's stating stuff.

Agnew was a great disappointment as Vice President in terms of his conduct in the Cabinet, because he would sit there and disagree with the President. The President didn't view the Vice President as being [someone], at Cabinet meetings especially, to disagree with the President. He expected the Vice President to back the President. Which he had always done with Eisenhower. He never disagreed with Eisenhower in a Cabinet meeting. If he had any line of disagreement, he would talk to Eisenhower directly, or to Sherman Adams or someone else, and get his view to the President. But he never spoke up in a Cabinet meeting against a Presidential line. Agnew did. Agnew would say, "Gee, I'm not so sure that's a good idea. I think we ought to consider doing such-and-such." And the President would just be furious.

Not openly so. He wouldn't say so, but he'd be furious after the meeting.

It got to the point where he just got tired, within just a couple of months, of dealing with [what he viewed as] these guys' petty problems. He decided that John [Ehrlichman] and I would have to do it, and the way that was to be done was I was to deal with State, Defense, Treasury and Justice, and John was to deal with the rest of the Departments. That was the way he was going to handle it. All that was was a complete cop-out on his part. It was a way to get out of having to deal with what he really knew he had to deal with himself. It didn't work.

RHG: So it sounds as if the Cabinet just behaved in such a way right in the beginning of the administration that Nixon, given the way he was, could not deal with them. So Nixon himself then put the White House staff in between him and the [Cabinet].

HRH: That's exactly right. Or tried to put the White House staff in. He did not succeed in doing it completely. He recognized that he couldn't. He tried to do it, but he knew it wouldn't work totally. What it was was a semi-buffer for him, and yeah, he would still break down and say, he has to have his meeting every now and then with Volpe and even had to meet with Agnew.

RHG: That interests me, and we'll talk about this later on at some length, but by the end of the first term he seems to have completely changed his mind and decided to try to bring the Cabinet back again. And you went through a lot of....

HRH: On a totally different basis, though. He was bringing the Cabinet back with a re-structured Cabinet approach, where you had

the four basic groupings, with the heads of those groupings being Cabinet officers but also being Assistants to the President.

RHG: Counsellors actually, I think they were called at that time.

HRH: Counsellors to the President, whatever it was going to be. But they were going to be Presidential staff people as well as staff people, and they were going to have offices at the White House. And they were going to spend more time with the President and the President's staff than with their own Departments. They were going to have Deputy Secretaries of their Departments to run their Departments. Those Deputies would report to them, plus the Secretaries of the subsidiary Departments.... Well, they were subsidiary Departments. We didn't like to say it that way, but that's what it was.

RHG: Well, let's turn to the staff. I was interested that you said this morning that Arthur Burns was, from the beginning, intended to be the Chairman of the Federal Reserve Board, but that post wasn't available until I think the end of the year, I think it was.

HRH: That's right. Or the first of the next year.

RHG: So he had to become part of the White House staff. Then you ended up--I presume this wasn't planned--but you ended up with two domestic policy people: Burns and Moynihan. And that created....

HRH: Well, it was sort of planned, in a sense. The clash was desirable on domestic policy. The President wanted the foment of new ideas. He didn't want the.... Arthur Burns represented the Old Guard, the conservatives, the play-it-safe, do-it-the-way-

we've-always-done-it, standing on established principles, and all that. And Moynihan represented completely the opposite: the hell with everything that we've tried, none of it's worked; let's try a lot of new things, and just the fact that they're new is great. What he [Nixon] wanted was a clash between those two views to come up with something more progressive than Burns was capable of but not as far-out as Moynihan would've, left to his own devices, come up with. There was no way he would have left Moynihan to his own devices. He saw Moynihan as a spice in the stew but not as the total content. So the clash was understood. It was not really a problem; it was the same clash that we had between Pat Buchanan and Bill Safire in the speechwriting group, which was also intentional.

RHG: But in the case of the Burns-Moynihan one, wasn't Nixon having-- didn't Nixon as a result get a lot of fights brought into the Oval Office?

HRH: Yeah. He didn't want that. That was a fringe benefit that he hadn't counted on. [Laughter]

RHG: Didn't that make the thing really unworkable?

HRH: It made it difficult, not totally unworkable, and it wasn't totally unworkable. Moynihan came up with some good stuff. Fortunately outlasted Burns to the point where some of it got into the attempts, at least, at implementation.

RHG: Family Assistance Plan.

HRH: Family Assistance Plan, Workfare, and urban renewal concepts, and the Pennsylvania Avenue [redevelopment] concept. There were quite a few things that Pat.... Pat was a valuable, I thought, a

very valuable addition to the White House. It was a real testimony to his staying power that he stuck it out. Because he was an innocent in a den of thieves there. He was all alone, pretty much.

RHG: But that made it necessary for Ehrlichman to come in and try to be the broker to the President.

HRH: To a degree, but it wasn't.... The Ehrlichman necessity was more with the domestic Cabinet people than it was in the Burns-Moynihan conflict. It was both, but I would say the Cabinet thing was more what got Ehrlichman into the domestic thing. You can see way back in April, which was long before Ehrlichman became Assistant to the President for Domestic Affairs, the President was already having him handle all but the big four in the Cabinet. That was in sort of a role as a Cabinet secretary rather than a policy person. But then he got into domestic policy planning, and Moynihan got sort of folded into that and Burns went off to Federal Reserve.

RHG: You mentioned earlier that the paperwork, the way the paperwork was created at the White House, the staff was to be a broker to the President and to present him with essentially a synopsis of ideas and possible directions he could take. Could the Burns-Moynihan team do that?

HRH: No, not really. Not as Burns-Moynihan. Someone else had to do it. There had to be a broker in there. In various issues there was--McCracken was in some of that, and Ehrlichman was in some of it, Finch was in some of it. There were various people involved, in various ways. It was still a welcome foment of ideas, and I

think from Moynihan's contribution more welcome than Burns's, actually. Burns was a stabilizing factor there that sort of brought some of it back to earth. Burns was essentially much more negative, much more: "No, Mr. President, you can't do that." Moynihan was saying: "Why not? No one's ever tried it before. Let's try it now."

RHG: So Ehrlichman then would eventually have to write up a position paper saying....

HRH: No, they forced Moynihan to do the position papers. They made Moynihan function as a staff guy on those things. He did. He got overruled a lot, but he also got accepted a lot.

RHG: The idea of a Domestic Council, although it didn't begin properly I don't believe until July of 1970, I think that it required reorganization. No, there was an Executive Order. But I think that it finally went in place in July of 1970, but the idea of having a National Security Council counterpart is very early. In fact, I see here in March 1969 you're talking about the results of a staff meeting.

HRH: This was just a staff meeting thing. Haldeman, Ehrlichman, Harlow and--who the hell is "A"?

RHG: Alexander Butterfield I guess.

HRH: Alex, I guess. Right.

RHG: "Agreed we need a czar for domestic like 'K' [Kissinger] in national security and decided it should be 'E' [Ehrlichman]." How did that realization come about?

HRH: Probably out of all the things that we've been talking about. Just that there was no focal point, no channel established and

that the NSC was working very well at that point and the Kissinger role. I think we all saw it as being a model that would work well with the domestic side, and then you see this the next day: "The Urban Affairs Council meeting all screwed up because Moynihan hadn't properly staffed the agenda, stuck in a four-page release on a new volunteer plan. The President was upset. Hope our plan for Ehrlichman to oversee domestic matters will overcome this." The loose cannons are there, and we've got to figure out some way to tie them down.

RHG: Yeah, Moynihan is...?

HRH: Did he cause problems right from the beginning? The answer is "yes." But they were desired. The thing is, there was an acceptance of Moynihan causing problems, an expectation that Moynihan would cause problems. When they went beyond the substantive problem-causing into the procedural problem-causing, then people got disturbed. Because they wanted him to stir things up substantively, but they wanted him to do it within the procedure. When he got off the procedural tracks, you needed something else.

RHG: It sounds as if some of the confrontations with Arthur Burns were sometimes pretty strong. On March 25, 1969, "He and I had a knockdown with Arthur Burns at lunch. Pretty bitter discussion. Didn't settle the problem of getting domestic programs. Burns determined to run the show, but it's obvious he can't manage. Tough one for John. He later said that he has to ride herd on this because Arthur will never get it done."

HRH: That's I'm sure, a very accurate summary of where this was. It

picked up later in the same day, where we're saying, "We're in a period of internal dissension. Bryce is worn to a frazzle and so is Burns. John and I are pushing too hard as a result of the President pushing on us. We need to get back together but it's hard to do when everyone's tired and edgy." That was a recognition--we were in formative stages. We knew it, we knew we had to work through some of these things. It was a matter of concern but not a matter of panic or disaster. It was a recognition that we had stuff we had to work out. We had to find ways to work it out. I think your perception here [is] that this was when the Haldeman-Ehrlichman partnership was being forged. It had already been forged; we'd been working very closely together all through the campaign. The President was looking to the two of us, just as he had told us we had to divide up the Cabinet and take it on. He was looking to the two of us because we were the two within that whole apparatus that basically functioned the way we saw a staff ought to be functioning: as internal operatives; honest brokers; no agenda of our own to forward; a desire to get the President's views translated into operational results.

The others: Henry had his agenda, in his own way, and was out to prove his own role, but he was doing a hell of a good job. His ego thing hadn't risen very high at that stage. He was putting the structure together, and it was essentially working very well. Harlow was a problem for the President to deal with because he always came in with negative things. He would always come in saying, "Mr. President, we've got a real problem here."

The President got to the point where he would say, "Can't Harlow come in once and say, 'Mr. President, everything's going just peachy' "? But you don't do that, and that's what I tried to explain to the President: "People don't come to the President saying, 'Everything's going great.' They look to you to solve the problems they can't solve. If they can solve them they don't come to you." That's a problem a President has to deal with.

RHG: It strikes me that you and Ehrlichman--you mentioned the partnership was forged earlier, but that the administration had on the Cabinet side a lot of prima donnas, and on the staff side, you had at least a good few people that you were depending on who really couldn't handle staff. I mean, they were intelligent people and good operators but not staff people. I'm thinking of Harlow and [Herbert] Klein.

HRH: Right.

RHG: And eventually it comes down to Haldeman and Ehrlichman who are not prima donnas, and can handle staff.

HRH: I think that's a good summation. I think that's exactly what did happen. Plus, both Ehrlichman and I put together staff structures, under us, that implemented our non-prima donna staff handling ability, where the other people were putting together staff structures to try to forward their own agendas. Now, Kissinger is still something of an exception to that. Kissinger fits more into the Ehrlichman/Haldeman category than the Moynihan/Burns/Harlow/Klein-type category.

RHG: What about [Donald] Rumsfeld? What was his place?

HRH: Rumsfeld, let's see now, we've got a.... I may not be accurate

in reconstructing the thing there. Rumsfeld was a Congressman, and we persuaded him.... This is hard to believe, this shows Rumsfeld coming in in April of '69. I don't remember it as being that early. I thought we brought Rumsfeld in initially to take over OEO [Office of Economic Opportunity]. Then later brought him in as a Counsellor to the President. That's very strange.

RHG: I can't comment except to say that this is from your journal, and clearly you were intending to bring him [in] as early as April. I don't think this does say....

HRH: And clearly we were going to bring him in as Counsellor to the President parallel to Arthur [Burns] with Cabinet status.

RHG: I can recall entries about Rumsfeld in the journal, periodically, that he doesn't step up to things.

HRH: Right. Don, it turned out, was a Congressional-type, not a staff-type. His method was to conciliate and moderate rather than to decide and execute. So it created those frustrations because of that. Also, he had a very strong long-range political ambition, so he had to look to his own political credentials at all times, where Ehrlichman and I and Kissinger had absolutely no political motivation. We were not looking to long-range credentials. We were looking to short-range results. It's funny, obviously my memory is bad on the Rumsfeld thing because I thought we originally brought him in as OEO Director with the mission to eliminate OEO, and then I thought we moved him over as Counsellor to the President. I obviously am wrong, because this April '69, I mean, we'd just started. We obviously brought him in as a Counsellor to the President.

RHG: I found an item here, this is April 7, 1969. Your staff is worried about your image. "Probably do need to do something to avoid letting the Von Haldeman concept become firmly entrenched." Why did this happen? Do you know?

HRH: It happened because I didn't believe them. I didn't listen to them. I didn't care what my image was. I didn't feel it was relevant. I didn't think it mattered. I thought that trying to worry about my image would get in the way of worrying about my results, and results were to me important and image wasn't.

RHG: Why did the image begin?

HRH: I'm not really sure. I think probably from disgruntled Congress people, to begin with, and maybe disgruntled Cabinet officers, too. Who, when they couldn't get access or results--or the access or the result that they wanted--instead of saying they had failed to convince the President of their argument, they said, "Haldeman blocked it." There's no question, I automatically fell into a scapegoat role, and I think it was inevitable I was going to get a bad image, because the role I was in almost prescribed that I was going to come up with a bad image.

And also because I spent no time, at all, with either Congress or the press; and I felt my role was not to spend time with Congress or the press. We had other people to deal with both, and that my role was to deal internally with operations and the President himself. From a public relations viewpoint that wasn't good. From a purely operational, managerial viewpoint, it was totally sound. Despite all that, it really didn't make any difference until Watergate gave them something to get their oars

into, because it was just starting to crumble four years after that. For three years after that I maintained pretty much that internal position.

RHG: You mentioned earlier that Mrs. Haldeman had said that she thinks you shouldn't have been so tough.

HRH: Right. She felt I was unreasonable in dealing with especially the young guys on the staff. I demanded too much of them and didn't have enough understanding of the problem they had to cope with in figuring out how to do what I told them to do. And that I should have been more compassionate and understanding in dealing with them, and I think she's probably right.

RHG: I just wondered if that was part of the "Von Haldeman" image.

HRH: Not with the young guys, I don't think, because they were really dedicated to me. I don't think they were the source of the negatives. They had internal negative reactions, but I don't think external. I think the external came from Congress and Cabinet.

[End Side 1]

[Begin Side 2]

RHG: This is for the article that you're publishing in Prologue. I found three items in the journal that concern the White House tapes, and I just want to go over each one with you and see what you can say about them. Then, if you like, I can try to include them in the article. The first one is November 19, 1972, and the context is that Kissinger has done an interview with Oriana Fallacci in which he said ([and] what everyone remembers about [it]) that he was like the cowboy and walking down the street to

get the bad guys at high noon. Nixon was very upset about this interview. It wasn't so much about the cowboy, I take it from the entry in your journal, it was what he was saying in implying the distance between himself and the President on the issue particularly of the Vietnam negotiations. Nixon turns to you and he says, "Tell Kissinger he doesn't make the decisions."

HRH: Now are these on the White House tapes or are these in my journal?

RHG: These are in your journal. No, there's nothing here from the White House tapes.

HRH: OK.

RHG: But I was reading at the wrong place. He [the President] turns to you and he tells you to tell Kissinger "that the President's conversations with him have been tape recorded. And tell Kissinger that he can use them if he likes for his book." Then he turns again and he says, "Tell Kissinger he doesn't make the decisions and, once they're made, he wavers the most. Tell Kissinger to stop having interviews alone." What it appears here is that Nixon has told you to use the tapes to threaten him, which is exactly what you told me earlier was the main reason for installing the tapes. So that when this kind of thing arose, the information could be used against the people who were causing trouble. Can you expand on this at all?

HRH: Frankly, I don't remember his telling me to tell Kissinger that the tapes, that he had been recorded, and I'm virtually certain that I did not do it. I think that this was the President angry about an interview and reacting to that anger and saying things

that I interpreted to be venting spleen rather than issuing specific instructions. Because I'm virtually certain I did not tell Kissinger that he had been tape recorded. I'm sure I didn't tell him he could use the tapes when he wrote his book, because the President's thought was always that nobody else would use the tapes. I strongly felt that that should be the case: that he should not get in the position of letting people think that they were going to have access to the tapes. Or even letting them know they existed.

The next instructions telling Kissinger to stop having interviews alone I probably did do. Because I know the President was disturbed, and I know he wanted Kissinger to know he was disturbed, and he didn't want to tell Kissinger.

RHG: I think the part about telling Kissinger he can use the tapes for his memoirs was just a way to soften the fact that he has just been threatened.

HRH: Right, I'm sure it was. But I'm also virtually certain that I opted not to do it.

RHG: It never happened?

HRH: Right.

RHG: But it was interesting to me because it was the only case that I know of where at least Nixon intended, for a moment anyway, to use those tapes for the purpose...

HRH: For that purpose. Yeah.

RHG: ...for which they were initially installed. Right. There are two other items. Both of them are from the Watergate month of April 1973. On April 9, 1973, Nixon ordered you to remove the

taping system from his offices and then later in the day, I take it, he changed his mind and decided he wanted them left in but only on a "switch" basis. He was going to select things that he wanted taped. Can you expand on that?

HRH: I can't expand on it much, I don't think. I remember that, and I think that's what we did. I think we did, I did have it switched, changed to a switch basis. I'm not sure.

RHG: There was no change made to the best of my knowledge.

HRH: There was not, OK. He may have overruled it, then, later, so I didn't do it. I remember the discussion of going, of getting control. Because at that point we were having conversations about whether John Dean had taped a meeting and what was being done, and the President got to thinking at that point, "Those tapes have got to have stuff on them that could create problems." And that it would be better not to, from here on out.... Especially because he was getting into all these Watergate discussions. I think he did not want his Watergate discussions taped, but obviously they were.

RHG: Right. It's interesting that he did change his mind and let the thing go forward.

HRH: If he did. Maybe he thought they had been put on a switch. No, he couldn't have, because he would have known where the switch was, and he didn't know where the switch was.

RHG: Yeah, yeah. Now, the third item I'm not positive refers to the tapes, but I couldn't understand it in any other way. It's April 18, 1973. Nixon tells Haldeman that, if he (Haldeman) has to leave the administration, Nixon wants him to take all of the

"office material from his machinery there, and hold it for the library." What does that mean?

HRH: I'm virtually certain it means the tapes, because there are other discussions about that. He had expressed at other times that he didn't want anybody else to know that the tapes existed, that he did not want anybody ever to listen to the tapes except himself and possibly me. He specifically excepted Rose Woods. He did not want her to hear the tapes. And that also included the.... No, I'm sorry, this may mean something else, which would be his dictabelts. Because he had a lot of dictabelts that he dictated that he did not want Rose to transcribe, and no one else was to hear, and that I was to have transcribed by somebody in my office so that they would be kept.... He did have them transcribed, and I was to keep those belts separately, and that may be what he told me to take.

It could have also been the tapes, because he had told me, probably later than this, that he was giving me the tapes. That they were my possession. He said, "That'll take care of your need for funds, if you run into legal problems, because you will own the tapes, and you can sell the rights and do stuff like that." Now, that I never took as a serious statement, because it was when he was floundering around in his despair, trying to figure out how to handle the problem of our leaving. But he did say something to that effect: "I'm leaving the tapes to you, and you can use them later on" or something. But I suspect--I may be wrong--that this may relate to the dictabelts rather than the tapes.

RHG: I don't know what the legal consequences would be; did he just want to get them out of the White House?

HRH: Probably. But he hadn't thought that through very carefully in legal [terms], because obviously in my possession they were less secure than in White House possession. He had all kinds of ability to claim personal property and executive privilege against the legislative or judicial branch, where as an independent citizen outside I.... As it turned out, all of my stuff was impounded by the White House, and I couldn't get it. Consequently when I was subpoenaed for materials, I had no materials. Which worked probably both for my benefit and detriment.

RHG: All right, thank you Mr. Haldeman.

[End of interview]