

JOHN SHERMAN COOPER ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

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John Sherman Cooper, Interviewee

William Cooper, Interviewer

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Interviewee ~~does~~/does not desire a copy of the interview.

Subject of interview(s): John Sherman Cooper Project

The following is an unrehearsed interview, the eighteenth in a series, with former United States Senator and Ambassador John Sherman Cooper. The interview was conducted by Bill Cooper for the University of Kentucky Library's John Sherman Cooper Oral History Project, at Senator Cooper's home, 2900 N Street, N.W., Washington, D.C., on June 5th, 1983, at 2:00 p.m.

An Interview with John Sherman Cooper

BILL COOPER: Senator Cooper, we . . . we've already talked about the Bay of Pigs . . .

COOPER: Yes.

BILL COOPER: . . . fiasco, but in February of 1963 you said that the United States should renew it's blockade of Cuba if diplomatic efforts failed to remove Russian troops from the island. There were still Russian troops on the island even though the missiles had been removed. And you said that President Kennedy had valid grounds to insist upon withdrawal of those Russian troops, on the basis of promises that the Russians had made at the time of the . . .

COOPER: Yes.

BILL COOPER: . . . missile crisis in . . .

COOPER: That's right.

BILL COOPER: . . . 1962. Now, wasn't the imposition of . . .

COOPER: Is that . . .

BILL COOPER: . . . of such . . .

COOPER: . . . is that too much noise?

BILL COOPER: . . . no, that's all right. Imposing a blockade such as you proposed, wouldn't that have been running a considerable risk of war with the Soviet Union?

COOPER: Yeah. But at that time I didn't think it was a really probable risk and I will give you my reasons. They start back some time before the incident in 1963 [sic 1962] when President Kennedy called the Russians' bluff, you know. This may be a little background [but] it's all known, though. For several weeks, or maybe two or three months before that Senator [Kenneth B.] Keating had been speaking in the Senate saying that the Russians were putting missiles in Cuba. And he made a number of speeches. He talked to me about it. He wanted me to join with him. Well, I asked him what his sources were and he said, "Cuban immigrants in New York," and other sources that he had. And I did not join with him in it but I remember on one TV program we had together I did say to him, "I've been listening to your speeches about the Cuban [sic Russian] missiles in Cuba and have you been able to accomplish anything with the administration about it?" He said, "No." Another thing that's past now and I don't like to . . . well, I don't mind telling what's history. It was denied by the administration that there were any missiles there. McGeorge Bundy, who was a great . . . one of the great foreign experts over in the White House, on the day before they actually

admitted that there were missiles there or on the way, Bundy made a statement on television in a public statement that there were no missiles there. That it was all a hoax. That's one reason today I don't . . . I can't . . . I can hardly stand to listen to him talk about his position on various matters such as the Vietnam War and all that, which I heard many times. But anyway, when it was . . . I think I've told you before, just by chance I happened to be in the White House sitting with President Kennedy on the day that the Russians turned back. I'd gone up there at the request of the . . . we were all called in and I went to Washington and then I went over to the White House and curiously enough, I saw Bundy and he didn't want to talk. He looked awfully tired and Kennedy heard I was there so he sent for me to come up to his . . . White House and up into his living room quarters and he was sitting there in his rocking chair and he was very calm. He told me that their boats were on their way, "But," he said, "they'll be destroyed and Cuba will be destroyed if they come and they've so been informed." He said, "I think they're going to turn back." He was very calm. They did turn back. Then following that, as I recall, they had absolute promises from this man who is still foreign minister, and promises made at the U.N. [United Nations] that any missiles that were left there would be . . . or . . . or . . . or were there or any . . . any kind of material, would be withdrawn. Adlai Stevenson then was our

representative up there and he was quite angry. It was reported that he had never been informed about any of this.

BILL COOPER: Now did . . .

COOPER: Well, . . .

BILL COOPER: . . . did their promises also include Russian troops as well as . . . as missiles, that they would be withdrawn . . .

COOPER: I don't know, . . .

BILL COOPER: . . . as well?

COOPER: . . . to be honest about it. President Kennedy sent former Secretary of State Dean Acheson to Europe to talk to our allies and I think sent him also to . . . to Russia. So it seems that it was settled. I made another statement then. I said, "I . . . I think that we should reinstate the Monroe . . . Monroe Doctrine [chuckling] and not permit any Soviet troops or Communist troops to . . . to interfere in the affairs of countries in the southern hemisphere [in] South America [or] Central America," and I did make the remark if . . . that we should put a blockade around Cuba, which nothing came of it, because I assume that they thought it had all been settled. They'd with- . . . they'd turned back, but I don't think anybody has ever known for cer- . . . actually or factually whether there are still some missiles in there or not or the machinery by which they could be placed in there, for example, launchers, warheads and others like that. I doubt if they'd

have any warheads in there. They probably wouldn't want to trust Cuba with warheads. But they have . . . well, I'm sure without question, they've had . . . of course, you know, they've provided them with all kinds of . . . of equipment [such as] airplanes and bases, [and] assisted them and . . . oh, it's reported at a cost of about a million dollars a day ever since. So, you know there's a close association. So I'm glad I made the statement [chuckling] although nothing came of it.

BILL COOPER: Yeah. In the . . . but . . . well, Kennedy must have been . . . must have been fairly sure that . . . that his . . . his threat had been taken to heart. You said he appeared so calm when you . . . you saw him in his living quarters at the White House at the time of the . . .

COOPER: Well, of course, . . .

BILL COOPER: . . . crisis.

COOPER: . . . it was a great victory for him. He had stood up to them and told them that, you know, if they . . . if they advanced the boats were coming [and] they'd be destroyed and he had already made orders on our air force, bombers, to not only destroy the boats, but as I understand it, to attack Cuba if necessary.

BILL COOPER: So, there's no question but what . . . had they . . . had they gone ahead, war would have ensued . . .

COOPER: I think so, . . .

BILL COOPER: . . . at that time.

COOPER: . . . but I . . . I don't think . . . at that point Russia had been humiliated and they were not in the position in Europe that they are today and . . . so I don't think there'd have been any war.

BILL COOPER: Yesterday we touched on this a little bit, but I wanted . . . a couple of other things I wanted to ask about the civil rights activities in 1963. In February you introduced along with Senator [Thomas J.] Dodd, a bill to protect the rights of . . . of people seeking to vote in any federal election. The . . . part of that I think, . . . well, actually this was before that bill was introduced, even before the Birmingham . . .

COOPER: Yeah.

BILL COOPER: . . . problems in the spring of 1963 and, of course, at that time you made speeches in which you accused both political parties of . . . of only paying lip service to civil rights. On the 15th of May, then, following the Birmingham situation, you and another group of . . . of senators, I think there may have been about twelve of you, six Republicans [and] six Democrats, . . .

COOPER: Yeah.

BILL COOPER: . . . wrote a letter to President Kennedy seeking a conference and you . . . you promised in that letter to support any appropriate legislation that the Kennedy



administration would offer. Do you recall the response to that or lack of response to it?

COOPER: No. I'm sure we got a letter back and where it is, I have no idea. If it's not in the . . . your files at the University of Kentucky, it's in one of these other boxes which I still must send down there. I'm sure . . . well, they would always . . . they would always answer you, not always the president himself but someone for him. And I think from that time on until his assassination he did push forward with civil rights. I forgot to say that at the beginning of his term it really was difficult to get his administration--and I know that he's a liberal, I know he believed in civil rights--but to get his Attorney General, Robert Kennedy, to send up a bill.

BILL COOPER: Why was that?

COOPER: I don't know.

BILL COOPER: I know you . . .

COOPER: We had . . .

BILL COOPER: . . . you did a considerable amount of prodding, yourself.

COOPER: . . . we had a meeting in [Everett] Dirksen's office [with] about twenty-five to thirty Democrats and Republicans. And we had Kennedy down there--the Attorney General, Bobby Kennedy--and told him that they ought to at least get a bill up there and . . . so we can start work-. . . we could start working and it was delayed and delayed and

several bills were introduced. I introduced a bill myself before they introduced their bill.

BILL COOPER: And then they followed with one very similar, didn't they?

COOPER: Yes. They had every . . . I had everything in my bill [that] they finally sent up except housing. And there was no particular reason why I left that out except I just really didn't know how to . . . upon what grounds, you know, that you could . . . you could go at . . . go at it. I could understand the grounds on voting, grounds on public conveyances, grounds on public eating places, where the people came generally, and upon the . . . as I've said, transportation. I did have a change on transportation. I based my . . . my proposal on the Fourteenth Amendment. The Kennedy administration--and it's in the law--based its proposal on . . . on the Commerce Clause as they were part of commerce. [chuckling] And I described it as treating them just like cattle. I testified before the Judiciary Committee on that subject, to amend it, to place it on the Fourteenth Amendment and just like they did with other parts and described it as . . . they were speaking of them as if they were transporting just ordinary commodities or cattle or . . . and I had some support, but not enough. Walter Kro- . . . Walter . . . I mean, Arthur Krock wrote a big [chuckling] editorial on [it] although I don't think he was for civil rights much, but he wrote an

editorial on my amendment saying if they were going to do that, they ought to do it the right way . . . the proper way and . . . but that was before they . . . the Kennedy administration came up with its bill and, of course, were never able to get too far along with it until after he was assassinated and then Johnson put more vigor into it.

BILL COOPER: Do you think that Kennedy might have been reluctant to push civil rights bills early in his administration because he feared losing? Certainly he had . . . he had an obligation based on his campaign . . .

COOPER: Yeah. Yeah. Yeah.

BILL COOPER: . . . he had an obligation to pursue civil rights legislation.

COOPER: No, I don't think so. I . . . I don't know why they delayed it. It seems chiefly . . . of course, naturally he and his brother Robert were very close. He'd appointed him [Robert]—as attorney general, but Robert himself was a very determined man, that could be very difficult, you know.

BILL COOPER: Yeah.

COOPER: And I g- . . . he may have been just taking his time. I don't know.

BILL COOPER: But he was a . . .

COOPER: But . . .

BILL COOPER: . . . he was a civil rights advocate, though . . .

COOPER: . . . yes.

BILL COOPER: . . . probably more so than . . .

COOPER: Yes.

BILL COOPER: . . . than Jack, was . . .

COOPER: He was . . .

BILL COOPER: . . . he not?

COOPER: . . . yes. But that's the history and why it occurred and nobody . . . you hardly ever [hear] anything ever said about it, [regarding] their great delay.

BILL COOPER: Well, why . . . why do you think so many people felt it better to try to base public accommodations laws on the Commerce Clause, rather than the Fourteenth Amendment?

COOPER: Well, there's a history to that. After the Civil War, there was passed in the Congress the Civil Rights Act and they based . . . in . . . in that act, they were based upon Chambers . . . I mean, the Commerce Clause. There was a dissenter, a Judge . . . Justice [John Marshall] Harlan from Kentucky who had been a Confederate [sic Union] soldier, but he strongly supported the Civil Rights Bill and insisted that it ought to be based upon the Fourteenth Amendment, you know, which provides for the rights and due process and the different rights of all citizens. But he did not succeed and so gradually they did make progress in states where there weren't many . . . much . . . many great particular difficulties. [In the] Middle West, New England [and] other places there just

wasn't any fight made about it.

BILL COOPER: Now, was that your . . . basically your . . . your only difference with [Thruston] Morton on civil rights is that he . . . he preferred basing public accommodations law on . . . on the Commerce Clause, and you . . .

COOPER: Oh, we never discussed it.

BILL COOPER: . . . based it on the Fourteenth Amendment.

COOPER: I don't know. He . . . he certainly supported it, . . .

BILL COOPER: Yeah.

COOPER: . . . the Civil Rights Act and I . . . I [chuckling] . . . I may have been too technical, but I . . . it offended me, to be honest about it, that . . . that they would not give these . . . provide these rights to these people upon the section of the Constitution which actually declared those rights.

BILL COOPER: Don't you think it offended blacks, also?

COOPER: Who?

BILL COOPER: Don't you think it offended blacks, also, that it wasn't based on the Fourteenth Amendment rather than a . . .

COOPER: Well, there wasn't much . . . much written about it or said about it. As I've said, Krock wrote a very strong article in The New York Times [chuckling] about it and . . .

BILL COOPER: You don't recall getting . . . getting letters from . . . from black leaders . . .

COOPER: No.

BILL COOPER: . . . expressing . . .

COOPER: Not then.

BILL COOPER: . . . any opinion as to . . .

COOPER: No.

BILL COOPER: . . . where they . . .

COOPER: No.

BILL COOPER: . . . thought you or . . . or . . .

COOPER: There could have been some, but . . .

BILL COOPER: . . . the Commerce Clause was . . .

COOPER: . . . I think the main thing [was] they wanted to get the bill through, because it provided clearly their rights [or] extension of rights beyond voting to enter public places, to travel equally on public accommo- . . . on public conveyances and also it had a housing clause.

BILL COOPER: Now, you mentioned yesterday Governor [Bert] Combs in Kentucky . . .

COOPER: Yeah.

BILL COOPER: . . . at this time and . . . and his stand on civil rights. The executive order that . . . that he issued at that time banned . . . banned public accommodations discrimination within the state and, as a matter of fact, I think you . . . you applauded that action and even had his . . . his executive order read into the Congressional record.

COOPER: Yes. I mentioned it in . . . in the Senate and

. . . and had . . . I think I had his order placed in the record.

BILL COOPER: Yeah.

COOPER: I remember that I spoke on it and congratulated him on the action he'd taken.

BILL COOPER: Now, if my recollection is correct, the next governor of Kentucky rescinded that executive order.

COOPER: Is that correct?

BILL COOPER: I'm not sure why, but I . . . I . . . I . . . I need to check this, but I . . . I recall vaguely reading something to the effect that [Edward] Breathitt rescinded that order. Now, I know in 19- . . . in . . . in the 1963 gubernatorial campaign, when Louie Nunn was running against Breathitt, Louie Nunn attacked that executive order by the . . . by Combs, I . . . I assume on the basis of . . . that this could only be done by the state legislature.

COOPER: Yes. I would think that would be the only re- . . . ground upon which it could be . . . be attacked and it might be properly attacked on such a ground.

BILL COOPER: You personally would have preferred that the state legislature would have passed such a law.

COOPER: Yes. I would have.

BILL COOPER: But in . . .

COOPER: But I . . .

BILL COOPER: . . . in lieu of their . . .

COOPER: . . . thought it showed leadership on the part of . . .

BILL COOPER: Yes.

COOPER: . . . Combs and that it could have its effect.

BILL COOPER: Yeah. In other words, you . . . you felt it was something that needed to be done . . .

COOPER: Yes.

BILL COOPER: . . . whether it be done by the legislature or by the . . .

COOPER: Yes, . . .

BILL COOPER: . . . governor.

COOPER: . . . it would have been better being passed by the legislature because that was the . . . that was the mode that was followed generally throughout the country at the time.

BILL COOPER: Well, one other thing on . . . on this . . . this issue of . . . of basing that either on the Fourteenth Amendment or the Commerce Clause. Now, you mentioned the Supreme Court back in the 1880s had . . . had ruled that basing such a law on the Fourteenth Amendment was unconstitutional and Justice Harlan had dissented. Do you think in the 1960s the Supreme Court would have sustained a civil rights bill based on the Fourteenth Amendment?

COOPER: Yes.

BILL COOPER: You think they . . .

COOPER: I . . . I . . .



BILL COOPER: . . . would have . . .

COOPER: . . . I [chuckling] . . . my reasoning on that may be more based upon personalities than . . . and the very fact of the [Earl] Warren decision [*Brown vs. Board of Education* in 1954], you see . . .

BILL COOPER: Yeah.

COOPER: . . . I think laid the ground work and that they would have sustained the enforcement, because it was such a monumental decision and had such . . . well, it had great opposition and it also had great approval.

BILL COOPER: In June of 1963, at a meeting of the Republican National Committee, which was held, I think, in Denver, Thruston Morton said, "If Kentucky . . . if the Kentucky delegation has a favorite son in 1964, I'm hopeful it will be Cooper."

COOPER: I didn't know that.

BILL COOPER: You . . . you were never aware of that?

COOPER: No.

BILL COOPER: No? Did . . . did you ever have any ambition to be a candidate for president?

COOPER: No. I remember one . . .

BILL COOPER: Why not?

COOPER: . . . well, for several reasons, to be perfectly honest. I don't think I'm a very good administrator.

BILL COOPER: Well, we've had a lot of presidents who haven't

been [laughing].

COOPER: Yes, I know that [laughter]. And second, I didn't think it was--this . . . this was not a good real reason because I never thought about being it [sic president]--but being a Republican from a state like Kentucky it was very doubtful anyway. But I really didn't. I . . . I . . . I . . . I enjoyed the legislative work and I felt that I could do that and I had ideas and I . . . we had a chance to work over a tremendous scope of issues. Of course, you had the same opportunities being president of the United States plus the great authority he has. But I just didn't [want to be president]. I remember one night President Kennedy was talking to me [while] he was in the Senate. Sometimes he'd come back . . . I sat in the back row then and he sat in the back row on the Democratic side. Sometimes he'd come over and sit by me [laughing] and so he said to me, "Have you ever thought about being president?" and I said, "No." [He said], "What?" [laughter--Bill Cooper] "You never have considered trying to be president?" I said, "Yes, there . . . I did once." He said, "When was that?" I said, "When I was about twelve years old." [laughter] And he laughed and that was about the end of that. [laughter] And he looked down at his shoes. He had on a pair of brown shoes and they were . . . they were a very light tan. He says, "I've got to get . . . I've got to . . . I've got to get more dark polish on these shoes because they're

[laughter] too light." He had a funny way about him, you know. He'd go from the serious to . . . but he really was surprised.

BILL COOPER: Maybe he thought light shoes weren't becoming a president [laughing]?

COOPER: Yeah. But he really was surprised at my answer that I never had thought . . . thought about being president. [laughing] As I said, I might have when I was ten or twelve years old [laughter--Bill Cooper]. But I don't think so even then. I never . . . didn't know whether I'd ever . . . what was ahead.

BILL COOPER: In . . . in August of 1963, you were appointed by Vice-President [Lyndon] Johnson to represent the United States at sessions of the Interparliamentary Union, . . .

COOPER: Yes.

BILL COOPER: . . . which was going to meet in Belgrade [Yugoslavia]. Now, what . . . what exactly is the Interparliamentary Union?

COOPER: Well, where . . . where did it meet?

BILL COOPER: It was going to meet in Belgrade, Yugoslavia.

COOPER: To tell you the truth, I don't think I attended it.

BILL COOPER: That . . . that wasn't the occasion when you talked with [Marshal Josip Broz] Tito?

COOPER: No. No. I talked to Tito in nineteen hundred and fifty- . . . let's see, one, two, three . . . nineteen . . .

. Christmas Day, nineteen hundred and fifty-two. I went to . . .  
. I went to Belgrade. I had repre- . . . I had . . . Yugoslavia  
filed a complaint against the Soviet Union, which was rather  
unusual, for stripping their country and a lot of other of the  
Eastern European countries including East Germany of its rail  
facilities [and] its . . . and all of those things it needed.  
And it [Yugoslavia] asked that the Soviet Union be censured for  
doing so. And I represented the United States on that issue.  
Of course, the . . . the . . . it . . . the U.N. [United  
Nations] at that time was wholly pro-America and anti-Soviet,  
so there wasn't much problem about them being censured. But  
that was the first censure and one of the only three censures  
the Soviets have ever . . . ever suffered. And it's curious  
that I . . . I represented the United States on the first two--  
one on this and one on the . . . later on, on [the] Soviet  
Union . . . Bresh-. . . [Leonid] Breshnev's treaty with  
Nationalist China. I we- . . . I . . . Interparliamentary  
Conference differs from, for example, from the N.A.T.O. [North  
Atlantic Treaty Organization] Conference. Now, I went to many  
N.A.T.O. conferences as a representative of the United States  
and for s- . . . for a time I was called . . . I was a reporter  
for them. They call it rapporteur [chuckling] and there'd be  
representatives there from all the N.A.T.O. countries and we'd  
discuss defense and discuss all these kinds of questions. The  
Interparliamentary Conference is not . . . is not barred to any

country, Communist or . . . or . . . or non-Communist. The only one that I can ever recall going to [was when] I went to one--and I don't remember what year--but I went in . . . I went . . . we went . . . went to Denmark and I . . . that's the only one I can remember. I remember it for several reasons. I remember John Stennis went along, and he usually wouldn't . . . didn't go to those things and we were good friends. And after it was over we went to Ireland, where w- . . . the whole group did and stayed a few days. I went to one other which was held in Paris which dealt more with social and economic questions and it . . . it too, chiefly, was the anti-Communist countries, but it also included a lot of countries which were not N.A.T.O. countries, for example, Spain and Portugal at that time and representatives of other countries like that. And I remember that very well. My wife and I went and . . . [chuckling] well, it didn't . . . I think you had the feeling it didn't accomplish much [chuckling]. I remember one amusing thing that happened there. Senator [William] Fulbright went [and] he hardly ever goes to any of these things, but he went to this. And the president of this . . . of this conference was from Italy and I think it lasted about two days and, of course, in front of the delegation would be a stick with the name of the country on it. At some point, Senator Fulbright raised the United States [sign]. Well, there was kind of tremor went through the audience, you know. They all knew his name, you

know, and . . . [because of the] Fulbright Scholarships and also [he was] chairman of the Foreign Relation Committee, and the Italian, he kind of spoke up, "And now we're going to hear from Senator Fulbright from the delegation of the [laughing] United States." So [laughing] Senator Fulbright got up and he said, "I want to know what you all are going to do about poultry." Poultry, you know [chuckle--Bill Cooper]. At that time there . . . there was a war going on between chiefly Arkansas and [chuckling] the European countries on poultry because Arkansas and other states in the United States that developed this means of keeping these barns open all night, you know, and [chuckling] keeping the hens busy laying eggs [chuckle--Bill Cooper] all night and, of course, we were producing poultry just by the thousands [or] millions. And . . . and, of course, these countries didn't . . . couldn't compete with us. And the Netherlands was one of the chief competitors [and] it . . . they began to do the same thing, and of course, they all did it. They had a right to. And [laughing] boy, it really . . . that created quite a shock [laughter--Bill Cooper]. "What are you all going to do about poultry?" [chuckle--Bill Cooper] Jennings Randolph was sitting behind me. He said, "Do you think we ought to say something about coal?" [laughter--Bill Cooper] I said, "No. They can't do anything about it here." [laughter]

BILL COOPER: Well now, this organization was not affiliated

with the U.N. or with N.A.T.O. or any of those. It was a . . .  
an independent organization, was it?

COOPER: U.N.E.S.C.O. [United Nations Educational,  
Scientific, and Cultural Organization]

BILL COOPER: Oh. It was a part of . . . it was a part . . .

COOPER: A part of the U.N.

BILL COOPER: . . . the U.N.

COOPER: That's right.

BILL COOPER: I see.

COOPER: U.N.E.S.C.O.

BILL COOPER: Yeah. But you think you didn't go in '63.

COOPER: No, I don't. I . . . I . . . I . . . because I  
know . . . I know I never went to Belgrade again. That was the  
only time I was ever in . . . in Yugoslavia was when I went to  
see Tito, except when I was in East Germany. I . . . I went to  
. . . I went to Yugoslavia at the invitation of the Yugoslavian  
ambassador and my wife and I stayed about ten days on an island  
off the coast. They call it Brinje [?]. It's where Tito had  
one . . . one of his summer places, but I didn't see him while  
I was there.

BILL COOPER: Another important event in 19- . . .

COOPER: I saw him though, at least once or twice when he  
came to the United States, because he would come to the Senate  
Foreign Relations Committee.

BILL COOPER: Another important event in 1963 was the

ratification by the Senate of the Nuclear Test Ban Treaty.

COOPER: Yeah.

BILL COOPER: What . . . what was the nature of that treaty?  
It was a limited kind . . .

COOPER: Yes.

BILL COOPER: . . . of test ban, right?

COOPER: It was to prohibit the test . . . nuclear testing in the atmosphere or the water. It did not include the earth. And there was quite a controversy over that [treaty]. I would think at that time we were pr- . . . we were ahead but, of course, the Russians were coming up and doing a lot of testing. And . . . but President Kennedy fought very hard for that and I was on no committee where you could hear the testimony of the scientists and the military people, but they had a com- . . . they had hearings, but they were closed. But if you were a member [of the Senate], you could get permission to go in, and I remember that I went up and listened to the military people and the scientific people and they were supporting it. I can't remember anyone there in that group that opposed it.

BILL COOPER: Why do you think the Russians were willing to . . . to sign that treaty at that particular time when they were behind?

COOPER: Well, I . . . at that time I think that . . . that the reason would be that we had superior . . . we had a



start. We had superior resources at the time. We probably were better organized for research and we . . . we may have had more getting ready to test in the atmosphere and the water. And I assume if they agree to anything they think it's to their advantage.

BILL COOPER: Do you think the treaty . . . what . . . what about the effect of the treaty? Was it . . . did it alleviate the . . . the nuclear arms race or did it make it worse on . . . in the long . . .

COOPER: Well, I think . . .

BILL COOPER: . . . haul?

COOPER: . . . it was a beginning of the . . . not the . . . yes, it was. It was the--after the . . . after . . . after Cuba and all and that--it was the beginning of . . . of several steps that were taken which improved, I think, [or] assisted in moving toward arms control. As I recall, at some point later than that--and . . . and I can't tell you the exact year--then there was an agreement upon . . . upon the communications between the Soviet Union and the United States. If any event occurred which might lead into war, and a dis- . . . a possibility of discussion by, you know, by mechanical, scientific detectoral means rather than by personal means. There was another treaty agreed to which I really can't remember right now. [inaudible]. And that was all in the . . . during President Kennedy's administration and I think some

maybe during Johnson's. I'm not sure. And then, of course, the next big event occurred when Nixon was president and when he went to Russia, you know, and the great period of detente began.

BILL COOPER: Yeah. But you see the background for that detente period as being really laid . . .

COOPER: Yes.

BILL COOPER: . . . with the . . . with the partial test ban treaty in . . .

COOPER: It was.

BILL COOPER: . . . '63.

COOPER: And I think it . . . it continued pretty well until . . . in the middle '70s when the Russians went into Angola with the Cubans, although there were some . . . there were some hard things happening before that. I knew more about these things later because in '6- . . . '66 [sic '67] I became a member of the . . . of the Foreign Relations Committee. But I kept up with these things. I remember after the Bay of Pigs, [chuckling] nobody could understand what happened. There was some talk that . . . that we were supposed to back them up with air [support], but at the last minute it had been canceled. I remember I went into the Foreign Relations Committee. At that time, I wasn't a member, but I went in and I read the complete record of the hearing. I could never discover one thing in there that told what happened [chuckle--Bill Cooper] other than

that these Cubans made the effort themselves and were wiped out. There was talk about someone had . . . had given an order that the . . . they should not be supported and nobody could ever find out who gave the order, if it was given.

BILL COOPER: No one would admit it.

COOPER: Nobody would admit it, and it was not pri- . . . in the printed record.

[End of Tape #1, Side #1]

[Begin Tape #1, Side #2]

BILL COOPER: On November the 22nd of 1963, President Kennedy was assassinated in Dallas, Texas. Do you recall where you were and . . . and what you were doing when you heard that tragic news?

COOPER: Yes. My wife and I had gone to New York for no particular reason. But I remember I was just walking along the street in front of the St. Regis Hotel. In fact, I was going down there to get my hair cut and a man stopped me and he said, "Have you heard the news, that President Kennedy has been assassinated?" "No," I said, "no." But he said, "He's . . . it's . . . it's true. It's been verified, he . . . that he was assassinated in Dallas, Texas." Well, I went on down at the barbershop and . . . and they were all sitting down there crying and--most of them--and so I sat down with them [chuckling] and sat there for a while. Those that are still

working there, they all know me now [laughing]. They remember I was sitting there with them. But everybody remembers. My wife remembers where she was.

BILL COOPER: Yeah.

COOPER: She was at a friend's apartment and I count . . . I don't know how many people have . . . have told me [where they were]. The . . . they ask you where you were and then they tell where they were, you know.

BILL COOPER: Well, later on in November of that year, President Johnson appointed you to the Warren Commission to investigate the Kennedy assassination. Could you describe the circumstances of that appointment and . . .

COOPER: Yes.

BILL COOPER: . . . how he contacted you and . . . ?

COOPER: Well, I was at home in Somerset, Kentucky, and --at my brother's house whose [name is] Richard--and a telephone call came through and they said it was for me and I went [to the telephone] and [chuckling] the operator said, "There's a man on the phone who says he's the president of the United States. [He] wants to talk to you." [laughing] And, [laughing] "Says to say he's the president of the United States," but it was and he told me that he was appointing this commission and he wanted to know if I would serve on it. Well, I said, "If you w- . . . if you want me to serve on it, I will." He told me [that] he did not na- . . . he named . . .

he didn't name any others that would serve on it, except he said Senator [Richard B.] Russell would be a member. Well, of course, I went right back. The next day I left and went back to Washington and I went up to see Senator Russell because, you know, he was a leader. At that time, too, I learned that Chief Justice Warren would be chairman of the . . . of the commission and the other members. There were two from the Senate, you recall, Senator Russell and myself, and two from the House, [Hale] Boggs and [Gerald] Ford who then was the . . . number two in the House, and then Allen Dulles [and] John McCloy, who had been very prominent during World War II. He had been . . . he succeeded [Lucias] Clay as military governor of . . . of West Germany and also had been active down there in, I think, at the Treasury for some time. And so I went up to see Senator Russell. [chuckling] I won't say he was angry but he . . . he was ag- . . . agi- . . . aggravated. He told me that President Johnson had called him and told him this, that he wanted him to serve, and told him who was going to be on the commission and he said, "I told him I wouldn't serve if . . . if Warren was going to be the chairman." And he said . . . he gave me his reasons. Of course, his legal reason was that some question might arise which would finally get to the Supreme Court and there would be the chief justice of the Supreme Court who would be in a position to have to stand aside. And . . . and then he said, "Frankly, I don't want to serve with Warren," he told me.

They didn't get along at all. Although they never showed it on the . . . our work. They were extremely courteous to each other and neither one of them made an issue out of any subject that . . . just because the other . . . other had a different position. There was one issue which we . . . or we . . . a ma- . . . chief issue which we separated on, but which we came to . . . to a compromise on and that was . . . that was on the question of how many shots were fired, you know. Russell was a very valuable member because he . . . he . . . I don't know how long it'd been since he'd practiced law, but he was a good lawyer, but also he . . . having been a chairman of committees so long, you know, he . . . he was good on questions. And . . . and it was a good . . . it was a good commission. We all knew . . . we had met each other, but I don't think any of us were close friends. We had a . . . a counsel from New . . . from New York Ci- . . . from New York, who was a very good lawyer and a number of others on the staff. I should say I . . . I don't know how many, fifteen or twenty or something like that. One . . . one of . . . one of the men who was on the staff is now a United States Senator from Pennsylvania, Specter, S-P-E-C-T-E-R, Arlen Specter. Also, at all our meetings we had some outside attorney recommended by the American Bar Association to sit in. They did not ask any questions, but the purpose was to be able to assure that . . . that the witnesses had fair treatment, you know. Among them

was . . . was Chief Justice [Lewis] Powell [Jr.] . . . not Chief Justice Powell, but Justice Powell from Virginia who is now sitting . . . sitting on the . . . on the [Supreme] Court. And just very curiously, I . . . I went over to see him last week. He had a friend who came to see me and who knew him and . . . and he said that he'd give anything if he could see him. Well, I called up over there and he said, "Come right on over." And then [there was] another one who was from New Orleans who'd been president of the [American] Bar Association. I can't remember his name right now. But there was always at least about three who were sitting in.

BILL COOPER: Wasn't this a . . . wasn't this a very difficult assignment for you, particularly having been a good friend of President Kennedy?

COOPER: Well, you had to dismiss that, you know, from your mind. It was a tremendous . . . we had a tremendous number of witnesses, but . . . but then you had hundreds if not thousands of depositions, affidavits [which were] taken throughout the country by district attorneys or by the C.I.A. or . . . not C.I.A., but F.B.I., and to read those took all your time. Now that . . . I think we were in session. I think we spent about six months and as far as being in the Senate at that time, you just as soon not have been there. We did not meet every day, but then at night I . . . I . . . I . . . I had to read those papers and I remember that was the same year, of

course, as the convention . . . '6- . . . you know, out at . . .  
. out at San Francisco and I went to that and came back and I'd  
had a very . . . I had a very bad cold and chest and so I went  
to see a doctor. He insisted I . . . I . . . I stay in bed two  
or three days. [chuckling] And yet they kicked all the time  
because I read those papers all the time [chuckling] I was  
there.

BILL COOPER: [chuckling] Oh, is that right?

COOPER: But it was a hard job. We went to Dallas  
several times and, of course, went over the whole route from  
the time he got off the plane, down the streets to the turn,  
went through the school book depository, talked to the people  
who were in there, went to the place where [Lee Harvey] Oswald  
lived, went to the place where his wife lived, and went to the  
hospital, of course, and talked to the people there and went to  
the theater where Oswald was captured. Then later after he was  
killed we, of course, went to the jail and saw what had  
happened there, the situation. And on one occasion Senator  
Russell called me and told me that he had not been satisfied  
with the testimony of Oswald's wife. It was very curious. It  
turned out there was quite a Russian settlement there in Dallas  
and at the house of one of them is . . . a picture was taken of  
Oswald holding his pistol, you know. And . . . but anyway, on  
her first appearance Russell told me he wasn't satisfied with  
it--her testimony--and he said he . . . he was going down there



. . . of course, he . . . brought it before the . . . commission and examined her. Of course, she'd have counsel. He asked me to go along with him which I did and we spent a day examining her and he did most of the questioning, of course. But you could not shake her a bit. I think my view was that she had nothing to do with it in any way and told all she knew and was a . . . had been treated very badly by Oswald. She came back again before the committee later on and I remember the difference in her appearance. When she first came she was a very simple looking woman, very nice looking, no rouge, no . . . no make-up. When she came back, of course, she'd gotten in the hands of some public relations fellow [laughing] and she was made up like she just come out of the beauty shop [chuckle--Bill Cooper]. But it was sad. I felt that she had . . . she must have had a sad . . . a sad life.

BILL COOPER: Where were your . . . where were the me- . . . the meetings and hearings actually held?

COOPER: What?

BILL COOPER: Where . . . where did you actually work in your . . .

COOPER: We worked . . .

BILL COOPER: . . . your sessions?

COOPER: . . . at the . . . up . . . up past the Senate office buildings at the headquarters of the . . . of the Veterans of Foreign Wars. They had a quite nice building up

there and there was a large room and some of the . . . one of the witnesses, who was the first one down there to write about the assassination, and . . . and his . . . Oswald's mother employed him, I think, free because he tried to use that as a reason for sitting in [chuckling] in our meetings. He's written a . . . I mean, he's made . . . he's been living on it ever since and we had him before us and he could not verify a single thing. Somebody told him.

BILL COOPER: Well, there's been a great deal of . . . of talk, of course, about the Warren Commission findings, particularly the finding that Oswald acted alone in the . . .

COOPER: Yes. Yes.

BILL COOPER: . . . assassination attempt and then several books have been written challenging that . . .

COOPER: Yes.

BILL COOPER: . . . that theory. The House of Representatives later conducted their own . . .

COOPER: Yes.

BILL COOPER: . . . investigation. How . . . how do you react . . . as a member of the Commission, how do you react to . . . to all of those things?

COOPER: Well, I hold the position that I've held always. There were several questions in it which you . . . you wonder about. One, of course, [is] Jack Ruby killing Oswald. There's talk that they had some association, but we never could be sure

of it. Oswald . . . I mean, Ruby, of course, claimed that he had such great sympathy for Mrs. Kennedy [that] he didn't want her to go through a trial and he killed Oswald for that reason. It seems kind of skimpy, but nobody was ever able to develop anything else. We could never find anybody else that had any close association with him. He was a loner. And in the bo- . . . in the te- . . . when we went into the textbook depository there, we talked to the people in there and oh, they'd seen him that morning running through the . . . through to leave, after the shooting and, of course, up there where the . . . the window was, there were the cartridges, you know, and . . . and there was one thing which was disturbing. They did not take proper precautions about the parade. They published . . . published the route. They did have police along the streets, but maybe it wasn't as well done then as it is today. In matters like that today they have police, you know, sharpshooters and police, who are on the roofs of the buildings or in the windows and mingling through the crowd. As far as we could find out there wasn't anything like that at all and so he didn't have the necessary protection, which might not have made any difference. It's just like [Ronald] Reagan being shot with all those people around him and . . . but there were worse things. There was . . . the F.B.I. had followed Oswald for quite a while because he had been . . . there'd been some accusations that he had tried to kill another man there--a general [Edwin

Walker]--and then he'd gone, of course, to New Orleans and created quite a brouhaha there about the Cubans. And . . . and then he disappeared for a while and he . . . they later found out he had gone to a . . . he'd gone to Mexico, you know, to try to get a visa to Cuba and then went on to Russia, I guess. He came back to Dallas and he spent the night there at his wife's, but got up and left early before she was up. It appeared later that this F.B.I. man knew that he was back in Dallas and that he never notified the police or never covered him himself. Well, that . . . there was never any charge of conspiracy against this F.B.I. man, but no . . . no . . . nothing said about that or thought about it, but it was absolute negligence.

BILL COOPER: Looking . . .

COOPER: He might have been able to prevent it, you know.

BILL COOPER: Yeah. Looking back at it . . .

COOPER: But look at these . . . I haven't read all the books, but I read the main ones, and they'll say . . . well, some of the witne- . . . some of them we had before us, you know, and they could not prove any of it. They didn't have proof for any of it. We asked them about this, "Well, we talked to somebody who told us this," or something like that.

BILL COOPER: Did . . . did any of the people who have written . . . written books challenging the . . . the Warren Commission report at an- . . . have any those people ever interviewed you?

COOPER: No.

BILL COOPER: No?

COOPER: No. None of them. None ever came to see me. I've, of course, spo- . . . I spoke on it a number of times after that. I would be invited. [chuckling] I remember I spoke at Yale [laughing] and I could see that . . . that they didn't have much confidence in the Warren Report, the students [didn't]. I think I spoke at the uni- . . . there . . . some place in Kentucky, not the University [of Kentucky], but I remember particularly going to Yale [chuckling]. They got what they . . . the Yale Union they call it. They were all . . . they were very nice to me, but you . . . but questioned you very hard and that was all right, but the general opinion--they didn't have a . . . take any vote on it or anything like that--well, but you felt that they [chuckling] . . . they felt we hadn't done our full job. The next thing--and you mentioned it--was that later the House took it up, you know, the House of Representatives and there were just three of us left on the commission. Just Gerald Ford, who was the second House member, and John McCloy, who's still living in New York, and myself. And we were . . . they didn't subpoena us, they just asked us to come, so we . . . we went together one morning and were questioned and they were very nice to us and . . . but they asked tough questions, if they could, and they first came out with a statement that . . . in a way vindicating [chuckling]

our position and later somebody made some kind of motion and they passed some kind of resolution expressing doubt about it. So they were mixed up, too.

BILL COOPER: But they . . . they didn't reach any conclusions of their own though, . . .

COOPER: No.

BILL COOPER: . . . did they?

COOPER: No. They just kind of left it hanging like a lot of people have. At . . . at first they . . . the general opinion was that our report was . . . was . . . could not be challenged upon any proof they had, and then later they issued some kind of a statement that it wasn't a very . . . very conclusive.

BILL COOPER: Well, looking back on it, does . . . does it appear to you that any vital information was deliberately withheld from you by the F.B.I. on the . . .

COOPER: No.

BILL COOPER: . . . commission? You know, some . . . some have . . . have speculated that . . .

COOPER: Oh, yeah. They've . . .

BILL COOPER: . . . the F.B.I. did not come forth with all the information they had concerning Oswald's connections with Cuba and so forth.

COOPER: Well, of course, they speculated on that, but all we could do was to take their testimony and at that time,

you hadn't got to the place where we got to Watergate where [chuckling] you're asking for every paper and everything. And they gave very good reports of what Oswald had done, his record from the time he was a boy until he was in the navy, in Japan where he was in trouble and then his . . . and then the way . . . the way . . . and then going to . . . and what he said during that time and then when he went to Russia. And, of course, we had the reports from the embassy there in Russia, you know. They said he tried to commit suicide there, you know. And then he tried to become a Russian citizen and they didn't accept him and then he tried to revoke his American citizenship, but it wasn't accepted. And, of course, he ended up down in this town where he got a job and he was working when he met this woman and there was . . . there was questioning whether or not . . . why the Russians would let him out again.

BILL COOPER: Yeah.

COOPER: They . . . but they thought to do so so openly, that he would certainly then be watched always as a possible spy, which he was. He was watched from the very time he came back.

BILL COOPER: By the Russians, you mean.

COOPER: By the U.S.

BILL COOPER: Oh, by the F.B.I.

COOPER: Yeah.

BILL COOPER: Well, you've mentioned that . . . that during

the . . . the several months you were on the commission, it must have been very difficult to keep up with your Senate . . .

COOPER: That it was.

BILL COOPER: . . . duties at the same time.

COOPER: Same time we held . . . and that year we had the Baker investigation, of Bobby Baker.

BILL COOPER: Oh, did that start in '63?

COOPER: Yeah. We were . . . or . . .

BILL COOPER: Or '64, yeah, . . .

COOPER: Yes.

BILL COOPER: . . . you're right.

COOPER: We did that . . .

BILL COOPER: '64.

COOPER: . . . in '64, . . .

BILL COOPER: Yeah.

COOPER: . . . a committee I was on.

BILL COOPER: Yeah. Yeah.

COOPER: The Rules Committee.

BILL COOPER: Yeah.

COOPER: And that was a very difficult kind of a investigation and one which was entirely unsatisfactory. He was protected all the way through . . .

BILL COOPER: Yeah.

COOPER: . . . by somebody. He had the best lawyer . . . criminal lawyer in Edward Bennett Williams, you know, [who is]



a fine lawyer and as . . . he was fair. And . . . but the . . .  
. . . it was a majority committee and we had difficulty getting  
witnesses. They just wouldn't ask . . . send them. There was  
one witness who was in Ireland. He was a very large contractor  
[Matthew McCloskey]. He had built that new House office  
building and we did issue a request for him to come back. One  
of the members who claimed himself one of the great anti-Baker  
members--I'm not going to give his name--but we . . . he wired  
this man not to come. And we had incidents like that. And oh,  
of course, they finally did censure . . . agreed to censure  
Baker and put out a report and that was when I wrote my own  
report and in- . . . and introduced on the floor my bill for  
the establishment of the Ethics Committee, which came as a  
surprise and . . . but it was adopted. And I remember very  
well that it was opposed by most of the Democratic members on  
the committee, but I remember that Paul Douglas on the  
Democratic side just stood up and just gave great support and  
he said it would be--well, I can't say exactly what he said--  
but in substance that it would be a disgrace if we didn't  
establish some means of dealing with these subjects in the  
future where they'd be . . . believed to be fair, straight  
forward, and honest. And so it was passed.

BILL COOPER: What . . . what is your . . . your general  
assessment of the Kennedy administration? Now, you . . .

COOPER: Yeah.

BILL COOPER: . . . you were a great friend of his . . .

COOPER: Yes.

BILL COOPER: . . . but you were also a fairly constant critic of his administration. Now, . . .

COOPER: [chuckle] Constant?

BILL COOPER: . . . looking back on it . . . [chuckling] well, maybe constant's a little too strong, but . . .

COOPER: Yeah. I . . .

BILL COOPER: . . . but . . .

COOPER: . . . it's a little too strong.

BILL COOPER: . . . but you did . . . you did needle him from time . . .

COOPER: I . . .

BILL COOPER: . . . to time.

COOPER: . . . I supported him on some things, too.

BILL COOPER: What's your general assessment of his . . .

COOPER: Well, my feeling is this.

BILL COOPER: . . . presidency?

COOPER: There's now . . . a lot of people are saying-- and there's nothing particularly original about it--that he . . . he was not there long enough to actually establish whether or not he had a successful administration from the viewpoint of . . . of action and programs. But I must say, I think he gave a lot of hope to the people of the United States, particularly young people and he gave hope to people all over the world. I

can't say I've been all over the world, but after that I happened to go on a trip around the world with Dean Rusk and, just by chance, [William] Averell Harriman, and they were visiting all these countries in Southeast Asia. We went to India first. I was appointed by Johnson to go along wherever there were . . . at the . . . at the burial of the . . . of the prime minister [Shastri] who succeeded [Jawaharlal] Nehru. [He] only served about two or three years before his [Nehru's] daughter became--[Indira] Gandhi--became vice- . . . became prime minister. And President Johnson . . . I don't know. He was [chuckling] always appointing me to something [laughing]. Anyway . . .

BILL COOPER: Maybe he wanted to get you out of Washington [laughing].

COOPER: Well, I'd been . . . I'd been the ambassador there, . . .

BILL COOPER: Yeah.

COOPER: . . . that's probably one of the reasons, because [John Kenneth] Galbraith always . . . also went along [but] he didn't stay. And Hubert Humphrey went [and] he didn't stay either. But when they got out there, oh, it's the . . . it's the usual kind of a thing, a tremendous ceremony. If you see this [moving] picture *Gandhi*, it's . . . the burial of Gandhi, it's just like the way you'd see the burial of this man. And they burned him. You sit there and watch them burn

their . . . and then throw the ashes in the river, there. Well, I saw some interesting people there, though. I saw this fellow from Tibet, you know, who had to flee when China took it over. You know, there's the one that they select . . .

BILL COOPER: Oh, the . . .

COOPER: . . . not . . .

BILL COOPER: . . . Dalai Lama?

COOPER: . . . yeah. I saw . . . I think I sat next to him and, of course, Lord . . . oh, from England, who is . . .

BILL COOPER: Mountbatten?

COOPER: . . . Mountbatten was there and I talked to him. I had met him before. Then . . . then Rusk told me that . . . I . . . we're going on to . . . to . . . a lot of it was connected to the [Vietnam] war. We're going to Thailand and Singapore and . . . [countries] like Thailand, Singapore, and the Philippines. And he asked me if I wanted to go along. Well, I said, yes. It was right at the beginning of the Congress [and] there wasn't anything to do, so I went along. Of course, I wasn't going when they talked to these chief officials. I met them all, but I went to all the official functions and I noticed that when they mentioned Kennedy's name, the young fellows there, the younger ones, and many times you'd see tears in their eyes, you know, they expressed sadness about it. We also went to Vietnam . . . to South Vietnam and at that time K-Y, [Nguyen Cao] Ky was the president and

Ellsworth Bunker was the ambassador. No, [Henry] Cabot Lodge [Jr.] was the ambassador and, of course, we saw the generals and saw Ky and saw Lodge and it was about the same story, everything was, that everything was going all right, we just need more people and more [chuckling] men. I'd been there once before. And then we went on to the Philippines, and I don't know what the . . . so it was . . . and we stopped at Hawaii [chuckling] on the way back for a rest [laughing]. So it was a good trip [chuckling] and I met a lot of people. But I'd been . . . I'd been to . . . I'd been to Thailand before. I'd been to Vietnam and I'd been to the Philippines. I hadn't been to Singapore.

BILL COOPER: But you see . . . you see Kennedy's greatest accomplishment as . . . as . . . as being a . . . kind of a national, and really world leader . . .

COOPER: Yeah. Yeah, I think so.

BILL COOPER: . . . who gained a great deal of respect for the United States.

COOPER: Yes, he did and that continued. Of course, as the years have passed . . . well, [chuckling] a Kennedy is still a Kennedy. Wherever they go, they have . . . you have people trying to see them and talk to them and, of course, the only one who's left is Teddy, but . . . and . . . and John Kennedy's wife. And . . . but I think he . . . he did give a lot of [inaudible] he was young, he spoke well, he spoke of

peace. I think that he would have pressed hard and . . . and as I say, particularly, he would have given some more inspiration and hope to the young people and particularly in this . . . in our own country. Although he had some very glaring failures right after he became president, you know, [such as the] Bay of Pigs, although you can't blame that wholly on him. That had been started before he got in. But then his crushing meeting with Khrushchev, you know, in Austria--Vienna--and then the effort they made to threaten Cuba and place missiles in there. And so he . . . his first months, his first year was . . . wasn't too good. And he also had a recession, which very few people know anything about. It didn't last too long but he was forced to take--as I've told you before--to put in a public works program and also to put a tax on . . . on imports. It didn't last too long, but I think he got along all right with the Congress. There was talk about that there was disagreement between him and . . . and Pre- . . . and Vice-President Johnson, but if they were . . . was it never was out in the open and as far as I can make out, and I think you can give this credit to Johnson, I think he sup- . . . he didn't like him a bit and wanted his place, but I think he supported him loyally.

BILL COOPER: Do you think had Kennedy lived, there would have been any question but what he would have been re-elected in '64?

COOPER: Yeah, I think he would have been re-elected. The candidate again would have been [Richard Milhous] Nixon, I think. Unless there'd been some awful crisis which . . . of course, he . . . another thing he did, you know, he sent the first troops to Vietnam. He sent fourteen or fifteen thousand troops out there. They were the first ones out there, except we had six hundred military advisors there, and if he had kept that up that might have prevented it [his re-election]. But I . . . again maybe it's because, as you say, I like him, but I've got to believe somehow that he had enough sense to . . . to stay out of it.

BILL COOPER: Now, you say that . . . that you think the Republican candidate, had . . . had Kennedy lived, you think the Republican candidate in . . . in '64 would have been Nixon rather than [Barry] Goldwater?

COOPER: Oh, yeah. They wouldn't have nominated [chuckling] Goldwater again, huh?

BILL COOPER: One other thing in . . . in 1963, right at the end of '63 you became involved in opposition to a bill to . . . that had to do with the Federal Water Pollution Act. You opposed it both in the Public Works Committee and in debate on the Senate floor . . .

COOPER: Yes.

BILL COOPER: . . . and . . . and your . . . your chief opponent in those debates was . . . was Senator [Edmund]

Muskie.

COOPER: Muskie, yeah.

BILL COOPER: Now, the act we're talking about would have permitted the secretary of Health, Education, and Welfare to set water quality standards . . .

COOPER: Yes.

BILL COOPER: . . . for the nation's streams. Do you recall the . . . the source of your opposition to this bill? It . . . it ultimately passed anyway.

COOPER: Oh, yeah. Well, I'll just tell you. I was . . . I served on that committee from the time it was established and I must say that Senator Muskie, later Secretary of State Muskie, deserves the greatest of credit for the concept of establishing it and for the work he did. And I think if you go through the record, you'll find that this is the only time I ever voted against such a bill. In fact, the Water Pollution Act, [the] Air Pollution Act [and] we tried one on noise and I was the ranking [Republican] member and I supported them. And there was something about that bill, and I hate to mention it, it . . . I believe it was misleading. I remember that in the debate there was nobody in there [the Senate] hardly, and in some way it affected the states in a certain way where . . . and . . . some man would come in and he said, "Does this have anything to do with my state?" and Muskie would say, "No." Well, it did and I finally just said that I . . . I think I



probably was rougher than I ever was, except once or twice before. I said, "This thing is not correct. It can't be correct." And . . . well, he got very angry and almost accused me of calling him a liar and everything, which I was about doing, and, of course, it passed. The next day he saw me and he said, "John, I do . . . I do want to tell you, I made a mistake on a few of those things." But I don't . . . I don't think it was bad enough for me to vote against it, but . . . but he did mislead us some. I don't know whether he meant to or not, but he said that to me the next day. And again, I'm always mentioning Paul Douglas. Paul Douglas stayed in there all the time. He agreed . . . he agreed with me wholly that it was misleading. But I . . . after that Muskie and I worked together and I . . . and we never had any more problems and . . . and we . . . we are, I should say, today very close friends.

[End of Tape #1, Side #2]

[Begin Tape #2, Side #1]

BILL COOPER: One of the things that I . . . I wanted to mention when we were talking about that Water Pollution . . .

COOPER: Yeah.

BILL COOPER: . . . Act of . . . of late 1963, after it had passed you wrote letters to all of the governors . . .

COOPER: Yes.

BILL COOPER: . . . of the fifty states . . .

COOPER: Yes?

BILL COOPER: . . . pointing out to them that they needed to examine this bill very closely.

COOPER: Yes.

BILL COOPER: Had you ever done that kind of thing before? Was it . . . was this an unusual kind of thing for a senator to do?

COOPER: Yes. Oh, I wrote letters now and then to governors who were friends of mine, who I'd met, you know, in conventions and matters like that. Sometimes [it was] something which I thought might be helpful to them, and something they might look out for. But I don't . . . I think this may be the only time that I ever wrote every governor about this thing and it . . . maybe it shows that I might have been a little vindictive, I don't know.

BILL COOPER: Well, . . .

COOPER: Yeah, but . . .

BILL COOPER: . . . either that or you were very concerned about . . .

COOPER: . . . but I was.

BILL COOPER: . . . the dangers of the . . .

COOPER: I . . . I was. I have to go back to saying that I ser- . . . I was on that committee from the very beginning and I was there all of the time and I had good staff people. You know Bailey Guard?

BILL COOPER: Yes. Yes.

COOPER: He was my ma- . . . he was my chief man up there, and I had . . . we were allowed a minority [and] we had good . . . good ones and we were starting out and--I'd have to go back and read that debate--but anyway, I . . . the best I can recall [is] that we were starting out the wrong way and it was going to create trouble. And also it was not entirely truthful.

BILL COOPER: Well, I think one of your . . . as I recall it, one of your objections was the fact that this new change in . . . in the procedure for determining water control . . . or water quality standards would be an invasion of the rights of the states.

COOPER: Yes.

BILL COOPER: In that particular case you . . . you took a kind of a states' rights stance.

COOPER: Yeah. Yeah.

BILL COOPER: Now, that may not have been the only objection you had.

COOPER: Well, it probably wouldn't be what I would think today [chuckling] after all the trouble they've had about that. That must have been one of them because that's the reason [why] when these men would come in and ask Muskie, "Does this in any way affect my state?" he'd say, "No." Well, it did.

BILL COOPER: Yeah. Oh, no . . .

COOPER: And . . .

BILL COOPER: . . . question about it. It . . .

COOPER: . . . and so they all would . . .

BILL COOPER: . . . [inaudible].

COOPER: . . . go out and they all voted for it.

BILL COOPER: Yeah.

COOPER: I remember one particular man who came in, Spessard Holland from Florida. He's one of the most conservative men I ever served with [who believed in] states' rights and all that kind of thing, and I remember him walking in [and] asking Muskie this question, "Does this affect Florida in any way?" and Muskie said, "No." And I can remember others. I just happened to remember him because he was so conservative and [a] rather prim and able man. He'd been governor of Florida, you know? And he'd been one of the big fighters for the . . . protecting the offsh- . . . offshore rights for oil to the states. Of course, they lost it, but he was one of the ablest men in it. And several others. And that was the reason that Douglas said, "Well, it's not true."

BILL COOPER: Yeah.

COOPER: He told me later. He said, "You were right." I don't know whether he favored the bill or not. I've forgotten. But he knew it . . . that that was wrong.

BILL COOPER: Yeah. Now, also near the end of 1963, the Senate reversed what had been an earlier stand on the issue of

. . . of assisting church related institutions, the schools, and gave approval in an education bill to . . . authorizing loans and grants to colleges regardless of whether they were public, private or denominational. Now, the chief critics of the change . . . of that . . . that change . . .

COOPER: Yes.

BILL COOPER: . . . in an education bill were you and Sam Ervin [Jr.]

COOPER: Yes.

BILL COOPER: And . . . and you argued that . . . of course, that it was a violation of the First Amendment.

COOPER: Yes.

BILL COOPER: Your . . . I think, yours and Ervin's amendment was rejected, but . . . but you offered . . . you and Ervin, I think, offered an amendment to the effect that any taxpayer could make a court test of the constitutionality . . .

COOPER: Yes.

BILL COOPER: . . . of this new . . .

COOPER: Yes.

BILL COOPER: . . . segment of the education bill. Would that . . . if that amendment had passed, would that have satisfied your objections to federal aid to church related institutions?

COOPER: You mean if the one which would . . . permitted

. . .

BILL COOPER: Which you and Ervin proposed to allow a court

test, any . . .

COOPER: . . . court test to . . .

BILL COOPER: . . . taxpayer to . . . to test . . .

COOPER: . . . well, . . .

BILL COOPER: . . . the constitutionality.

COOPER: . . . we were so clearly going to lose the other, . . .

BILL COOPER: Yeah.

COOPER: Huh?

BILL COOPER: Right.

COOPER: . . . and I guess I probably would because it would have given it a chance and otherwise it would have gone on and on. Right . . . right now it's again a subject, you know. In this year of 1983, it's again a subject which is being debated up here, and . . . well, in my view it was unconstitutional . . .

BILL COOPER: Yeah.

COOPER: . . . and . . . and that. But Ervin was well known for his legal ability and . . . although I read a statement he made the other day [which] I thought was more [chuckling] unconstitutional than anything I ever heard. [chuckle] I've forgotten what it was about. But . . . oh, he sent it to . . . he sent it to our friend from . . . Helms put that in the record, Jesse Helms. Yeah. And it was a very interesting argument that he made. But anyway, I suppose I

would have gone along and voted for the right, because certainly somebody would have brought a suit, you know.

BILL COOPER: But your . . . your position is, as I understand it, that . . . that any kind of . . . of federal aid to a church sponsored institution is unconstitutional.

COOPER: Yeah, that's my position.

BILL COOPER: Now, what would be your position on a constitutional amendment to alter that?

COOPER: The same.

BILL COOPER: It would be the same?

COOPER: Yeah.

BILL COOPER: You would still . . .

COOPER: Yeah.

BILL COOPER: . . . still be opposed . . .

COOPER: Yeah.

BILL COOPER: . . . to it. Why . . . why do you think . . .

COOPER: There are too many . . . so many of these today, you know, churches getting all mixed up in all kinds of political questions and . . . and . . .

BILL COOPER: . . . why do you think that is? Why . . . why are we seeing more and more of these church-sponsored academies and so forth and now they're making the argument that they too should receive federal aid?

COOPER: I certainly have no objection to the establishment of church schools, you know, and . . . and . . .

and to . . . and . . . and to their work. There in Kentucky you've got Georgetown. I'm not sure whether Transylvania is or not. You've got several Catholic schools, one at Bellarmine, Thomas More. I've spoken at all of them. I've got degrees from [laughing] Bellarmine and Thomas More [chuckling] and I've spoken at Notre Dame and I guess others. I . . . if I could recall them at the moment. And so there's nothing against that, but I think with the advent of these P.A.C.'s [Political Action Committees], where they can put money into candidates' hands, you know, in different ways, there are a lot of groups with their own religious viewpoints [who] see that as a source to money and . . . and I think they're moving into the political arena. You know, this man [Jerry Falwell] down in Virginia here [who is] quite a controversial figure. I don't know whether he's right or wrong, but he's in . . . he's always on the . . . talking about . . . in the political arena and I . . . of course, what can you say? If you have the right of free speech, you have the right of free speech. The Pope, he's in the political arena everywhere, huh?

BILL COOPER: But we're seeing . . . today we're seeing more and more of this down in the elementary and secondary levels.

COOPER: Yes.

BILL COOPER: Not just the college levels.

COOPER: That's right. Yeah. And . . . well, that's . . . that's what happened to my vote.



BILL COOPER: Yeah. Yeah. And you . . . you haven't changed your mind . . .

COOPER: Oh no, not on that.

BILL COOPER: . . . on that issue?

COOPER: No.

BILL COOPER: Do you recall . . . we talked a little bit yesterday about your . . . your relationship with Carl Perkins and that eastern Kentucky . . . eastern Kentucky project. I ran across an item in December of 1963, where you and . . . and Senator Morton both . . . both clashed with Representative Perkins over the appointment of a postmaster in Maysville, Kentucky. Do you have any recollection of that?

COOPER: Maysville?

BILL COOPER: Yeah. The man's name was Noel Hargett.

COOPER: What was his name?

BILL COOPER: Noel Hargett.

COOPER: Hardict?

BILL COOPER: Hargett. H-A-R-G-E-T-T.

COOPER: No, I don't.

BILL COOPER: You don't have any recollection . . .

COOPER: Uh-uh.

BILL COOPER: . . . of that? What . . . what was your . . . you know, during . . . during much of the time that you were a senator, of course, the appointment of postmasters went through your office and then that ultimately was changed, I think, . . .

COOPER: That's right.

BILL COOPER: . . . before you . . .

COOPER: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

BILL COOPER: . . . retired.

COOPER: They formed this bureau . . .

BILL COOPER: Yeah.

COOPER: . . . to kind of . . . oversight over the whole postal service . . .

BILL COOPER: Yeah.

COOPER: . . . and also gave it the power of appointment of postmasters.

BILL COOPER: What was your . . . your general attitude about that? Was that . . . did you regard that as . . . as an essential part of a senator's duty or it was it a . . . was that a bother to have to deal with?

COOPER: Oh, of course it was troublesome because you had to . . . you never had but one . . . two . . . I never had but two chances up there to appointment postmasters. One was when Eisenhower was president and the other was when Nixon was president, and, of course, they'd all been filled practically by Democrats under President . . . President Roosevelt [and] President Truman. And as I recall they served for life or . . . or to a certain age, so there would just be a vacancy [that would] occur now and then. Well, I must say I was political enough that I thought we had a right to make those appointments

after all those years and although, as I said, you always had a battle over it because you . . . you make [chuckling] . . . you'd make about a [chuckles] dozen enemies and as one fellow said, "Make an ingrate." [laughter] No, I'll take that back. And . . . but I felt anyway that I . . . if I had . . . if we had to make a choice in Somerset, Kentucky, I could make it just as well as some board up in Cincinnati. I think it's located up there. And now you're going to get the surprise of your life. When we voted on that bill, I was the only one that voted against it.

BILL COOPER: Oh, is that right?

COOPER: That's true.

BILL COOPER: You mean, the bill to remove the . . . the . . .

COOPER: To est-. . . to establish . . .

BILL COOPER: . . . postmaster privilege.

COOPER: . . . to make this change. And maybe somebody else spoke . . . spoke against, maybe somebody else voted against it, but I . . . but I remember that I said, "I think I could pick a postmaster just as well in . . . up in . . ." -- oh, the name of the . . . a very beautiful name for a . . . for . . . for a private college up in the mountains there.

BILL COOPER: Oh, Pippa Passes?

COOPER: Yeah. I said . . . [chuckle--Bill Cooper] I said, "I think I could pick somebody in Pippa Passes [laughter--Bill Cooper] or . . . [chuckling] or Redbird,

Kentucky as well as some fellows up in Cincinnati, who probably never even heard of any of these places." And [chuckling] I think we could. I forgot whether it was roll call or a voice vote, but I know I voted against it.

BILL COOPER: And you were the only . . .

COOPER: I think . . .

BILL COOPER: . . . vote against.

COOPER: . . . I'm the only one. [laughing] But . . . well, [inaudible] . . . I . . . there weren't many there, but [chuckle--Bill Cooper] I said, "I can pick one for Pippa Passes or Redbird just as well as those fellows can." [laughter]

BILL COOPER: Do you remember the story--you told it to me one time, but we've never got it on tape--the story about the postmastership at Redbird?

COOPER: Oh, yeah.

BILL COOPER: [chuckling] Would . . . would you mind putting .

COOPER: No.

BILL COOPER: . . . that on tape?

COOPER: Well, that's one of those cases where you have [laughing] to make a [inaudible], [laughing] you know, . . . there was a vacancy in the Court of St. James, ambassador from the United States to Great Britain, and he wrote me and said he'd like to be appointed. Well . . . well, of course I . . . there wasn't any chance, other than he was a good man [and a]

good friend. [laughing] I didn't want to hurt his feelings. So, I wrote him back and I told him, "I don't think that you really want to go there and I don't really think you . . .," [and] I don't know whether I said, "I don't think you'd be appointed." "I don't think . . . I don't think you really want to go there." I said, "It's . . . the weather's awful bad over there," and I said, "They speak a language pretty difficult to for- . . . it's just . . . it's English, but it's a lot different from ours and difficult to under- . . . for us to understand." [laughing] "And I don't think you'd be very happy over there." I may have some other reason, I don't remember [laughter]. Well, he just wrote me back a letter and said . . . he thanked me the information [and] he decided he didn't want to go, but he'd like to be postmaster at Redbird [laughter]. Redbird, as I recall, is up in Bell County [laughter].

BILL COOPER: [laughing] He . . . he'd set you up, hadn't he?

COOPER: He'd already . . . [laughing] I'm sure he [laughter] . . . that was his . . . that was his position all along.

BILL COOPER: Yeah. Yeah. [laughter] Some of those constituents were pretty shrewd, weren't they?

COOPER: Oh, Lord, yeah. [laughter--Bill Cooper]

[Interruption in taping]

BILL COOPER: What are some of your recollections of Lyndon Johnson?

[Interruption in taping]

COOPER: Well, I first met Johnson after he'd been elected to the House of Representatives, from Texas. This man, a classmate of mine whom you've met at New Haven [whose name is] Watson Wise, lives in a town in Texas called Tyler, Texas. It's called "the rose capital of the United States." Curious in this oil field, although you can't see the oil wells from Tyler, which is more like a Louisiana town. It's close to the Louisiana border. Beautiful roses everyplace. So they give the Rose Festival every year and invite a speaker and he invited me and Johnson. And so we both spoke and . . . and I remember I told an old story about Texas that was just [laughing] about a Civil War veteran who died here and his companions came back for the funeral, and his one companion came from Texas and these other fellows all praised him--the dead veteran--and finally this fellow held up his hand and he said, "If you don't mind, I'd like to say a few words about Texas." [laughter] So they laughed about that. And Johnson made some remark about that. But I didn't get to know him then and after I'd been defeated, I came back [and] he had been elected to the Senate and he very quickly became majority leader, you know. And . . . and, of course, he was an absolute czar as a majority leader. He worked like a dog all the time. He was there all the time busy and he'd argue with everybody about a vote. You could see him take these people on his own

side back in a corner and talk to them [chuckling] and he'd usually get their votes. I remember I saw him take Jack Kennedy back in the corner one time and Jack . . . [chuckling] Jack ordinarily would have voted the other way, but he voted with Johnson. And one time we had a bill up there which . . . oh, there were at least fifteen Democrats that were going to join in an amendment that two or three of us had on a bill, and I can't remember the bill, but when it came down to the vote there was only one of them stood with us [chuckling]. All the rest he'd got to [laughing]. He would come over on the Republican side at times to speak to people. He never did speak to me about voting with him. He and Margaret Smith were pretty close. They were on that Atomic Energy Committee and . . . and she'd vote with him sometimes. And then somebody . . . he . . . and, of course, Dirksen was our leader at the time after [Robert A.] Taft died and after [William F.] Knowland retired, and it was kind of a curious thing there that leaders get to be great friends. Well, I suppose they have to. They have to talk over things [like] schedules [inaudible]. That didn't mean that Dirksen supported him on everything. In fact, he led the fight against civil rights on the Republican side and Johnson led it on the Democratic side. Oh, he was . . . he was determined, you know, to run the thing and he did. I had a few little occasions where he would . . . they weren't so . . . well, they weren't so unpleasant, but it happened one time that

I was presiding and there is a rule that if the leader asks for the floor right away, reasonably, you give him the floor even if somebody else [is speaking]. But Jack [Jacob] Javits had been speaking about five minutes and of all people, you know, that [chuckling] Johnson wasn't particularly in love with was Jack Javits, although I think he treated him fairly. So Johnson came in and asked for the floor. Well, I said, "Senator Javits has the floor." He said, "I'm entitled to the floor." I said, "I know you are, generally, but that's just when . . . when . . . when the request is made almost immediately and," I said, "he's been speaking five minutes and I can't interrupt him." Well, Javits did a very nice thing. He said, "I'm willing to yield the floor to the majority leader." And Johnson said, "No, I won't take it. I have the right to it myself and I won't . . . I'll take it on my own right or none." [laughter] He looked at me hard all the time, you know [laughter], and he turned his back on me. He turned around like this [chuckle] and then after, oh, four or five minutes he got up and walked off the floor. Then Mike Mansfield, who was the [Majority] Whip, he came up to me and said, "Lyndon said to tell you, you were right." [laughter-- Bill Cooper] So he had those peculiar . . . he wouldn't want to admit he was wrong *anytime*.

BILL COOPER: He didn't tell you.

COOPER: No.



BILL COOPER: He didn't tell . . .

COOPER: Never did . . .

BILL COOPER: . . . you.

COOPER: . . . tell me.

BILL COOPER: Yeah.

COOPER: Another occasion like that--to show that kind of contradiction--at that time [and] I don't what . . . how much they're doing then . . . now, but you've had the Vietnam veteran, you've had the war over there and all that, but every year we appropriated a lot more money than the Veterans Administration ever spent. You know, keeping good with the s- . . . with all the military people. So, once [chuckling] . . . one day the thing [budget] came in and it was way above what they could possibly spend and it was . . . it was late in the evening and I got up and introduced an amendment to . . . to cut it, not any tremendous amount but a start, you know. And of course, a howl started around [chuckling] and then Johnson was . . . was . . . of course, I knew there wasn't a chance of it passing unless Johnson supported it. But . . . so we adjourned and I remember I got a call from John- . . . from Johnson. He said, "I want you to come over to my office about nine o'clock in the morning." We [the Senate] were going to meet at ten, I think. So I went over to his office and he said, "You know, that amendment you offered last night," he said, "I've been thinking about it. And he said, "I . . . I

had my staff look it up." He said, "We are just spending much more money than they use and we could use someplace else." Well, he never said another word. We went to the floor [and] there weren't half a dozen people on the floor. The fellow presiding was Johnson and Dirksen or . . . I don't know whether Dirksen was then. I think he was dead then. I'm not sure. And Johnson got up and asked for the floor and he said, "I'd like for my name to be joined to Senator Cooper's amendment." And then, "I move it be passed." [laughter] "Unanimous consent that it be taken up and passed." [laughter--Bill Cooper] So there it was. He didn't want anybody to know that he'd changed his mind or had . . . if he had . . . whatever his mind was on it, and also he didn't want to be [chuckling] . . . he didn't want to have any roll call vote on it and he just did that [laughing]. That's the . . . that's the way he was. Sometimes there would be a tight . . . tight vote and I'd vote [inaudible] very much and I'd vote against him, you know, and he wouldn't speak to me for two or three days. Then sometimes I'd cast a vote that he liked and he'd put his arm around me out in the hall someplace and he'd say, "John, you're a great American," [chuckle--Bill Cooper] "a great American." [laughter] And he was that kind of a fellow and the reason I know he was loyal to Kennedy, I--this is a little off the story--but it's when he was vice-president. I went down to Texas to a wedding, to the daughter of this . . . or son of

this fellow you met. And after the wedding the men and women separated and . . . and these fellows were good Texans, oil fellows and all that, you know, and they began to ask me, "How can you explain Lyndon Johnson [and] the way he's acting up there?" And I said, "What do you mean?" [The Texans said], "Supporting . . . supporting John Kennedy, the president." "Well," I said, "usually it's the duty of the vice-president to support the president." [The Texans said], "Well, he's d- . . . he's not doing right." And they kept . . . and I finally said, "I'm a Republican." And I said that, "You'd better ask some of the Democrats, not me." [chuckle--Bill Cooper] So they shut up. But it shows, you know, they didn't think he was right. But anyway . . . oh, a few other things. He once went down to . . . to Camp [sic Fort] Campbell when they were sending off some troops to Vietnam and he invited me to go and Thruston [Morton] and . . . oh, I don't know, I think Hubert Humphrey went. And he introduced us down there and was very nice to us. On the way back he said, "I've got to stop in Louisville and you all will have to stay right with me, now, otherwise we'll miss the plane going back." Because we had to go over . . . he said, "I have to go over to Jeffersonville, across the river." [laughing] He took Morton and me over there [and] there was a big rally over there for a Democratic candidate for the Congress [laughter--Bill Cooper]. The fellow's a darn good Congressman. He's up there now, Lee

Hamilton.

BILL COOPER: Oh, I know . . . yeah, I know him.

COOPER: He's a good one. And he put us up there on the platform, [laughter] introduced us [laughter] . . . wh- . . . he was . . . had devilment about him, you know.

BILL COOPER: He made it a bipartisan rally, . . .

COOPER: Yeah.

BILL COOPER: . . . didn't he?

COOPER: Well, I . . . I haven't been so sorry about it, because I think Lee Hamilton's a very good Congressman.

BILL COOPER: Yeah. Yeah.

COOPER: But the way he did that [laughter] and he laughed about it going back on the plane and . . . take a big snort, you know, and drink [laughing]. Why . . . so, oh, another time at the University [of Kentucky] they were going to unveil a . . . a . . . a bust of . . . of Vice-President [Alben W.] Barkley. I don't know, it's still there, isn't it?

BILL COOPER: Umhmm.

COOPER: And they wanted Johnson for the speaker. No, I'm wrong. Dirksen was the one that spoke when Barkley's bust was unveiled, but Johnson came down to speak at the University of Kentucky [Centennial Celebration, 1965] and I went along and it was a time when the re- . . . Vietnam War was really getting rough and it wasn't particularly in the university, but outside there were a bunch of . . . of demonstrators and I could tell

he didn't like it a bit, you know. And we went in and he could hold his head down and he held his head . . . you know, I believe he cut his speech half in two and left and we went back.

BILL COOPER: Oh, is that right?

COOPER: He was a . . . very . . . then on another interesting occasion . . . he always invited me to these meetings about the war, because, you know, I was opposing it and after my first error [voting for Tonkin Gulf Resolution], but anyway, they had bombed Haiphong in North Vietnam and so he . . . that afternoon he invited a group to come over to the White House, probably twenty [people], and among them was a . . . of course, the House Speaker [John C.] McCormack, I think, not the present one. And in that group were at least ten Catholics. McCormack, maybe Tip O'Neill, and Mike Mansfield was a Catholic, Kennedy was there--I mean Teddy--and two or three others, I . . . I knew . . . I knew they were. And he ma- . . . he had Rusk or somebody or some military fellow talk--Rusk didn't say much--military fellow explain the operation, [about] how they had selected the best pilots, planes, [and] had prepared for weeks. But [they were] very much worried because there were some Russian ships in the harbor there and afraid they might hit one. "And so," he said, "last night I was lying there in bed and," he said, "I couldn't sleep. I was thinking about those planes and if they hit one

of those Russian ships." And he said, "I was shaking the bed."  
[chuckling] He said, "Finally, Lady Bird ruined it all." He  
said, "She leaned over and said, 'Lyndon,' [inaudible],  
'remember the Maine.'" [laughter]

BILL COOPER: [laughing] Remember the Maine.

COOPER: He said, "That was just the limit." He said, "I  
knew that I had to go and pray someplace but," he said, "you  
know, none of our Protestant churches are open and," he said,  
"mine's not, of course," he said, "I'm a Campbellite." You  
know what the Campbellites are . . .

BILL COOPER: Yeah.

COOPER: . . . don't you? Huh?

BILL COOPER: Yeah.

COOPER: Huh?

BILL COOPER: Yeah.

COOPER: They started in . . . in Lexington, you know.

BILL COOPER: Yeah.

COOPER: Huh?

BILL COOPER: Umhmm.

COOPER: Henry Clay was one. But he said, "Lucy,"--  
that's his young daughter, she was engaged--he said, "you know,  
she's plumb foolish on Catholicism." [laughter--Bill Cooper]  
Here's all of these Catholic [fellows] [laughing] . . . "Plumb  
foolish on Catholicism. And so," he said, "I got up and went  
in and I woke her up and I said, 'Lucy, any of your Catholic

churches open?' 'Why,' she said, 'yes, father.' 'Well,' he said, 'get up out of bed and take me to one.'" And she did. And he took her to this . . . she took him up to the Cathedral and he said, "We prayed." Well, there's that side of him, you know, he's very human.

BILL COOPER: Very human.

COOPER: And [laughing] there was . . . he said, "She's plumb foolish on Catholicism," [chuckle] but nobody laughed or anything and I think they felt sympathy for him. And, oh . . . oh, I'd see him once in a while. He'd . . . he was always very nice when you'd see him and I remember . . . oh, we gave a reception for him after he announced he wouldn't run [for re-election] up in the Senate, you know, and he made a little speech and it was right touching, you know. He just ended up and said, "Well, all I can say is that I did the best I could." Later, I . . . I never heard him make this speech, but he made it in Austin, Texas, and he talked about his boyhood. [He was] just born in a . . . some kind of a slab house or something, you know, and he said, "You know, we didn't have any bathroom facilities. We just had a privy." This is a public speech. And he said, "How . . . I remember how it was that I felt at the time." He said, "At first I didn't pay an attention to it, but then I'd go to school and see the difference. And then after," he said, "I got to . . . went along in public life, I got to be . . . been thinking about all these poor people,

blacks [and] whites, living in the same kind of little hovels. No bath facilities." He said, "You'd just have to go to the privy, you know." He . . . [chuckling] he didn't care what he said and maybe he said worse than that, but . . . "and I determined I was going to help them." And I do believe that looking back on his career, that he had two things in mind. President Roosevelt was his idol. President Roosevelt gave him that job, you know, that first job he had dealing with young people mostly. [Texas Director for National Youth Administration, 1935-1937]

BILL COOPER: Yeah.

COOPER: And I think he wanted to have a New Deal or whatever you call it. Later, I think, it was the Fair Deal, wasn't it, like Roosevelt?

BILL COOPER: Johnson's "The Great Society."

COOPER: "The Great Society." And I think he wanted to win a war because he really did create all these agencies which have helped a lot of people, although they . . . the cost has run far beyond [what] anybody ever conceived, and . . . and, of course, there really wasn't any reason to get into that war. What's his name . . . when . . . when the French were beaten, Eisenhower sent out . . . oh, General [Alfred M. Gruenther]. . . he was . . . he . . . he succeeded Eisenhower as head of N.A.T.O. He'd fought with . . . he'd been with him through all World War II. Not the man who died the other day



who was chiefly the staff man. This man was a combat man, well known. And he sent him out there because the French and some of them were wanting us to come in and some people were saying we ought to. The man came back and reported to Eisenhower that it'd be the most re- . . . well, improbable thing to do. Our people are not guerrilla fighters and you're going to . . . you'd never get out of there. And Eisenhower refused to do it, you know. And Kennedy sent out a man [General Maxwell Taylor] who now is in the papers quite a bit. He writes a lot. Every time I read him rewriting a speech I . . . I get kind of angry [chuckling], because he . . . Eisenhower had made him chief of staff and then he evidently didn't like Eisenhower. He quit and then he began to write books about him. He still writes a lot of pieces that are in The [Washington] Post here. And Kennedy sent him out and he advised both Kennedy and Johnson to send troops out there. But as I look back again to say that you . . . I think . . . I don't know why he got drawn into that war and I doubt if he ever realized himself what the breadth of these programs would finally be, although I . . . I think that his purpose was right and I think it is right myself to help people who can't help themselves and who, for different reasons, can't . . . that doesn't mean everybody. Some of them won't try to help themselves, you know. But . . . that he was a very . . . very human person and I never . . . I don't think . . . I don't remember that I ever saw him again or not after

he left the presidency.

[End of Interview]