

# Johnson: 'I Prayed That

*This is the 11th of 15 excerpts from former President Johnson's book, "The Vantage Point," an account of his presidency, to be published shortly.*

WHEN I TOOK THE OATH as President in January 1965 to begin my first full term in office, I felt that it would be my last, and this feeling grew stronger with every passing week in the White House.

For several years Lady Bird and I had spoken many times about our plans to leave the White House at the end of my first full term. Her position had remained perfectly clear and consistent since she had first expressed it to me in the spring of 1964: She did not want me to be a candidate in 1968. We discussed often how to select the

proper time and the right occasion to make the announcement.

Long before I had settled on the proper forum to make my announcement, I told a number of people of my intention not to run again. As far back as the summer of 1965 I had discussed the subject with Willard Deason, whom I had known for many years.

A few months afterward, late in the fall of 1965, I confided in Arthur Krim. He and his wife, Mathilde, were loyal and devoted friends, and Arthur was a valued adviser on matters relating to the Democratic party.

I talked with John Connally early in 1967 at the LBJ Ranch. He was formulating plans of his own at the time. He told me that he had no desire to seek another term as Governor, but that he would run again if I wanted him on the ticket with me in Texas. I told him that I felt certain I would not run and

suggested that he base his own decision on that assumption.

In September 1967 I discussed the subject with another friend, George Christian, my press secretary. We were in Texas at the time, and I asked George to get Governor Connally's help in preparing a statement in which I could announce my decision. I thought then that I might find an appropriate occasion to use it later in the year.

I talked privately about the likelihood of my not running in 1968 with both Dean Rusk and Bob McNamara, two of my most trusted advisers. One July evening in 1967, while sitting in the small room adjoining the President's Oval Office, I confided to Secretary McNamara the frank exchanges I had had with Connally. I told Bob I was convinced that once the announcement was made the press would read



Mr. Johnson appears at the White House with Wilbur Mills, key to President's 1968 tax reform legislation.

United Press International



# Hanoi... Would Respond?

significance into Connally's decision not to run, as it related to my plans. McNamara assured me many times that he would continue to serve as Secretary of Defense as long as I wanted and needed him, and I know he meant it. As a footnote to history, had I contemplated another four year in the White House, I would not have wanted Bob McNamara to leave the government, any more than I would have wanted Dean Rusk to leave.

At a meeting in the Cabinet Room on October 3, 1967, I again shared my thoughts with Secretaries Rusk and McNamara, and with several other top advisers who were present. They included Walt Rostow, Dick Helms of the CIA, and George Christian.

December came, but a good forum for my announcement failed to materialize, and I put the matter aside for a few weeks. I began to think about including my decision in my State of the Union address to the Congress in January. When I went to Australia to attend the memorial service for Prime Minister Harold Holt late in December 1967, I took Horace Busby with me. A former aide, Busby had worked with me on messages in the past. During the trip I told him what I planned to do and what I wanted to say. I asked him to try his hand at a statement. Busby's draft arrived two days before I reported on the State of the Union and contained the following paragraph:

"I shall not seek — I have no desire to accept — the nomination of my party for another term in this great office of all the people."

I gave it to my wife to read. In all our conversations about declining to run in 1968, Lady Bird had always been most deferential. She never took the lead in these discussions or forced an opinion or a point of view on me. However, I noticed that she made one important change in Busby's draft. Above the phrase "have no desire to accept" Lady Bird penciled in the words we both preferred: "will not accept."

When I went to the Capitol that night, I thought I had the statement with me but I discovered that I had failed to bring it. Frankly, I cannot say what I would have done that night if the paper had been in my pocket. But my best guess is that I would not have read it.

But I knew that if other Democrats were to have an opportunity to organize and offer their candidacies, they deserved sufficient time to prepare. Harry S. Truman had faced a similar decision on timing in 1952. He had finally made his announcement on March 29. Lady Bird had suggested March as the outside date for announcing my decision not to run. In her memorandum to me of May 1964, rec-



Associated Press

President Johnson and his adviser Lady Bird in a 1968 photograph. Mrs. Johnson edited a draft of his retirement announcement from "have no desire to accept" to "will not accept" the Presidential nomination in 1968.

ommending that I run for the Presidency that year, she had said: "If you win, let's do the best we can for 3 years and 3 or 4 months — and then, the Lord letting us live that long, announce in February or March 1968 that you are not a candidate for reelection." She told me that the reason March was in her mind was that she had been influenced by President Truman's timing. I found a certain historical satisfaction in following President Truman's precedent. But March 1968 proved to be exactly the right month for me for another reason: It coincided with the new effort I planned to seek the way to peace in Vietnam. I had found the right forum.

A great misconception had been



built up by the press that I was a man who was hungry for power, who would not conceivably give up power willingly. Those who believed this estimate did not understand that power can lose its charm when a man has known it as many years as I had. I was

consistently amused at being characterized as avid for power on the one hand and soundly criticized for not using power the way it is used ordinarily — in a political way — on the other. Several columnists commented that I did not take sufficient interest in rewarding party contributors or building strong party machinery, but these observations never detracted from the myth of the power-hungry man.

I used the power of the Presidency proudly, and I used every ounce of it I had. I used it to establish programs that gave thousands of youngsters a head start in school, that enabled thousands of old folks to live in clean nursing homes, that brought justice to the Negro and hope to the poor, that forced the nation to face the growing problems of pollution. In this exercise of power, I knew a satisfaction that only a limited number of men have ever known and that I could have had in no other way. Men, myself included, do not lightly give up the opportunity to achieve so much lasting good, but a man who uses power effectively must also be a realist. He must understand that by spending power he dissipates it. Because I had not hesitated to spend the Presidential power in the pursuit of my beliefs or in the interests of my country, I was under no illusion that I had as much power in 1968 as I had had in 1964.

\*At 1 a.m. I went to my bedroom. I was tired. It had been a long day, a day marking an end but also, I earnestly hoped, a beginning. I prayed silently that the action I had taken would bear the fruit I devoutly hoped for. By renouncing my candidacy, I expressed a fervent wish that problems that had

resisted solution would now yield to resolution. I wanted Hanoi to know that Lyndon Johnson was not using this new move toward peace as a bid for personal political gain. Maybe now, with this clearest possible evidence of our sincerity thrown into the balance, North Vietnam would come forward and agree to a dialogue—a genuine communication dedicated to peace. Those who doubted me and disliked me, those who had fought my struggle to achieve justice for men and women who had for so long suffered injustice, might now be willing to adjust their rigid views and seek to fashion a workable formula for peace in the streets. Members of Congress who had believed that my crusade for the tax bill was linked to personal politics rather than an attempt to defeat inflation might reassess their motives, soften their antagonism, and turn this urgent piece of legislation—so vital to the nation's and the world's needs—into law.

Perhaps now that I was not a candidate commentators in the press and television might regard issues and efforts more objectively, instead of concentrating on criticism and cynical speculation. For a while the nation and the world would reflect on my words.

Just before I drifted off to sleep that night, I prayed that Hanoi had listened and would respond. The chance for peace, the opportunity to stop death and destruction, the opening toward a new decade of hope—all these were enfolded in the words I had spoken. There was nothing more I could do that day. All that I could do I had

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## Congress 'Like a Sensitive Animal'

FOR TWENTY-NINE YEARS Capitol Hill was my home. In all those years I thought I knew Congress fairly well, understood its many moods, grasped its essential nature. But like other Presidents with previous experience on Capitol Hill, I found that once I reached the White House the Congress appeared far less familiar. However close we might remain, I knew that our relationship could never be the same.

While the President must live with crises and deadlines, a Congressman can cultivate the art of delay and refrain from commitment—especially if the commitment is to increase everybody's taxes.

As Chairman of the Ways and Means Committee, Representative Wilbur Mills had a different constituency than I. His leadership would be judged by his Arkansas electorate and his colleagues in the House. In building his reputation, Chairman Mills followed a basic principle. He wanted to report a bill to the floor when he felt there was a good chance of passing it. Over the years he developed great skill in esti-

imating votes in the committee and the House. When the votes were lacking, he preferred to wait rather than risk the reputation of his committee and the image of his leadership.

In the tax fight Mills was particularly sensitive about his reputation.

Actually, Mills was an extremely skillful Congressman and a man of integrity. I liked him, and I enjoyed a close working relationship with him.

I was certain to be criticized whatever direction I moved, and each alternative offered peculiar dangers. To wrap the tax bill in the flag might launch pressures that would widen the war and cut back the reforms our society needed. Nor could I agree that the tax increase should be used solely for domestic purposes and be accompanied by tax reform. The need to support our soldiers in Vietnam was immediate and increasing. Effective tax reform would take months or years. Moreover, I knew that talk of additional outlays for the Great Society programs would give the conservatives the excuse they needed to torpedo the tax bill.

A President must always reckon that his mandate will prove short-lived.

Much had happened between my landslide victory of 1964 and the difficult days of the tax struggle in 1966-1968. I had deliberately spent a good deal of my mandate to accomplish many controversial reforms. For me, as for most active Presidents, popularity proved elusive.

The key to accurate head counts is personal knowledge or trust and the ability to probe beneath the surface to see what individuals are really thinking and feeling. If a liaison man knew his contacts well—if he knew who was irritated about what, who had a tough election ahead, and who had ambitions for higher office—he could judge their reactions in one conversation or phone call. But if he did not know his men well, he might never be able to interpret tone, nuance, and spirit. Without this kind of preparation, checks on specific legislation are of little use.

I sometimes felt that Congress was like a sensitive animal—if pushed gently it would go my way, but if pushed too hard it would balk. I had to be aware constantly of how much Congress would take and of what kind of mood it was in.





**ARTHUR J. GOLDBERG**  
... challenges memoirs

## Goldberg Says LBJ Lied in His Book

Former Justice Arthur J. Goldberg accused former President Lyndon B. Johnson yesterday of making "untrue" statements in his memoirs about who made the initiatives that led to Goldberg's 1965 resignation from the Supreme Court.

Goldberg said in a statement that "nothing could be further from the truth" than Johnson's account that Goldberg was restless on the court and sought service as head of the Department of Health, Education and Welfare or the United Nations ambassadorship.

"The President actively and insistently solicited my acceptance of the ambassadorship," Goldberg said, adding that he took the post in the belief—"perhaps mistakenly"—that he could persuade the President to wind down the war in Vietnam.

The Johnson version is contained in his book, "Vantage Point: Perspectives on the Presidency 1963-1969," which is being serialized in The Washington Post and other newspapers. A shortened version of the passages about the Supreme Court are scheduled to appear Sunday.

In the book Johnson describes a visit from Harvard Professor John Kenneth Galbraith and his wife on July 16, 1965, two days after the death of U.N. Ambassador Adlai E. Stevenson.

According to the book, Galbraith said he believed Goldberg "would step down from his position to take a job that would be more challenging to him," either as HEW secretary or U.N. Ambassador.

Johnson said the news surprised him. "I was aware that Goldberg, an activist, became restless on the bench from time to time," he said. "but I could not imagine him giving

up his seat on the Supreme Court."

Goldberg confirmed that the reports "had substance" during the flight to the Stevenson funeral, Johnson wrote. According to the book, the President mentioned the need for an effective head of HEW, but Goldberg replied "that he had become increasingly interested in foreign affairs."

The next day Goldberg called presidential assistant Jack Valenti and said he would accept the U.N. post if it were offered, according to the book.

Goldberg's statement said the Johnson story "that I left the Supreme Court out of 'boredom' is not only inaccurate but demeaning to the Supreme Court and to me as a citizen."

Vowing "to set the record straight," Goldberg said Valenti had offered him the HEW position and that the President had previously asked him to become Attorney General. Johnson "made a series of urgent telephone calls" asking him to leave the court for the United Nations, Goldberg said.

### Blacks Stop Speech By South African

EVANSTON, ILL., Oct. 26 (AP)—About 350 blacks who said they were protesting South Africa's apartheid policies prevented a scheduled speech Monday at Northwestern University by a member of the South African Parliament.

The group took over the meeting Monday night as Catherine Taylor of South Africa was preparing to give a speech on recent developments in her country. The protesters said they opposed Mrs. Taylor because she was a member of South Africa's United party which they said conditionally has supported apartheid.