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Interview with  
George Christian  
August 8, 1968

Place of Interview: Austin, Texas

Interviewer: Dr. Fred Gantt

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Oral History Collection

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Dr. Gantt: Do you want to make some remarks along the introductory line so we can get into some questions?

Mr. Christian: Alright. I understand that you've been concerned with the staffing and methods of operation, that sort of thing, in the executive branch here and in Washington. I think if you will lead me into answers on various topics along this line, it might be an easier way to get into them, Fred. Do you want to start with the similarities or the . . .

Dr. Gantt: Yes, why don't you do that? What do you see as some similarities between the President's staff and the governor's staff, for example?

Mr. Christian: I think at either level it's necessary to assign responsibilities to individuals in certain fields. In the governor's office, of course, you have a budget director, you have a director of planning, you have a press secretary, you have an executive assistant who runs the office and supervises governmental departments, and, of course, a number

of other duties. At the White House level, generally it would be broken down, of course, into the two fields of foreign policy and domestic program.

I think to best illustrate our operation there I would use the individuals, by name, who are involved. Joe Califano, who is a lawyer from New York, is primarily in charge of the President's domestic program. He supervises various task forces which are appointed from the academic world and business world to come up with ideas and programs that the President might consider for a legislative program. We may have as many as fifty or sixty task forces working at the same time on anything from housing to how best to extend medical care or how best to improve the poverty program or any number of new ideas that might come forth. Normally the task forces work without publicity. Most of the members are people connected with universities or men high in the business world who would prefer to be free in their studies and deliberations without any glare of publicity because the programs that they develop may never see the light of day anyway--they are essentially study groups. When they come forth with a suggested program it is then staffed out in the White House under Mr. Califano's direction. He may condense several task forces'

recommendations into one recommendation of the President on some subject. The President may accept it, or he may say that it's premature to attempt a program like that, that he'd rather staff it out further and delay it.

But many of the programs that the President has recommended over the last five years are the results of tax forces. They come up with the ideas. They're staffed out and the President gives them a great deal of personal attention as to whether it's something he really likes or he feels is politics, something he feels is obtainable. He has to exercise judgment over whether something is an empty gesture. It sounds good in recommending it, but yet you know it will never get off the ground and it will never get a hearing. The hearing will never get out of Congress. Thus, he has to be the final say over whether to prevent something. But I would say almost every major program in the so-called Great Society began with a task force.

After the program is recommended, Mr. Califano has the primary responsibility to nourish it in regard to amendments, in regard to any changes that we may have to make in it. He is not, however, responsible for the actual executive lobbying for the bills. This is in another department. He is

responsible for the program as a program.

There's a Senate and House legislative liaison man--two people--who are primarily responsible for making sure that the officers get hearings, to make sure that the witnesses get brought in, to make sure that congressional contacts are made for the legislation. Presently these two men are Mike Manatos, who is from the state of Wyoming, and Barefoot Sanders, a former member of the Texas legislature and a federal district attorney here. He was originally from Dallas. He handles the House and Manatos handles the Senate. By necessity these two men have to be extremely close to the congressional leaders. Manatos spends a great deal of time in Senator Mansfield's office. Sanders spends a great deal of time with Speaker McCormack and with his leaders, Congressman Boggs and Congressman Albert. They are known as the White House contacts for the congressmen. When a congressman wants something, he usually calls either Sanders or Manatos. They're the people who dispense whatever help that a congressman might desire. If a congressman wants a postmaster appointed or anything, they would be the contact in the White House for this sort of thing, sort of an addition to handling the

mechanics of getting legislation through. They are the people who have the congressmen and senators ear, I mean, they give their ear to the congressmen and the senators for a variety of things. That is essentially the breakdown on domestic legislation.

On foreign policy at the present time Walt Whitman Rostow from Massachusetts is the President's special assistant for national security. Rostow operates with a staff which is a professional non-political staff of the National Security Council with specialists in each field. We'll have a man, an experienced foreign service officer, whose specialty is Latin America; we'll have one whose specialty is the Middle East, and another one whose specialty is South Asia--India, Pakistan; we have one whose specialty is the Far East and so forth. Each man has his specialty. Mr. Rostow meets with the staff of the National Security Council three times a week in the morning, and they thrash out problems and discuss what's coming up and what to expect that might require presidential decision. These men work closely with their counterparts in the state department. State is segmented pretty much along the same lines as all of you, I know, are familiar. There's a European desk at State.

There's a Far Eastern desk, and then there are many sub-heads--Korea and any number of people working over there on particular countries and problems. There is a reasonably close correlation with the State Department and also with the Pentagon and with the intelligence community.

The intelligence community is considerably more than the CIA. State and Defense both have their own intelligence operations. There's CIA, of course. There are combined operations involving Defense Intelligence Agency, CIA, and other military intelligence. The general supervision of intelligence community is under the Foreign Intelligence Advisory Board which presently is headed by General Maxwell Taylor, a former Chairman of Joint Chiefs of Staff, and he's a special consultant to the President. Most of you will remember him as an ambassador to Viet Nam and as a general in the Korean War, and presently he is in private business but is actually a consultant to the President. He works, of course, closely with the President on foreign policy matters, along with Secretary of State and Secretary of Defence and the President's special assistant on national security, Mr. Rostow.



In the mechanics of Mr. Rostow's operation he is in some ways a funnel for information which the President must have to make decisions. In our operation-- I'm sure in any President's operation--he has to make a final decision on many things. No one else can do it for him. If it's a minor matter it never reaches him. If it's something to do with closing a wheat deal with some country, it might be handled further down the line. If it's a minor arms sale or something like that, it might be handled further down the line. If it is a major matter--something that requires arbitration by the President between different viewpoints or different decisions by the President based upon his foreign policy advisors--he and only he can make the decision.

So essentially it's necessary for his advisors to give him every possible bit of information upon which to make his decision. This is what they try to do. Efforts are made to present questions as objectively as possible so that he can determine whether it's something he wants to do or not. Sometimes in the past the President has not felt that he had adequate information on both sides of the question. I've known him to ask someone to brief a question and come up with a harder descent on some question when he didn't feel he was really getting the pros and cons

of it. He used his former Under Secretary of State George Ball for this a great deal till he left. He continued to do that after Ball went to private life. I recall one instance where he was on the fence on a wheat deal for India--their major program. There was a lot of talk pro and con over what size program really should be approved because you had questions of India's own agricultural production and all sorts of difficult questions involved with it. Everyone among his advisors recommended a certain course. The president had no dissent from these people after they had given the matter considerable study. He asked Mr. Ball, who was a private citizen--told him what the facts were--to build a case for taking some other action, a more limited action or turning it down or whatever it is. He wanted to see the other side of the question. Mr. Ball did this, gave him a report, and made a good argument as to why this wheat program ought to be modified. After giving him this he then called the President on the phone and said, "Mr. President, I've given you the complete argument as to why this ought to be modified, but I want to give you my personal view that you ought to go ahead with what your advisors have recommended at

this time." But at least the President saw the other side, and he did go along with his advisors on it, but he did feel better about it after having more facts.

This is staff work essentially. It's staff work necessary for presidential action, and it's awfully easy for the President to make a mistake on faulty staff work. If he doesn't get all the intelligence reports, he may get a distorted picture that will lead to a decision that will have dire repercussions. If we're dealing with a problem as explosive as Cyprus, he is entitled to know, and wants to know, everything that might happen. Are the Turks serious? Are the Greeks serious? How much of this is talk and how much of it is potential shooting? All these things have to be sorted out. Sometimes it's necessary for him to send a special representative to a hot spot to bring him back as much information as he can gather. Sometimes he just can't get everything he wants from an embassy or a military attache' or somebody else.

Thus in foreign policy essentially a mass of information is funneled into the President on a variety of things. Viet Nam is just one of many. He

ultimately has to decide what he has to do.

He has several ways of meeting with people in foreign policy fields. Every Tuesday there's a luncheon at the mansion with the same cast of people every time. There may be a few additions here and there, but always the secretary of state is there; the secretary of defense is there; the chairman of joint chiefs is there; the director of CIA is there (he is the President's special assistant for national security); and the President's press secretary is there. Those are the characters who are present at every Tuesday luncheon, as it has come to be known. Occasionally General Taylor will come in, Mr. Ball, Ambassador Goldberg before he left. If the secretary of state has to be out of the country, Secretary Katzenbach, the under secretary, might be there, but essentially it's the same group. This is a working group in foreign policy. These are the discussions on the really tough decisions that the President has to make. He also meets with the National Security Council at least twice a month. This is a larger group. It includes these people plus others.

Then periodically he will call in outside advisors to take a particular problem--should we do this or

should we not do this--and get the judgment of a group sitting around a table much like this. The individuals will be briefed on the subject. The President will seek information individually. He'll go around the table to Dean Acheson and say, "What would you do?" What would Eugene Black do? What would General Ridgeway do? What would Cyrus Vance do? From that he distills a viewpoint which pretty well cuts across the thinking of a good many people. There'll be differing opinions in that you do have super hawks and super doves on Viet Nam, for example. You do have a lot of people in the middle who could go either way depending on what the particular subject is. He's compelled to get as much viewpoint as he can on what is the correct thing to do based upon the information that he has. I think that breaks down the two staffing operations.

In addition the President has an appointments office which is sort of his traffic cop--people coming in and out, his engagements, his speeches. He has the press office. It's obvious what that does. He has a special office devoted to nothing except Health, Education, and Welfare which does somewhat dovetail with Mr. Califano's operation, but that's

because there's so much presidential program in these fields. He does have a full time staff operation just on health and education essentially. Douglas Cater handles that responsibility. Then there are other assistants devoted to agriculture, labor matters, and a variety of other things in the White House, but the breakdown is about what I've given you. Fred, I'm lost in the filibuster here, so are there any requests from anybody on this particular subject?

Gantt: Would anybody like to have any elaboration at this point?

Student: On these decisions made on the basis of Mr. Califano's recommendation does the President usually personally sound out the House or Senate committee chairmen on this?

Christian: Yes. Before the President submits an opinion to Congress--if it's something he knows is going to be controversial--he'll first go over it with the Democratic leadership and then probably include the chairmen and ranking members of the committees. If it's something to do with education, Congressman Powell would be brought in, and it would be thoroughly discussed with him to make sure that there weren't any particular problems so there would be speedy hearings and that sort of thing. Whatever the appropriate committee

was, either he or his assistants always do a fairly thorough job of prior consultation before the program is put up. Of course, most of our programs now in the latter days of the administration are extensions of things that he started before, because really in '64 and '65 he put in a mass of legislation based upon the 1964 Democratic platform. And really the whole program that he's been trying to carry out since '64 is based on the Democratic platform in '64, and most of it is in the law now, but there are still things that have to be done.

Gantt: \_\_\_\_\_, I'm curious as to how early\_\_\_\_\_.

Christian: That will depend a lot on the program. Many times the legislator may be deeply involved in the formation of a program, or as in the case of the recent tax bill over a period of a year and a half, for instance, I don't know how many conferences there were on tax bills with Republicans and Democrats and a great many times with the Chairman of Ways and Means, Congressman Mills. Many times these people have their own ideas on a program such as that, and you eventually work around something that everyone will agree to and finally might, if you're lucky, get something passed. But sometimes as in the case of some of the poverty

programs and some of the water programs, there are men on the hill who are deeply involved in this as people in the administration--Senator Muskie on water, and concerning some of the housing programs there are congressmen and senators who are greatly interested in this field--and the programs are worked out really jointly, but there is a great deal of prior consultation. I don't know of any instances where any program was ever put in cold before Congress without any prior warning as to what was coming.

Student: Mr. Christian, would you describe your own office force? How many people work in it and what they do?

Christian: I have three assistants--deputy press secretary, assistant press secretary, and associate press secretary--because everybody has to have a title, (laughter), and, of course, a number of secretaries. I also have supervision over a research department separate from my office and general supervision over the White House Transportation Office, which is my logistic support for getting the press all around the country or all around the world, depending on the circumstances.

We serve as the final clearing house, I guess you could call it, for everything coming out of the



White House of a public information nature. If the President wants to make a statement on housing, the man in the White House who knows the most about housing and about the immediate problem, whatever it is, drafts a statement. The President may change it or he may throw it back and say it's no good, or he may give it to me and say, "Put it in Johnson City language so I can understand it." (Laughter) But many of the press statements which are put out come from a department in the White House with that responsibility . . . with a responsibility in whatever field it happens to be. A statement that I put out on a foreign policy matter may be the result of a conference between Secretary Rusk, Mr. Rostow, and myself, and we may work out a statement and decide who should make the statement--whether the State Department should do it in my name, whether it should be in the President's name. A lot of this is decided by the effect--how much impact you want to have or something. If you want a slightly lower key than a presidential statement, then the press secretary makes the statement. If you really want to kill the fly with a board, then the President might make a statement on something. Or if you want to go one notch down below the White House, the briefing officer at the State Department

might cover a subject, and that would keep it completely out of the White House. Most of the time, I'll say, on foreign policy questions which are posed to us, I refer them to the State Department because that is the proper place for most of these questions. Unless it directly involves the President, we let the State Department handle it.

I have briefings twice a day--ten a week (sometimes on Saturday). I'm asked a variety of questions, obviously. The reporters that cover the White House, though, are essentially there to cover what the President does during the day, and how the President feels about a certain thing, or does the President have any comment on a certain subject. I have been asked today several times does the President have any comment on the Republican Convention. No, I told them I wasn't going to give them any comment (laughter). I don't see any point in saying anything about the Republican Convention so I just say, "No, I don't have anything to say about it." Today the big issue is the President's health because he has a slight intestinal problem that's going to require some more tests. And, of course, there is great uncertainty in the minds of a lot of people in the

press as to whether it was serious or not. Well, I don't know, I can't honestly tell them there's nothing to it, but the tests haven't been completed. I can't say, "Oh, yes, he's in dire condition," for the stock market would go down like that (laughter).

Thus, I try to be as evenhanded as I can with it, but we have many particular problems in dealing with the press. They obviously want more than we want to give them many times. They might want the President to come in on something that he doesn't desire to comment on, or they might feel that we don't give them enough notice on trips and things of that nature, and I'd have to say that that's true. We do move when the President wants to move, and if he has eighty reporters trying to follow him, they have to sort of grab hold and go along for the ride sometimes because he can't be President and also be sort of a nursemaid to anybody.

When he moves as President, you just have to expect that anybody who works for him and anybody who, by the nature of their jobs has to be with him, had better be ready to go, or they ought not be there. We do travel a very great deal.

This brings many of my most serious problems logistically because the press office by tradition

has had to handle the chartering of the press planes, the provision for transportation after we get to a place, provision for a place to sleep. I guess I'm the nursemaid on an awful lot of things because there's just no other way to do it. Some individual has to see to these things. They pay for all of it. They pay for the plane; they pay for their rooms; they pay for their cars or truck or bus or whatever they need at a particular location. Nevertheless, somebody physically has to get it for them, and that's where our transportation office and press office and Secret Service all cooperate in trying to help them out on that. Logistically, moving a great number of people like that is a tremendous task: making sure they get at the right place at the right time, and making sure they get at the right place at the right time, and making sure they get the cameras set up and have time to get set up, and making sure that there's a radio mult (a mock type operation that you plug into, for you only use one microphone--the President just needs one microphone--to feed to everybody who wants it) and making sure they have time to get rigged up, and making sure the reporters have a place to go when they get there at convention hall or what-

ever it happens to be. Also, I must make sure that they have filing facilities which is a headache. They have to have telephones--special telephones. They have to have telex machines, a certain number of those depending on how many people we have.

All of these have to be ordered in advance by the White House. They pay for them, but we have to tell the Western Union and telephone company to get the lines in. Sometimes we go on such short notice that they don't have time to get special lines in. Then we try to have a man there in advance to at least spot the pay telephones so we can say there's (laughter) a phone down there and there's a phone in here and go after them.

We advance every trip that we possibly can. This requires sending someone from the press office or someone who has worked with the press office. We send what we call a political advance man who is a person astute in crowd control and in dealing with the local people, whoever they might be. It might be a labor convention, say. He's a fellow who knows how to go in and talk to them and tell them what the President's needs are, just what the program is, and make a recommendation back to the White House as to what the President ought to do when he gets there.

Then we send in advanced communications people because wherever the President goes, you have to have instant communications. It's a rather monumental operation, and within the White House it is called White House Communications Agency, which is the Signal Corps. It's headed by a colonel who works miracles because sometimes he's gotten in Presidential phone systems on very short notice, and he has had to work very closely with the telephone company. When we take an overseas trip, it's particularly rough on both the White House Communications and on the Secret Service. They have to advance everything the President does for obvious reasons. They have to check a hall ahead of time to make sure there aren't bombs or something around. They have to work with local police on motorcades and on just general security matters. Thus, by the time the President arrives somewhere, more often than not the location has been thoroughly advanced as we call it: the press facilities are in, the press hotel reservations are made; every staffman has a room assignment; everybody has a method of transportation after you're there. Part of us has a truck up front so that if we have a motorcade, we'll be able to get pictures of the President's car and

the crowds and so forth.

The President's needs are met: we see that his support people are all in place whether it be cooks or security people or what; his phones are all in working order (He can pick up the phone and talk to Harold Wilson or anybody else he wants to, and he can operate just as he would at the White House). That has to go wherever he goes. Everything is immediate so far as his communications. This happens on board ship or in Malaysia or in El Salvador, and it does require a tremendous amount of logistics work by people who know what they're doing.

Thus, logistics is one of my biggest nightmares. I sometimes have recurring dreams of not getting the press plane off the ground or having the thing land at the wrong airport someday, or just not getting a guy to the plane in time to catch the plane. We've left these people behind sometimes. Hell, if they can't get there in time to go with us, well, tough.

Most of the time there's no particular problem. It's just a matter of rote, but sometimes where we operate more or less on an hour by hour basis such as when we took a trip around the world last Christmas. It didn't start out to be around the world trip. It just turned into one. There was very little time to

advance anything. There were a lot of headaches, but it was a very successful trip under the circumstances. So that's my biggest problem.

It really is the logistics rather than the policies before those quirks. As long as I am able to attend every meeting that the President has and be with him enough of the time, and as long as I have enough private conversation with him and read enough of the reports that he gets and he sees, and stay up to date on the intelligence reports, and stay up to date on my conferences with other people like Mr. Rostow and Joe Califano and the cabinet members-- as long as I can do that I am at least up to snuff on policy matters and what needs to be handled in that regard so that's no great concern as long as you have time to do that. Where you break down is on these little things like where in the dickens is the bus to carry the press from the airport to the hotel? It didn't show up. It burned out down the road so now you get a mess--that kind of thing. I know it sounds silly but it isn't silly when you can't get them there.

At the last summit meeting last summer we only had about a day's notice on it because it was decided rather late to even have a summit meeting. We didn't



have a location for it. We just had to find a place that was acceptable to both the President and Kosygin to have the meeting. We just sort of hit on it by accident. Thus, we had little time to get the phones in and this sort of thing, and when we had the conference we had about fifty telephones hooked up in a gymnasium. All the reporters rushed into the gymnasium to fight over these fifty telephones, and not a single phone worked, and you got shouting and screaming on the phones (laughter). The telephone company just didn't get them plugged in. That happens and it does cause me some grief. That was our major crisis at the summit conference. Anything else was minor in comparison.

Student: You mentioned awhile ago facetiously, but you couldn't say that the President was seriously ill because of a concern for the stock market crisis. Yet I can see this to be a serious problem. How much do you worry about or consider the effects of news or foreign policy on the stock market?

Christian: Well, we have to worry about it a great deal because we had a case not long ago where a premature story on a wire service caused a major juggling in the stock market which made a lot of money for somebody.

We investigated it to see what the facts were because it looked bad. If a guy knows something is going to happen or if he knows the President is going to recommend a tax bill or something, then there might be some doubt ahead of time, and he can make money if he knows how to do it. You have to watch this. We always have to assume that any major presidential decision is going to have an impact that could, if a fellow had inside information and wanted to be crooked and could manipulate something, result in financial gain for him. People could lose money or gain money depending on some government action.

Many times major decisions affecting money-- international money matters or price of gold or anything of that nature--is done after the stock market closes. Last New Year's we very deliberately waited till New Year's Day when the stock market is closed before announcing the President's major efforts to try to overcome the balance of payments problem because it would have had a dire effect if it had been announced during a day that the markets were open. Thus, we waited until the weekend when things were reasonably quiet, and there weren't any ripples and the impact wasn't there. Everybody gets an even

break the next morning knowing what's already been recommended.

Not only on money matters but on some other things, you are conscious of the fact that what you say or the action you take might have an effect that you wouldn't dream of unless you time it properly. We've been pretty lucky, although I remember one AP story several years ago on something the President did. It caused quite a break in the stock market because of a speculative story where the reporter was about half right and half wrong. But it's hard to catch up with something like that once it's happened. So you do try to be careful when you do these things.

Student: How is it decided what information to release? Is there ever, you know, is there ever a situation where you say, well, "We won't release this."?

Christian: Oh, yes.

Student: Foreign policy?

Christian: Oh, yes. We just have to make that determination generally by discussing. There is a lot that goes on, obviously, that we don't publicize. We very rarely will admit to any exchange of correspondence with Soviet leaders, and we never put out the substance of it unless it's an agreed thing. I never discuss

anything that goes on in the Tuesday luncheon on foreign policy as a matter of policy. It's off limits for discussion--maybe two-thirds of what is discussed it wouldn't really matter whether it was made known or not, but you have to set some standards of what you keep sacred so far as security goes.

In the foreign field there is considerable intelligence information which doesn't see the light of day for weeks or months after it turns up for various reasons. One is the method of detection. If you publicize how you knew "X" number of North Vietnamese troops were in the pipeline for infiltration it would give information to them that they wouldn't have. Then they would know there was some way we were doing this. It's just information that we have that we'd rather they not know how we could get it. In many cases much intelligence information is obtained by a system of plain old spying. You can't get your man in trouble, and so obviously a lot of that just never sees the light of day. It's information on which decisions are based--the President has to have it, certain people in the government have to have it, but you just have to assume that the intelligence people are just trying to do the best job they can and give the best information they can.

Sometimes intelligence people will disagree on a particular thing. You might get later intelligence which makes the earlier intelligence look incorrect. You have to ask them what they have.

Then a lot of just purely administrative things aren't made public. I mean, we don't have open sessions of the Cabinet because it gives the President an opportunity to freely discuss with the Cabinet a lot of pretty pressing problems. Now, a lot of this openly comes out in the form of action that they take or that you ask that they take, or reports that he gets from them that are ultimately made public--this sort of thing.

But we do operate in sort of a half world of secrecy. That's the only way to describe it, and this causes some problems with the press because it by nature wants more in the public record than we're able to put. And to be honest about it, a lot of government people really think too much information is made public. So somewhere in between you try to get what is a good mix on what you do to keep from getting nailed up by either side. It makes a public information officer's job a little difficult because many times a public information officer might think

that there is no particular reason for holding something, but his Cabinet officer boss might have different ideas on it. And they just work them out. I feel I've filibustered all these answers.

Student: I don't want to jump too persistently on you, but in your past experience, and in this limited range and scope and implication of what you're doing now, are any similarities between your work for governors and, of course, your President now?

Christian: I started on similarities but I wandered out far field, yes.

Student: It sounds so different from anything you could imagine that you might do for the governor.

Christian: It is and it isn't. It's different in the scope of responsibilities and activities, and yet, if you boil it down and eliminate national security matters, foreign policy, you come down to pretty much the same routine. Now, as President he has to make a lot of appointments for public office. He relies on the chairman of the Civil Service Commission for a lot of his recommendations for certain staff people--for a lot of recommendations on who to appoint to what. A governor operates much the same way. He generally relies on one or two individuals who make recommendations on who's good for the Board of Regents, who's good for the chairman of the T.E.C., or whoever

it might be. Then he has to make the decisions.  
Thus, it's pretty much the same operation.

I don't see any great deal of difference in it except that in the federal area there is a lot more checking of the individual. Your chances of getting a real ringer in public office are pretty slender at the federal level, surprisingly enough. First you get an F.B.I. field report on the man, and if he owes too much money or if he hasn't paid his income tax on time, or if he's been convicted of too many speeding tickets, or he has a reputation of being a drunk or something like that, it comes out just like that. Now at the state level you can slip up a lot easier because you rely on a few people. A governor will generally rely on his local man who might be the best lawyer in town, or he might be the druggist, or he might be a doctor or rancher who doesn't even live in town. He relies on that man. "Do you know Joe over here?" "Well, yes, I know Joe." "Well, what kind of fella is he? Is he a Democrat?" "Well, yes, I think he is." "Is he a supporter?" "Well, yes, he gave me five dollars last campaign." "Does he beat his wife? Are there any problems with him, any personal problems, you know about?" "Well, I

don't know of any." So that's a check. He might check a little further on him, locally. But you may know him yourself. You have met him, seen him somewhere, or known of him as being a man in politics or something. You check the senator, and he knows him, or he doesn't know him, and he gives you just about the same report. "Well, yes, he's a good supporter of mine. He helped me out in the last campaign. I'd be strong for him." So you appoint him. Thus, you check him out just about as well as you can at the state level. Now, occasionally, if it's a particularly sensitive place you might try to get more information through the Department of Public Safety or somebody on this man's character and whether he's a dangerous person to put on a certain board.

You can do that, but you do not have the apparatus here to really check a guy out well because at the federal level if you turn the F.B.I. loose on somebody they're going to interview his neighbors, his family, his friends, and people he works with. If it finds any evidence of anything they go digging a little bit further. They check his relatives; they check whether you've ever traveled in Europe, for example, or if you've gone into East Germany. How long did he stay there? Who were his associates? Has he ever been seen with anyone who was subversive? Had he ever



made derogatory statements about the government in public places. Then they get into his personal finances, which is indicative--you learn how stable he might be, if he has tendencies at maybe being a fast dealer or something like that. By the time his name comes to the President, they'll pretty well know just about everything there is to know about him. That doesn't mean you're not going to slip up, but you have had a much more thorough examination in a man's qualifications. But basically it's about the same. It's just a little more thorough nationally.

In the development of legislative programs, the governor again relies on a few people with ideas, but they may be men in universities. They may be men in business or men in labor--somebody with a program. Generally the governor gets a lot of his ideas through the mail. Somebody will write in and say, "We just really ought to have a law (well, this is an extreme thing because obviously this isn't one you get through the mail) to control loan sharks." And the state organization, the bar association, the medical association or somebody comes up with a program that they want the governor to push. Well, he considers it, and he might or might not depending

on what it is. He has the crime commission which comes up with a series of bills that it feels ought to be passed. He might buy all of it or a few of the bills. His budget man comes up with a variety of recommendations on how to improve the state operations, mental health, the library or anything, because this is the man who deals with the money and deals with the various programs in the governor's office.

Well, at the national level it's branched out more because it obviously can't be parochial. You have to get a distillation of a national view on something and then come up with the program. Thus, you do have to consult with more people. You do have to have task forces on these things.

On press operations there are similarities-- essentially the press job is dealing with reporters, and you do that here. A governor has to face reporters just like a President does. There are differences in that at the state level very few reporters will follow the governor in his travels. If John Connally goes to Mahayia and makes a speech no reporter from Austin goes with him. Even if he makes a major appearance, usually a big paper might send a reporter over there to cover him, but he

doesn't go along with the governor. The governor isn't responsible for wet-nursing him.

However, at the national level just because of the magnitude of it, because of the closeness with which the President is covered by the press, there are more responsibilities by the press office to help the press.

There is considerably more pressure on the press secretary all the time because here again it's just the magnitude of what the President's involved in. A governor can go away for two weeks and hide if he wants to. The press in Texas more or less accepts it unless something big comes along like the liquor scandal, where they just have to get comments from the governor. But he can get away from it, and a President can't. There's just no way a President can get away from the eye of the press and the insatiable public interest in everything that he does. He can't go to church privately. I don't dare tell them where the President goes to church but they chase him till they find him. He's used all sorts of ruses to try to get to some church where they don't know where he is. He's succeeded sometimes. He sneaks off and goes to a church fifty miles away just to do

something where he's not observed in everything he does. But they're compelled by the nature of things to try to cover everything that he does.

Now the President does have some freedom when he's here in Texas at the ranch. He can do the very same thing he does in Washington as far as handling the chores that have to be done. He gets dozens and dozens of action items every day that he has to say yes or no on. He can do that here. He gets dozens and dozens of reports that he has to read in order to be informed. He can do that here. It's on a more or less daily basis. These things are piped down here by postal courier. But he does not have to make public appearances. He doesn't have to go to the Rose Garden and make a speech. He doesn't have to have a public bill signing. He doesn't have to see five senators. He doesn't have to have staff conferences in person. He can get away from that part of office--the ceremonial, the public appearances, the pressing demands of just being there in the White House. When he's there a lot of people need to see him. When he's not they don't come near having to see him as bad as they thought they did. Thus, he reduces his actual work time which enables him to do some things that relieve the pressures somewhat,

if it's nothing more than getting in the car and driving around the ranch and looking at cows. That's something that's not work. When he's in Washington he's working. If he's not sleeping he's working. Here he does get away from that portion of the work enough to sort of get restored a little bit.

Different Presidents have done this in different ways. President Kennedy during one period spent fifty-two consecutive weekends away from the White House. When Friday afternoon came he just said, "I'm leaving. I can't stay here all weekend. I'll go crazy." He would go to Hyannis Port or Florida or somewhere to get away from the White House for the weekend. Thus, he was gone for one period for fifty-two consecutive weekends.

There's not much variety in what President Johnson does because when he gets a chance to get away he almost always comes to the ranch. He's not interested in sailing. He's not really interested in hunting or anything of that nature, so he comes here. He's interested in going home. When he goes back to Washington he's usually refreshed. He's gotten some sun. He's been able to swim a little. He's been able to relax some, though he's not the type person who really relaxes, and he does go back a little

fresher than when he came down. But about the only way he can get his batteries recharged is to come home some weekend. During this particular period we will probably be here a good bit of this month because Congress is not in session, and the conventions are going on. He can be away from Washington without any particular strain on anything he has to do. It gives him a good break in the routine. I don't know how I got off into this (chuckle).

Gantt: Does anyone have a question at this point? I want to bring up something that we have talked about a good bit here, and this is the executive relationship to the legislature and these things that you do not read about in the textbook, like how does he get the program through the legislature, what preference did it have with legislative leaders and so on. Would you comment on the extra-legal or informal techniques of passing a legislative program and how they are alike and different?

Christian: You have a different system to begin with between the Congress and state legislature, of course. I understand now that there's somewhat a seniority system in the House committees here. In my time here it wasn't. The speaker appointed the chairman and the

members of the committee, and it changed all the time. In the Congress, of course, by the time a man becomes chairman of a committee he's pretty much an authority in that field--the field he's chosen. He's worked his way up in it. He considers himself to be an influential man in that field, and he normally is the best informed man in the Congress on the subject. Thus, his judgment is followed rather closely. George Mahon, Chairman of House Appropriations, has considerable influence over the House in fiscal matters. He's been at the job a long time, and just by the way the system operates his judgment is taken on those things.

You have the difference of the two-party system, of course. The President has to not only consult his own leaders but sometimes--infrequently but sometimes--has to call in the leaders of the opposite party and go over matters with them and try to get their support. Sometimes if he didn't get the support . . . well everybody the example of Senator Dirksen, who has come forth and saved something that we were about to lose just by the fact that he and the President discussed it, and Dirksen's a reasonable man. It's not arm twisting or it's not intimidation. It's nothing like that. It's two men who know how to work

with each other. Another case is Eisenhower and Johnson, when Johnson was the majority leader and Eisenhower and Johnson, when Johnson was the majority leader and Eisenhower was the President.

But you've got quite a difference there. If a governor can get the support of the speaker and the lieutenant governor, he's part of the way home. The President has to support his speaker if his party controls the House, and he has the tacit support, anyway, of his leadership in the House because of the two-party system. They can exert certain forms of party discipline on some questions which will get you votes when you know a man may be reluctant to vote for it. It's easier for Republicans or the Democrats to vote in a block or a near block on a lot of subjects. It's just easier to be with your kind and say, "Well, heck, this was a Republican policy, and I just followed it." You can answer anything with your constituents on that basis.

Down here it's sort of every man for himself. You might have a member who may be a lawyer with a lot of clients who are optometrists, or funeral home directors, or something. When some question comes up affecting his home folks--people he listens to and



people who keep him down here--he has quite a problem. I mean, there's no discipline in particular that you can exert in the legislature. If you have a strong speaker, he can exert discipline as we've seen happen in Texas. Speakers can get their troops together and pretty well pass a program. He'll lose some on certain issues, but if they've got a well disciplined group and if they've been very careful on committee appointments, a governor and a speaker can get a program passed, and the same applies to a lieutenant governor. A lieutenant governor can wreck a governor's program, and I've seen that happen down here in years past. In the Senate the lieutenant governor is a more powerful man than the governor is.

In the national Congress if you have a very slender majority, you can still get programs through by making concessions or getting some bi-partisan support, but it's awfully hard when you only have a one or two-vote margin as the Senate had for years. It was very difficult for a President to adopt a program, and you see it on a record--a man's presidential record. Everything Eisenhower passed, he had to pass with Democratic support because most of the time he didn't have control of the Senate. Kennedy had such slender control that he got practically nothing passed.

Now you can count on one finger the number of major bills that the Kennedy Administration was able to get through, although it recommended innumerable things. In '65 Johnson had such an overwhelming Democratic Congress that the Republicans just stood up and got run over. There just wasn't any opposition to speak of. It makes a tremendous difference in how well you do. In '64 the President had the same Congress as Kennedy had in '63, but because of a combination of circumstances, he got some things passed in '64. There were some pretty key bills, but then the cork really came out in '65 after the national election. Now it's going back--the pendulum's back. We lost 47 Democratic seats in the '66 election. Well, things are tougher to get through Congress now. There's an appreciable difference on a bill like open housing. When the President recommended it this year, he knew he had a majority, but he also knew that he didn't have the votes to impose cloture. Thus, the battle was to try to scrape up enough votes to invoke cloture. In '65 he probably had an easier time with it as several of our bills were passed in '64 and '65. Yet, by all odds he should have had an easier time with it, but he couldn't get it passed because of the Republican opposition and one thing or another. He couldn't

quite get the votes to send it through the Senate. This time Senator Dirksen came around for the bill, pulled enough Republican votes with him, and even though the Democratic margin in the Senate was closer we did get the votes to pass it.

However, at the state level you can put through a lot of non-controversial legislation. But when you get up to something like taxation, where you've got so many lobbies involved in it, or an issue like where to spend your money, where you've got the mental health people pulling on you on one side, the teachers association on another, the colleges on another, and where you've got only so much money to go around and no more, the average legislator is really in a pickle on what to push and what not to push. You wind up with an Appropriations Committee or a Senate Finance Committee which really controls and determines where the money is spent. The bulk of legislators really do not have much influence in it.

A governor gets a lot done on a personal level, personal popularity, personal persuasiveness, because he's hamstrung by restrictions on his office. He doesn't have a cabinet. His attorney general, his lieutenant governor, everybody except the officials he appointed can be for him or against him. He's

got no majority-minority party setup in the legislature. The constitution gives the legislature tremendous power with which he has to cope. If he's an unpersuasive man, he's a failure as governor. If he can wheel and deal under these handicaps, he can get a good program through. If he can get the people behind him on something, public pressure is the best way in the world to get the legislature in Texas to act on a particular thing. I think the same applies to Congress. I've seen this in gun control in the last few months. After Senator Kennedy's assassination, you would have thought that we could have gotten any kind of gun control legislation passed that we would have recommended. We could have recommended confiscating guns, you know, and you'd have thought at the time that this could happen. The mail was running something like 80 per cent in favor of gun control, but within a very few weeks, it completely turned around. Pressure from home vanished. On any type of gun legislation the pressure was the other way. Everybody who didn't like it started writing in, and we wound up with not enough support hardly to get a bill out of the committee. After the period of mourning, the public just laid down on the job. They just really didn't seem to give a hoot whether we passed the bill

or not, from the nature of the public response. Thus, it's awful easy for a congressman to say, "Shoot, nobody at home wants this bill so I'll vote against it. And it will be a safe vote because I won't make the sportsmen mad or the National Rifle Association people mad, and I won't make other people mad either because they're not interested in it." Thus, you can lose a lot of fight that way if you don't keep enough public support behind something. But concerning the legislature in particular, if the man's constituency wants him to vote a certain way, the odds are pretty high he's going to vote that way. This is a truly representative government as far as our legislature is concerned. But a congressman will most of the time do the same thing. Every now and then he'll get up and vote differently but not very often.

Student: What about the technique the President often uses relative to the press on what took place during the previous administration? How does it differ?

Christian: I'm sure all of it is different. All I know on this subject really is what I've been told by reporters. Every President has a different style. I'm sure a President prefers, for example, on news conferences to have reporters in his office sit there and to visit

with them on a more intimate basis, answer any number of questions they have at any length. Let one man ask three or four questions in a row, and if he wants a classification on something, he'll follow up with an answer. This is an informal news conference. President Kennedy liked the formal news conference announced well in advance and televised. This is an entirely different production. Johnson does this to a great deal, too. We've had a number of televised news conferences, but the television extravaganza is a different baby altogether because you can't recognize the same man, for example, to ask all the questions. You can't say Merrimen Smith of UPI asked four questions in a row. Everybody's all spruced up. Their hair's combed. The lady reporters are in great shape. They're all jumping up and down trying to get questions asked on camera. It's a different type thing. It can be very effective.

Student: Who are some of the more effective reporters who cover the White House?

Christian: Well, most of them are pretty highly qualified people. There generally are not very many specialists covering the White House. They have to have a general knowledge of most of it. Some of them have been there a long time. Merriman Smith of UPI has covered

the Presidents, I believe, since the latter days of Roosevelt. Douglas Cornell of AP has been there since early Roosevelt. Well, really wartime Roosevelt--'41 or '42. Most of the reporters came along during Eisenhower's day when the White House really became a sizable beat. In the old days somebody on the beat became the regular reporter who covered the White House as a beat every day, and sat around in the Press Room playing poker or something till something happened. It was a more exclusive club in the old days and right up till Roosevelt's time. With the advent of the televised news conference of Eisenhower's day, you get the big increase in broadcasters who covered the White House. Today we have probably forty regulars, we call them. They are people who are there every day and who cover all the briefings and who are available to cover the President's impromptu news conferences. We have accredited something like 900 reporters-broadcasters. About a third of those might come to a televised news conference. We might have 300.

Student: Do you determine which of these . . .

Christian: No, no. It's just open to anybody accredited. Anybody can come to any news conference. The trouble is unless you cover the White House every day, you

miss half the President's news conferences because you don't get prior warning. You just say, "Come on in the President's office." And that's all the warning you get, and there is no prior announcement of a news conference. But when you televise a news conference, you have to give prior announcement because you have to allow time to get the mobile truck in and get the TV people cleared for time and so forth. Thus, you have to announce it a day or two ahead of time. By then it's a well-known fact that you're having a news conference, and you're going to get a very large attendance at the news conference.

Student: Did Mrs. May Craig come to the office conference after he had been elected or was that with Eisenhower?

Christian: Yes, May Craig retired some time back. A lady named Sarah McClendon who writes for the El Paso Times and two or three other papers has been around for a long time. She sort of inherited May Craig's . . .

Student: Mrs. Craig used to get General Eisenhower quite mad . . .

Christian: Apparently . . . apparently . . . she was a little . . .

Student: I can think of . . .

Christian: Sarah McClendon used to irritate Kennedy. She's the one who asked him the question about the security risks in the State Department and named them on television. She just tried them, indicted them, and



convicted them right there in front of fifty million people on television, and it really irritated him. She asked me a question the other day. When you get into the personalities of it, it shows you some of the things you get into. She said, "Is it true that the President sees Senator Hayden occasionally?" Of course, Senator Hayden is 92 years old. And I said, "Yes, that's true. He does see Senator Hayden." "Well," she said, "Is it true that the President takes the advice of this 92 year-old man who doesn't know where he is half the time?" I said, "My only regret is that a question like that goes into a transcript for people all over this town to see." That's the kind of stuff you get sometimes. It's legitimate really. I guess in the reporters' eye it would be a legitimate question, but I didn't think it was particularly relevant to anything going on.

Student: Especially when they spruced up I thought of Mrs. Craig's hats.

Christian: Oh, yes. She used to wear fancy hats. Televised things are extravaganzas. The President likes them fine. I don't care much for them. I think televised news conferences have a place, but I think they're badly overrated.

Student: The President has had a hard time dealing with the Viet Nam issue.

Christian: So have I. I've given a lot of serious thought to it, but I don't know what to do about it. In looking back I'm sure every President has had credibility problems. I don't know how you could avoid them. Just think back to some of the statements that different Presidents have made and some of the reactions that they've had from people. Take Lincoln, for example. Lord, Lincoln wasn't believed. This country was torn completely apart. Even in the North during the war they didn't believe what he was saying. They didn't believe he knew how to run the war. They didn't believe he told them the truth about what the conditions were or anything else. Different Presidents have made wild campaign statements, and they've not been able to live up to them. Like Wilson: he's going to keep us out of war and all that. Roosevelt campaigned in '32 on cutting the federal budget and in '33 recommended just the opposite. They had credibility problems.

As time goes on you can get your U-2 incidents where in my judgment, looking in retrospect, Eisenhower should have lied about the U-2. I mean, he may think

he should have. I say he should have lied. He didn't have to lie because I don't believe he knew what the U-2 was doing, but when he took the rap for the U-2 flight over Russia, he changed a lot in this world. He was on the verge of having a summit with Khrushchev and was on the verge of visiting the Soviet Union. He threw all that away by saying that, "I'm responsible for the U-2." The Russians would have accepted it if he had said, "I didn't know anything about it. He couldn't admit, though, that he didn't know anything about it. He felt that somebody had to take the rap, and it might as well be him. I think that he saw he made a mistake there. Whether he knew or didn't know he should've let the CIA or somebody take the rap because the President ought not to take that kind of rap. It's just got too many repercussions, and in diplomacy you can get by with it. You can say, "Well, he's a dunce," and then fire some fellow and try to survive. You understand what I'm talking about. It's just something that has been done historically for many, many years.

I think Kennedy was compelled to take the whole rap for the Bay of Pigs. He just had to gut up and say, "It's all my fault," just like it was. Really, possibly he shouldn't have at the time, although this

is a less extreme example. I don't think it hurt anything one way or the other for him to do it.

Arthur Sylvester, who was the Pentagon's public information man during Kennedy's day, was the one who made the speeches on the subject that it was okay to lie to the public. Sometimes you have to. Well, this created a terrible furor, and they accused Kennedy of news management. That was the worst credibility gap in Kennedy's administration--the news management. In looking back he did exactly the same thing we'd done. It's just like history repeating itself. He'd get mad at certain reporters, and he'd try to get back at them in some way, or his public information people would have them investigated and all sorts of stuff like that. But the news management in Kennedy's day turned in a credibility gap in Johnson's day, and a lot of it--I've been there 2 1/2 years now--and a lot of it I have personal knowledge of.

I also have personal knowledge of whether something is really part of the credibility gap or not, and I could recite any number of things that are listed in every book you see concerning cases where the government lied when I know the government didn't lie. But how you ever catch up with it? Either we blundered in some way by changing our tune or didn't handle it

properly or something, you know, and it looked bad; or we leaned over backwards to try to avoid being incredible (laughter) and turned out to be even more so, you know, or we predicted something wrong.

Secretary McNamara used to predict the end of the war all the time (laughter). You know, in his mind he was predicting things on the basis of information he had. He didn't think there was anything particularly wrong with it, but after a while when the war didn't end, why, it became quite a problem. We have learned to be very careful with our predictions. I think during the war in particular it's just natural for a fellow who's involved in it to say everything's shaping up just great, you know. It may very well be that when a man says, "Militarily we've never been in better shape," ninety-nine to one he's exactly right. Also fifty to one, half the people in the country won't believe him when he says it. Thus, you've really got a believability gap as much as a credibility gap. I think it's really unfortunate when a lot of people don't believe what the government says.

And yet, people haven't believed the government long before Lyndon Johnson or John Kennedy or Dwight Eisenhower ever got there. You think back to your younger days, and people have always suspected what people in public life say. You know, they try to

scrape the barnacles off some guy's political statement saying, "He's just making a political statement," or "He's just a demagogue," or something. That's gone on a long time, but we have gotten into what I think is a pretty dangerous situation, and I'm going to accept part of the blame for it. I don't think that the government is pure on this by any means. I mean, we make mistakes, too. I think the press makes an awful lot of mistakes that it doesn't have to account for. A reporter can write a story that's completely erroneous and put an account of something in the annals of the credibility gap by what he's done whether it deserves to be or not. And a lot of little things get mixed up in this--slips of the tongue--or perhaps the President can't make slips of the tongue.

President Johnson is a man who talks a great deal. He's not a silent man. He speaks out on things. He makes speeches all over the place. He has conferences constantly. He's always in a business of communication to somebody, with somebody. He's more vulnerable because of that. I'm sure they've never accused Calvin Coolidge of having any credibility gap. He never said anything (laughter). But when you're just exposed all the time, your little mistakes are going to be blown

all out of proportion as to what they are. He had one slip of the tongue. He had a slip of the tongue in Korea in a speech I heard, and I knew the setting of it. It was a highly emotional meeting with a bunch of soldiers, and it was right near the DMZ where they'd had trouble, and guys had been killed, and it was a pretty emotional setting. The President was very emotionally affected by where he was---just in an enlisted man's chow hall. He made an off-the-cuff speech in which he was getting a little more, you know, extravagant in his praise of these men, the job they were doing, and everything, and he mentioned that his great-grandfather died at the Alamo. He didn't have a great-grandfather at the Alamo, and he knew that. He had a forebear at the Battle of San Jacinto, which story he'd told a thousand times, but it got twisted into the Alamo. Well, he went right on, and he never knew he said it. And that same evening I told him that they were making quite an issue out of the fact he had a granddaddy that died at the Alamo. Well, he said he didn't say that. I said, "Yes, sir." "No, I didn't. I know what I said. I didn't say any such thing." (Laughter) I finally, though it took me some while, convinced him he had said it. Well, it was a slip of the tongue. He wasn't trying to snow anybody.

It was a story he had told a thousand times about his grandfather at San Jacinto or his great-granduncle or somebody. You just figured well, it was a goof. He just got to talking about the Alamo and then tried to talk about San Jacinto, and I stayed with the Alamo and got it kind of garbled up. That's all it meant to him. Some of the reporters made quite an issue out of it. "Well, it just proves he can't tell the truth." (Laughter) And it really was quite an issue. The Dallas News made a big to-do about it. To us that's just sort of silly.

Another little example of this sort of thing-- this is just petty stuff but it shows you how you can get things walked around and you have to live with them the rest of your life--occurred when he came out on the ranch one day to go to church in Fredricksburg. Some photographers were sitting beside the road in a car waiting to follow him to church wherever he happened to be going. He passed them by and drove on down the road, the Secret Service car right behind him. They finally realized it was him, and they piled in their car and drove like crazy to catch him way on down the road. Well, one of them was a reporter. I think there must have been a reporter with them or the photographer told the reporter. The published story said that these



men drove in excess of 80 miles per hour trying to catch President Johnson going to church. Well, that's fine. We had a big scandal--the President was going 80 miles an hour . . . 85 miles an hour or whatever it was. Somebody said it wasn't really 85 but 90. We were going 90 down the road. Well, I talked to the Secret Service, and they said, "We never exceeded the 70 miles an hour speed limit." You know the Secret Service men (laughter). And I said, "Figure out how long it took you to get from the ranch to the church." They've got everything logged. See in the present day they use Secret Service logs. They figured that from the house to the church they averaged 44.9 miles an hour. That's the best they could tell. They swore they never went over 70. Of course, these cars were way behind them trying to catch them so I don't know how fast they were going. The original story never said anything other than, "Photographers drove 85 miles an hour trying to catch up with President Johnson on the way to church." It didn't say the President drove that fast. It said they drove that fast, although they assumed the President was also going pretty fast. All right, by the time this had made three or four cycles the story became "President Johnson drove 85 miles an hour to church today." Well, a lot of us hit the ceiling over it. But then Newsweek came out

the following week, and it made a big credibility problem out of it because I had told the press exactly what the Secret Service told me. They said they never exceeded the speed limit. They said that the average miles are this, the time it took them was this. They said that the average speed that was driven was 44.9 counting the time on the ranch road, counting time passing through some little old towns or something. That's the only figure I have on record as to how fast they went. He only drove 44.9 miles an hour. Newsweek comes out and says, "Well, the President really drove 85 miles an hour because the photographers clocked him." They never clocked him or any such thing. "White House Press Secretary said the President only drove 44.9 miles an hour. The White House is lying about it." How do you win? I almost just folded my tent (laughter). I talked to the Newsweek man. I showed him where I didn't say he drove any 44.9 miles an hour. I said that was the average speed in going 20 miles or whatever it was. "Well, I guess that's right." But Newsweek didn't change and couldn't back up. They'd already made the error. They didn't correct it. It's lived with us. It has shown up in several books since

then as an example of how incredible we are.

Well, I think there's a little incredibility somewhere else involved in something like this. Every now and then I voiced it to the dismay of some of the press. But I think they have just as much responsibility to be accurate as I have, and I try to be accurate, and I know they try to be accurate. However, you get into these things, and when I get caught with something that doesn't quite jive with what may eventually happen--I may goof up something--there's no way for me to bail out of it. I've had it. I'm using me as an example for anybody putting out any public information. Yet a reporter or a broadcaster can make a colossal mistake, and it's gone. You know, it's implanted in the public minds some ways. Unless you threaten to sue them or something there's never any correction made on anything.

At the last news conference the President had CBS on the Walter Cronkite show quoted him as saying that the President threatened to invade North Viet Nam. None of the other reporters at the news conference picked that little item up. It's a mighty juicy little item, but he just never said any such thing, but CBS still carried it. And after CBS carried it, we spent the rest of the night answering telephone

calls from all over the world from people wanting to know whether the President had threatened to invade North Viet Nam. And it took us about a day to get that snuffed out. The reporter never did correct it and never did go on a subsequent program and say, "I made a mistake. The President didn't say that." He said, "We are not invading North Viet Nam." He didn't admit that he had been at error. He just completely misquoted the President and went the other direction. For some reason we escaped a lot of damage on that. Potentially it could have caused us all sorts of grief.

I'm just using a little time to show that credibility cuts both ways, it is a monumental problem. All press and press officers ought to watch it very carefully because when a mistake is made involving the President, the strongest man in the world, his credibility all around this earth is questioned, not just on this little stuff but through misquoting, misinterpreting. In some cases maybe we're too fuzzy where we get misinterpreted, so a lot of times it's our fault. Or maybe we say things sometimes that don't sound like they're quite what the fact is. So we're all somewhat at fault.

Student: May I ask a question?

Christian: Yes, sir.

Student: What about the transition of the administration coming up? What's been the thinking? What's been done? What will be done?

Christian: Not much has been done this far. It's pretty much up to the man coming in as to what he desires to do. Back at the time when it appeared that the President was going to be a candidate for reelection, I had a conversation with Herb Klein of Mr. Nixon's staff. He was a newspaper man in San Diego, but he contacted me about setting up an informal arrangement sort of thing to keep in touch with each other before and during the campaign so we could begin some relationship that might be needed if Nixon won the election. And I would assume that he and maybe some of the other Nixon assistants will have that same informal arrangement with the Humphrey and McCarthy people during the campaign. Now there won't be any particular relationship with the White House on this, at least there hasn't been thus far. If Nixon were elected I would imagine that his people will come on in for sessions with the present White House staff in November and begin trying to prepare for a smooth transition. I just have to assume that would happen. If Humphrey,

for example, were elected, it really wouldn't need to be very much of that. Humphrey's there all the time and is familiar with the operations. His staff is already pretty familiar with it so you have a different context.

I think in the Eisenhower-Truman transition there was not a great deal of fraternization prior to the time President Eisenhower took over. I think there had been some bitterness, and they really just weren't on very good terms with each other. And I think they had some rough times. It took Eisenhower some time to get settled in.

I went through a transition in the governor's office which could have been a lot smoother than it was. Well, I went through two transitions actually. The first time when Shivers left and Daniel came in, there was pretty close touch between the two staffs because the two men hadn't been opponents in the previous election and were able to really go in fairly smoothly, although every governor goes in behind the eight-ball in terms of getting behind in his mail and all that. The Connally-Daniel transition was not quite as smooth because (1) Connally didn't have a staff. His campaign staff and his office staff were

two different operations. He was a little late picking some of his staff people, and by then, you know, there was a lot that could have been done that wasn't done. And (2) he had had to run a very hard November campaign against his Republican opponent, something nobody had ever had to do before. Thus, he had less time to be concerned with transition. He had to get elected. In the old days if a man were nominated in July or August, he had all that period to work with the incumbent and try to make it smooth.

I would imagine that most of it in Washington this fall will be done on the staff level. You can't impose yourself on the other guy. I mean, if Humphrey's man or Nixon's man who wants to be press secretary comes in to see me, I'm in no position, you know, to really say, "Well, this is the way you ought to do it." Heck, it may not be the way to do it. He may have a better idea than I have. I think in my particular case I'll just give them everything they want. I'll give them everything they want and try to help them all they want. The personnel changes rather drastically between administrations. The Kennedy-Johnson transition was the only one, I believe . . . of course, Roosevelt-Truman, but Truman pretty well put his own people in very shortly after Roosevelt's

death. Johnson kept the Kennedy people; he didn't release any of the Kennedy people. Most of them eventually left, some in '64 and some in '65. But there was no real transition problems. There were the same people still doing everything. That won't be the case this year, of course, if Nixon is elected. He'll want to bring in his own people. I would imagine that the Vice President, if he's elected, has his own people he wants to bring in, and most of the present White House staff has got no desire to stay anyway. You know, a lot of us, all we can think about is getting home, and there's a certain wear and tear. You look to the date, you know, well, that's the end of me, thank God (chuckle). But there won't be much staff left over I wouldn't imagine.

I'm not sure how it will work, but I imagine in either case it will be fairly smooth whether a Republican or Democrat is elected knowing the way President Johnson operates and knowing the way all of us feel around him. I don't believe anybody would try to make it difficult for anyone who gets elected President. The President has a hard enough time without having people try to undercut him, you know, before he even gets started. I think the biggest need in this country is for the new President to get off to



a flying start and be able to govern. I sincerely believe it's becoming more and more difficult for a President really to govern this country. I think it's something we had better reverse pretty soon, or we're going to be in deep trouble. Credibility is part of it. No matter who is at fault, I think it is essential that a President be somewhat of a hero, somewhat of a fellow above reproach. Not that you don't criticize him and knock him and call him names and everything else because that's going to happen, but at least put him on a pedestal a little bit above everybody else because he is the fellow who has to decide whether you're going to live or die generally. I'm afraid that the whole trend in this country is towards making it more difficult for the President to govern, more difficult for him to communicate, more difficult for him to get public support. I hope that doesn't come about. I don't think it's as bad as it sounds. It hasn't gotten into that situation, but I think there's a thin line between anarchy in this country and an effective national government. And there are lots of things pulling on it right now.

Student: You mentioned earlier about the possibility of the leaders in the House and Senate imposing some party

discipline. I always thought it was very weak.

Do you think anything will come of it? Can they  
impose on \_\_\_\_\_?

Christian: A lot of it is just trying to get a guy to be silent. I'm trying to think of an example, say, the poverty program. You can exert some party discipline in passing a program like that by finally working out a program in committee that is pretty much a Democratic program. A fellow may be against it, but it's the Democratic program, and this is something he ought to pass. Now if he's just so much against it that he can't do anything about it, he may stay in his district or something. He may be gone or he may just be quiet. Where he's been a local opponent of the thing he may just agree to, well, I'll let you have a fair run with it. I won't try to torpedo you on it. Or obviously, there are lots of tradeouts on legislation--both here and at the national level. You give me a vote here, and I won't oppose your water system in Topeka. You have to do this. That's why the Public Works Bill always looks like a Christmas tree because the people in Congress do use bills like that to help the whole thing out, you know. Eisenhower used to very religiously veto the Public Works Bills everytime it

came to him. It was just full of stuff. It was idiotic, but it was a product of a system that was sort of a necessary evil, I guess, a system of getting votes for a program.

You can exert some discipline by, oh, just the fact that you may want the President against you. You may want a good voting record for the President. Well, it has been easy for Texas congressmen to vote for administrative programs under Johnson than it was under Kennedy because this is the President's program. You can go back to your district and say, "Yes, I voted for the President." Well, the average citizen you know, is going to say, "That's good, that's what you ought to do. He has to recommend these things. You ought to vote for him when you can." It takes a little bit of the problem away from it for a lot of them. It helps when the President is popular in your state, and you don't want to offend his supporters. You don't want somebody at home like your newspaper editor to say, "Why did ole Joe vote against the President's program? The President had a good program, and you were against it." Well, it may hurt this guy politically not to be a good solid Democrat right about that time.

There's some discipline that can be exerted if any party leader in the Senate is a very strong man, he just has ways of getting votes which a weak leader can't get. He knows a guy's weaknesses; he knows what he has to have; he knows how to exert influence on him through someone else, through some other member or even his wife, or through a constituent or through something. I mean, if a guy is a real sharp leader, he can make most members of his party come up to the line on something. If he's not willing to exert leadership, they'll run off like a covey of quail. And that's happened, too. We've had both good and bad congressional leaders. I mean, a speaker like Sam Rayburn could get a whole lot of votes behind something because he knew what party discipline was, and he knew how to exercise it. He knew how to help a guy or hurt a guy. He knew how to reward a man or freeze him out. He knew people wanted to be on the good side of Mr. Sam, you know. You didn't want to get him mad at you. And in our democracy that's just the nature of the thing. That is party discipline. We've had other folks, I'm sure, in both houses who haven't been that effective and yet have other ways of trying to get it just by appeal or some other method.

A lot of it is exerted in how you appoint people to committees. If you have a vacancy on a committee and a freshman who wants on there very badly, you might exact a little bit from him in exchange for getting something he wants. \_\_\_\_\_.

I'll put you on that committee, but when I come to you and want your help on foreign aid, I don't want you telling me you can't vote for the program because the people don't want it. Of course, you just remember that you've got to stand up like a man when the time comes. That's part of the discipline.

Student: We know a good demonstration of that was, of course, Johnson himself as majority leader of the Senate. Do you foresee an increase or improvement in a more formal means of imposing party discipline?

Christian: More formal means?

Student: Such as . . .

Christian: No, I don't think that . . . such as . . . go ahead.

Student: . . . seniority on committees or flagrant violations like we had, oh, in '54 on . . .

Christian: Yes, you can. They knocked John Bell Williams out of his seniority for supporting Goldwater. But that's a rarity. When you get right down to it, this country operates as it does because we have a two-party system,

and you don't have to have complete party loyalty and party discipline to function. But if you have too much defection from a party, you get off into a system entirely different from ours, and it is dangerous to get out of a party system. It's nice to be able to say, "Yea, I'm an independent. I vote for the man." That's great, and a lot of people do it, and I guess I've done it from time to time. It's just a custom here in Texas where you have a one-party state. You vote for a man for personality reasons usually for governor. But if you get too much away from the party or if you have three parties--Democrat, Republican, and Independent--you've got a pretty tough system when it comes to getting anything moved. If you need legislation you have to go by party lines. You have to get something hammered out that appeals to a majority of the Democrats, say, in the House of Representatives. You've worked it out to where you think you can get most of them to go with you. Then you set out to pick up a few Republicans. But you're not aiming at those Republicans when you start the program. You're aiming at getting a majority of your own party with you, and you get it by various means. A guy is philosophically for you. A guy will

go along with you because he doesn't care one way or the other. He'll go along with you because someone in his district wants him to. He'll go along with you because of some favor the speaker has done for him or the chairman of the committee or something. He might have any number of reasons for going along with you on the vote. But that is party discipline. That doesn't mean he won't go with you on something else. If he votes with the party 80 per cent of the time he's pretty much a staunch party man. If he votes with you 30 per cent of the time he's a fellow you can't count on. In a real showdown you might get him but only by extreme measures. By and large you can't figure that that fellow is going to be with you. He'll give you lip service and nothing else. The nut of it is it works pretty well this way. I think extreme measures of party discipline aren't really called for. You're not going to get 100 per cent of a man all the time, a President isn't. There's probably something wrong if you do. I've always thought that a fellow who had a 100 per cent voting record is not his own man by anybody's measurement. There's something fishy about it. I mean, a guy who's just for TMA or AFL or whoever adds up their voting lists and who say, "This is the greatest man

there ever was. He had a 100 good votes and no bad votes," is unreal. It means that somebody just told this guy how to vote everytime he voted, or at least that's what it looks like. It may not be that at all. I don't know of any member in the Senate or in the House who has voted with the President 100 per cent of the time. But there's an awful lot of them who've voted 60, 65, 75 per cent of the time. That's enough discipline to get most of your programs passed. I sure wouldn't substitute the present way of doing it for any other way because I think this is the workable political way of going about it. I don't believe in cracking guy's skill if he doesn't agree with you all the time.

It is party loyalty on elections that is hard for Americans to take, I think. I mean they want a little breathing room on voting for office holders. I think a lot of people do. In these areas where there's very strict party breakdown you do get a whole lot more discipline of voters. I think here in Texas, particularly, you really don't have much discipline as far as the voter is concerned. He can do about what he chooses to do, and I think it ought to stay that way. It amuses me that party loyalty



now is an entirely different thing than it was sixteen years ago. I remember in 1952, a fellow who was a non-loyalist was the worst thing in the world to people who were staying with the Democratic Party. This year many people who are leaving the Democratic Party for one reason or another are the same ones who were yelling loyalty back then. The people who were claiming they were loyal to the Texas Democratic Party back in 1952 are in the opposite camp now. I don't know who's right and who's wrong on it, but a certain number of people have to be loyal to a party and not just a man. I think we cease to function when everybody can say, "Well, if they don't nominate my man I'm quitting." Now this happened to the Republicans in 1964. Gosh, many Republican office holders just didn't do anything. The Republican Party almost died. It would have been disastrous. We would have lost it. We've got to have a whipping boy. (Laughter) If it happens this year with regards to the Wallace movement or if there's a fourth party movement this year, I think we're much more in dire trouble in the long haul than we were in '48 or earlier when we had different splinter organizations. Once the guy is nominated I just feel that a lot of folks just swallow and go ahead.

I don't know what else they can do to keep the system going. Nobody's perfect. If the wrong fellow gets nominated I may have an awful time voting Democratic in November, but that's the way it goes (laughter).

Student: As far as President Johnson was concerned was the right man nominated last night? (Laughter)

Christian: We could have done worse. (Laughter) I don't think there was any doubt he was getting the nomination. The rest of it was just sort of the windmill tilting. Sometimes I think a lot of this stuff is engineered to get a lot of publicity and to try to increase the interest in the thing because I think Nixon had this sewed up a long time ago. It would have taken a miracle to unseat him.

Student: Were you surprised at the Vice Presidential selection?

Christian: I sure was. I sure was. I don't know how that came about. Agnew is a good man. He's been a pretty good governor of Maryland. He's a new man, but he's pretty impressive. He seemed pretty stable and not a reactionary or extreme liberal, but sort of a moderate Republican.

Student: What is the President going to do in the election?

Christian: I doubt if he'll do much of anything in the way of campaigning. He might get out and defend his program

for somebody in Texas, but as far as getting on the stump and campaigning I don't think he has any desire to or intention of doing it.

Student: Well, let me ask something else. Presuming that the Senate is still going to drag its feet on this Fortas nomination, is there any possibility that the President will use an immediate liaison to sort of mobilize public opinion?

Christian: I sort of doubt it on that particular issue. I think they'll try to drag their feet on the nomination as long as they possibly can. The longer they do, you know, it might get tougher as it goes along as far as we're concerned, but he might speak out in news conferences and things like that as he did the other day, but I wouldn't imagine he would . . .

Student: Is he not going to put up a fight for him?

Christian: Well, he's making his fight. The way you get a man confirmed is to call a fellow in your office and show him the error of his ways (laughter). A lot of that has been happening. Of course, in this particular case it's an individual Republican-Democratic issue. There's a fairly large group of Republicans fighting it strictly on political grounds. This is a hard one to tackle because they weren't doing it for any motive other than the fact that the Republicans wanted

the appointment. That's what it amounted to. And then you get a combination. You get a few of the Southern Democrats involved in it, and it doesn't take many to conduct a successful filibuster. Cloture votes can be very close. That will determine what the President's next step is. Right now he'd like to have enough votes for cloture. He'll make a fight for it whenever it's necessary to make a fight for it. He doesn't want to add to public spectacle of a Supreme Court chief justice going through this. We think it's unfortunate that it has to happen, in fact, I'm sure it will all be forgotten in time but this putting a man in as chief justice under somewhat of a cloud that it would have to be under is distasteful. Well, is there anything else or do you want to break up?

Student: Mr. Christian, do you think your present credibility problem was in, let's say, part of that trend?

Christian: To be perfectly frank I think that there is a feeling among a lot of folks now in particular that Texans have sort of had their day. They want somebody else to have it. I think there is somewhat of a prejudice against people from the South and West. I don't think it's as bad as some would like to depict it. I think

that some of us are guilty of overplaying it. A time or two I've made statements to reporters about, "You guys are anti-Texans." They'd come back with always, "You're just super-sensitive. We're not nearly as anti-Texans as you think we are. But sometimes you just go out of your way to act like sensitive Texans and bring this all on yourself." But still you get a lot of stories in the eastern papers about "Johnson Appoints Texas Corny," "Johnson's Staff--All Texas Cornies," stuff like that. It seems as if a President ought not have many people from his own state that he happens to know on his staff, that he ought to get someone else. You didn't hear this much when Roosevelt had almost all New York people. Kennedy had virtually no one except New York and Massachusetts people and one or two from the Midwest. They called his the Irish Mafia, you know, not in a really mean way. People are sort of titillated by it. You know Irish Mafia, rah rah, some of that type of thing. But it is a little bit different in Texas, and I see it in conversation sometimes with liberal senators in particular some of whom are pretty narrow minded when it comes to anybody from this part of the country. They've accepted it because it came about, but they'll be awfully glad when it ends. Some of them try to

hide it, but it's there. And a lot of it, I'm sure, will vanish. But you have to remember that starting with John Nance Garner through Sam Rayburn and Lyndon Johnson, Texas has had a rather commanding role in national politics . . . national government for a long time--back to the twenties. It may be that it was a little bit out of proportion to the size and influence of the state during some of those early days, and it has lasted a long time--Johnson in the Senate, Johnson as President, Rayburn there so long. I think there's sort of a reaction to that really beginning to set in. The Texas influence is certainly not going to be the same on January 21 when you see the new cast up there. We may get a little taste of how it feels not to have a speaker or a majority leader or vice-president or President to go crying for when we really need them because a lot of these decisions in government regardless of what anybody says sometimes are geographic things. An influential congressional delegation can get an awful lot done for a state. An influential speaker can indirectly do a lot for a state and so forth on down the line. We're going to set up in Austin in just a few days a demonstration project on low-cost housing.

Student: Just why in Austin?

Christian: Because, by golly, it's a good place to do it (laughter).

Maybe it could have been Wichita, Kansas, but Wichita, Kansas, why? This is not going to mean a great deal of money for Austin or anything of that nature, but it is a project that the whole country is going to be looking at. How do you build low cost houses and put poor families in decent housing at \$30 a month? Use this for an example of the whole country. Well, Austin is an example for the whole country. I'm sure it could have been at Whittier, California, or Waverly, Minnesota, but it isn't. It's Austin, Texas. Next year it won't be Austin, Texas (laughter). It might be Whittier or Waverly. I think that you have a lot of that. I don't think it's compelling. I kid these reporters a lot of whom are pretty anti-Johnson who like to tease good Texans. But I tell a lot of them that along about a year from now they're going to wish they had old Johnson back, particularly after they've frozen to death up in Waverly (laughter). That's when they're going to wish they were back in Austin. But a lot of that will vanish, I think, after the President is gone. It's a perfectly normal thing to happen. We all look forward to our future projects of the state

which our congressional delegations are not going to have to get without our help.

Student: Is that really one of the true press stories or untrue about your pressmen complaining about our Driskill Hotel?

Christian: They don't like the Driskill that's for sure. They all stay at the Crest now. I'm the only one at the Driskill. I'm going to hold out to the bitter end (laughter). Make them walk all the way from the Crest to the Driskill. That's my opinion.

Student: Good, good. All we Austinites were quite affronted. We decided that if they preferred San Antonio . . .

Christian: Well, the funny thing is, it was about a 50-50 split. A lot of them liked to go to San Antonio. A lot of them liked to come to Austin. You can't satisfy them. We've stayed in San Antonio. They've complained in delegations--15 member delegations, "Next time we go to Texas we want to go to Austin." Well, fine, I'll see what I can work out. We came to Austin, and I swear there was another delegation saying, "We want to go back to San Antonio. Why'd you bring us to Austin?" So we switch back and forth. We've been both places. They'd just rather not come to Texas, period. Sir?

Student: You sounded pretty confident that the press would be staying next winter in Waverly rather than Whittier.



Christian: Well, I'm not about to tell them that they'll be spending it in Whittier (laughter). I'd think that was letting them in on a secret. I guess it's going to be a razor close presidential election. I thought that Republican Convention was just about the dullest thing I ever saw on television, and I imagine the Democratic is going to be just about as bad, but the election ought to be a real humdinger.

Student: Do you know anything about the Humphrey strategy?

Christian: I honestly haven't had anything to do with it. I've got my own problems. I just think that in a low of places it's going to be so close that it will be 1960 all over. Nixon carried 28 states in 1960 and just barely lost the election. Two or three states are going to make the difference this time, I think, and then Wallace in there compounds it. In Texas I think Wallace hurts Humphrey almost as much as he does Nixon. There are a lot of blue collar union people who are in the Wallace camp. I saw something the other day where Ray Evans of the AFL-CIO said something like 25 per cent, he figured, were Wallace supporters. Well, that just really hurts the Democratic Party when you lose union people. And yet Wallace is also cutting into the Republicans down here so you can't figure who he's really going to hurt. The Texas

vote may be one of the most important, and it is a state where Wallace will have some influence. So it's unknown. You'd have to put Texas completely unknown on how it would go. I thought that if Nixon had put Percy on the ticket with him it would just pretty well cinch Illinois for him, but he didn't do it. Why, I don't know. Maybe his southerners wouldn't go along with it. Maybe Percy turned it down. We'll never know. But now Illinois is a toss up. The Democrats have as good a chance as the Republicans do. New York with the present line up, you think, would remain Democratic. California nobody knows. They vote so crazy out there nobody knows. And Nixon piled up some big votes in a lot of those primary states without any opposition. He was totalling sizable votes running against nobody, like in Indiana. You have to put Indiana in his camp. You'd have to think the same thing about Nebraska and the other states that had primaries where the Democratic primaries attracted a lot of attention because they were Republican states.

Humphrey's going to have a real problem, I think, on a Vice Presidential candidate. He's going to go to the same pros that Nixon did, obviously, today.

Apparently Nixon had a lot of candidates and a hard time coming down to one. He could have taken the fellow that was the least offensive. This may have been finally what he came down to. Possibly he couldn't get Lindsey agreed to or he couldn't get Percy agreed to or Tower or somebody. He just had to pick a fellow everybody would agree to. Well, if Humphrey's in the same shape, he's got some pretty lean pickings anyway in trying to get a man to do him any good. You can't really look at anybody in the picture right now and analyze how much real ballot help you're going to get out of a fellow who's Vice Presidential nominee. Teddy Kennedy could give you some ballot help.

Student: How about John Connally?

Christian: He'd do it in Texas. You get beyond those two, and I can't think of a single potential candidate that would really make that much difference.

Student: On the national scene, do you think Connally holds influence because of his association with the presidential assassination which would give him a name and a weight to a number of voters that others might not have?

Christian: Well, it might have at one time. I don't know if it does now, though, because it's been so long. I wouldn't

imagine it would have much weight now. Most governors are pretty well looked at nationally by how attractive they are, how well they speak, whether they're magnetic people, you know, or whether they look like political hacks. That's about the way people judge a governor. They don't really know what governors are doing unless a man is out actively running for something all the time like Romney was. He was a well-known governor because he was running for President. He was exposed. Rockefeller, Reagan, others who sought national office are well-known, while Connally is probably the best known Democratic governor now. Humphrey is going to have all the geographical, sectional, religious, liberal-conservative pressures that Nixon probably had today. I don't believe any human being could tell you who'd be Democratic Vice Presidential nominee if Humphrey got it. I don't think Humphrey could tell you who he'd pick, and he probably hoped that Nixon would make such a shambles that nobody would want it anyway (laughter).

Student: Do you think the resentment of the working press felt against Nixon after his outburst in '60 and '62 is going to hurt him?

Christian: I don't think so. I think most working reporters are

liberal Democrats. Most newspaper publishers are moderate to conservative Republicans. Excuse me. I don't think most reporters really reflect much view anyway in the way they cover somebody, and Nixon's not an unpopular man to reporters. He's pretty open and tries to be nice. They all suspect him, however.

Student: Were they resentful of some of the statements he made about them?

Christian: Possibly . . . more than likely. Yes, some of them were because he tried to blame everything on the press, but we've tried to do that, too (laughter). It's not strictly the problems of Republicans to blame the press.

Student: Well, what do you think you'd rather be, a press secretary for a President or a governor?

Christian: I want to be in private life. I've enjoyed being a press secretary for a long, long time. You get a certain satisfaction out of working in something like this, but I'm really ready to retire and turn it over to somebody else and let them get bloodied for awhile.

Gantt: Well, it's been awful nice of you to take this time. We really do appreciate this. It's been one of the most interesting sessions that we've had.

Christian: I have a feeling we got awfully far afield, though,  
but I hope . . .

Gantt: Well, this is all the better, I think. We didn't  
have any planned course of action, just let it  
flow freely.

Christian: I'm thinking about teaching a course here next year.

Gantt: Good.

Christian: I'm trying to think of an appropriate subject (laughter).  
I don't believe that anybody's ever written a textbook  
that will tell you 90 per cent of what you go through  
on almost anything that involves any sort of success  
in government, in getting a legislative program  
through or anything else. You look back and wonder  
how you ever did it. There are no guidelines to follow.

Gantt: I think this is something that is really needed and  
as I said at the beginning, I think this is one of  
the problems of our political science courses. We're  
too highly theoretical and not practical enough, and  
that's why we've tried to bring in people who've been  
actual practioners and have seen what goes on.  
Incidentally, on the way out here we were talking about  
the possibility of President Johnson teaching here, and  
we said we would like to see President Johnson teach  
a course on the federal budget (laughter).

Christian: I really would for so few people understand it. I don't think there's a man in this country who has a deeper knowledge and understanding of how you spend federal dollars and how you get the maximum effect out of a dollar than he does. He's a master at the mathematics of the budget and has an uncanny memory for these things. You can't keep up with him on it. He'll tell me to tell the press this, this, and this, and I'll be writing furiously trying to get the gist of what he's telling me. He's popping figures so fast that I can't even keep up with it. It would be a real course and a highly unusual course--some of the things he could teach here if he'd just do it. And I hope he will.

I think in this school of public affairs he carries out what he envisions, which is to try to bring people in here for lectures--people who are very top in whatever field it is. His idea is to bring the Barry Goldwaters and the Dean Rusk, and the Willard Wirtzs, and the Arthur Goldbergs, everybody who's had anything to do with government for the last twenty years if they're still able to walk. You get them here, compensate them adequately for their time, and expose these people to students in this part of this country.

I think we have a real dirth of this type of thing. We get a lot of lecturers, and a lot of good lecturers, a lot of good visitors, but we don't have a steady stream of this. We don't have a real exposure here to people who have really made things work. Now look at Dean Acheson. You know he could come down here and have the doggonedest course you ever saw on foreign policy. And he'd better. Or important senators, old time senators who really understand the workings--Lister Hill on education and others like that. If we had the money we could really have something at the university if it'd just pan out. But you've got to pan; you can't pinch the pennies and expect to get that type of man down here because he's got too many demands on his time. But it will be interesting to see if any of this ever comes about.