

Frank Moore, Assistant to the President for Congressional Liaison

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Transcript

Young

We will first concentrate on the Congressional liaison staff in the White House and in the Executive Office setting. Then we will move to discuss the Congressional work of the staff, and try to get some general perspectives on the Carter Presidency. For the record the discussion is off the record and all here understand that in the interest of free exchange and candor what's said in the room doesn't go outside the room. Transcripts are first given to the former staff participants for their review and editing, after which the edited versions and the reviewed versions will be made available for scholarly research purposes. Frank, would you start out by giving us a general overview, calling on the others at the appropriate time?

Moore

Congressional liaison really began in May of 1976. I was the national finance director for the campaign and the deputy campaign director for the southeastern states. I raised money for the first thirteen months, and then Morris Dees came over from Alabama to head up the fundraising for the rest of the campaign. I was glad to see him because I didn't enjoy raising money that much.

I then began concentrating on thirteen states, beginning with Virginia and ending in Texas, where primaries were yet to be held. The last primaries were on May 25 in Kentucky and Arkansas. Those were on Tuesday. We recognized that we were winning primaries even before the big primary on June the 6th in Ohio and California, which put us over the top. We began to see by that time that we needed a presence in Washington. We had a Washington office that consisted of Peter Bourne and a couple of volunteers at Dupont Circle above a drugstore. Some of you may have been there to see it. Immediately after the May 25th primaries, I moved in with Peter Bourne. We opened a Washington office as a satellite of the Atlanta office. If you remember, we ran our campaign out of Atlanta, not out of Washington.

After about a month in that office we were able to get space in the DNC [Democratic National Committee] building which is the Airline Pilot Association building on Mass Avenue. For internal reasons we didn't call it a Congressional liaison office before the convention. The convention was in July. I wasn't doing Congressional liaison work really. I was working with the different delegations up on the Hill, trying to coordinate their Congressional races and what few Senate races we could work with. It was the first time we had been through the federal election law. Nobody knew what you could do.

Everybody was afraid after Watergate that if they spent ten dollars on a bumper sticker, they would violate a federal campaign act and go to jail. They didn't know what you could do and couldn't do.

Bob Thomson was the resident expert then. He was working for the Senate campaign committee. Unfortunately I didn't know Bob at that time. I was going to a meeting on the Hill with Dan Rostenkowski, who had called a meeting of the Illinois delegation. Jim O'Hara, who was head of the Michigan delegation, called a meeting of his group. [Edward] Kennedy called one for the Mass. delegation. We went through about thirteen of those meetings so that we could explain what we were doing. We were an unknown quantity to them. We explained how our campaign was going, what we were doing, what we thought could be done, that we wanted money, and that we wanted to share storefronts. That was really our conception of Congressional liaison and how I became known on the Hill as the Congressional liaison person.

I never even knew I was going to be in the White House. In fact I thought I'd move back to Georgia and do something there. After the convention I continued in that role in the same office. Until after the election, we stayed upstairs in the DNC office. Then we moved over to HEW [Health, Education and Welfare] in the transition headquarters. I was the only paid person. We had Missy Mandel as a volunteer. Liz Stevens was volunteering in that office. She may be known to many of you from Washington. Joe Duffy and Anne Wexler were volunteering. We shared office space. I think that Ron Royal and maybe Joe Mitchell were working there as volunteers then. When we got over in the transition office, Dan Tate began working with us as a volunteer. He was a full time Senate aide but his principal loaned him to the Carter effort. I can't remember the exact date when I knew I was going to be an Assistant to the President on the Congressional Liaison staff, but it was very close to January the 20th.

Tate

[REDACTED]

Moore

You didn't have a job and I didn't have one. I didn't know I was going to have one. So we didn't have a lot of time to sit back and say, How are we going to organize the office? Are we going to have these people or those people? We got in the White House with a total staff of thirteen people. That consisted of myself, Mrs. [Grace Sloane] Vance, who had worked for Anne and Joe, Cy Vance's sister-in-law, my secretary, Rick Merrill on the House side, Valerie Pinson I believe, Dan Tate on the Senate side by himself, Jim Free and some support staff. We had three people working the House, one person working the Senate and me working both of them.

Democrats had been out of office for eight years. Because of some campaign rhetoric there were some high expectations for a Democratic White House. Pet legislation had been kept on the back burner, and patronage jobs or appointments had not been available to Democratic Congressional people. We were absolutely deluged with telephone calls. Somebody put a counter on it, and recorded between two and three thousand calls a day. We were understaffed and overworked due in part to our many pieces of legislation.

The first things we put up were the economic recovery act and the emergency natural gas act. The natural gas act passed rather quickly. The economic stimulation was worked out at the Pond House and in Plains. Dan Tate helped me with the protocol and trip. We fell into the job of doing the protocol, making up lists during the transitions, and making courtesy calls for appointments. If somebody was being considered for the Cabinet, Dan and I would call around and ask various people, What do you think about Jim Schlesinger? What do you know about this or other names being mentioned? We would pass those comments back to Plains. Dan, I think you and I went down to Sea Island for the first meeting of the Cabinet before the inauguration. Those were the functions of the Congressional liaison at that time.

The point I'm trying to make is that we were not at that time working on legislation. We were not planning strategy, how we were going to get the votes or call on committee chairmen. We were doing protocol lists and conformation calls. We realized we had a lot of legislation up there. We had overloaded the circuits. We needed more staff. The press had critical stories about Congressional liaison operations for some of the reasons I've mentioned. We needed more staff. We wanted someone to head up the house. I started looking around, and met with Irv Sprague, who was working for the speaker. He ran the Democratic policy committee. The speaker instructed him to help Moore get somebody for the House. We went down all the staff directors and ended up asking a reluctant Bill Cable to come off the Hill and start heading up the house. This was in May.

Cable

First in March and then in May.

Moore

Yes, when you came to the White House. We realized Dan needed more help in the Senate because one person couldn't cover a hundred Senators; really two couldn't do it very well. So we recruited Bob Thomson, who came in April. So that was the evolution of the Congressional liaison staff. Then we began adding some additional people. Les Francis set up a legislative liaison office that principally interfaced with—shouldn't use a good Washington word like interface during the first session here—the domestic policy staff and OMB [Office of Management and Budget]. We found that we didn't have time, being on the Hill, to answer phone calls. We didn't have time to both go to all the meetings with the domestic policy staff and be on the Hill, so we created this other office that coordinated it for us with Les Francis. We started out with thirteen people on the

staff. I guess by April or May or June maybe we were up to 23. We ended up, counting detailees and budget task force, with 42 people on the staff. Is that right, Bob?

Thomson

[REDACTED]

Moore

Forty-one people four years later.

Mosher

Congressional and secretarial?

Moore

Yes, sir. That's total. But the way we were organized, secretaries were as important as a person on the Hill. When Bill talks, maybe he'll disagree with that. When we had a choice to hire another Hill person or another secretary, we chose to hire a secretary because the job they did was important to us. We made that choice several times. I've told you the way we started and the way we ended up. Now let me back up just a moment. We did do some in the transition period. I went over to Joe Mitchell, who was working for me. He talked to Claude Desautels, he talked to Jean Lewis, who lobbied for AID [Agency for International Development] and who had been on Larry O'Brien's staff. Claude had been there also. We spent a lot of time with Henry Hall Wilson of North Carolina who had been on Larry O'Brien's staff. We went up to New York and met with Larry O'Brien. We met with him twice, and asked, How do you organize an office, how do you set it up?

Young

When was this, Frank?

Moore

I went up and met with Larry after the nomination in July. It was probably about this time of the year, in September.

Young

Before the election?

Moore

Yes. Before the election, but I'm not certain of that date. He was very helpful and Henry Hall Wilson was very helpful. He had saved all the memos he had written to President [Lyndon] Johnson and gave them to us in loose-leaf form, following the issues. He was a prolific writer. It's an understatement just to say that. I still have those, by the way. I guess his widow would want them to go to the University of North Carolina.

Tate

[REDACTED]

Moore

Yes.

Tate

[REDACTED]

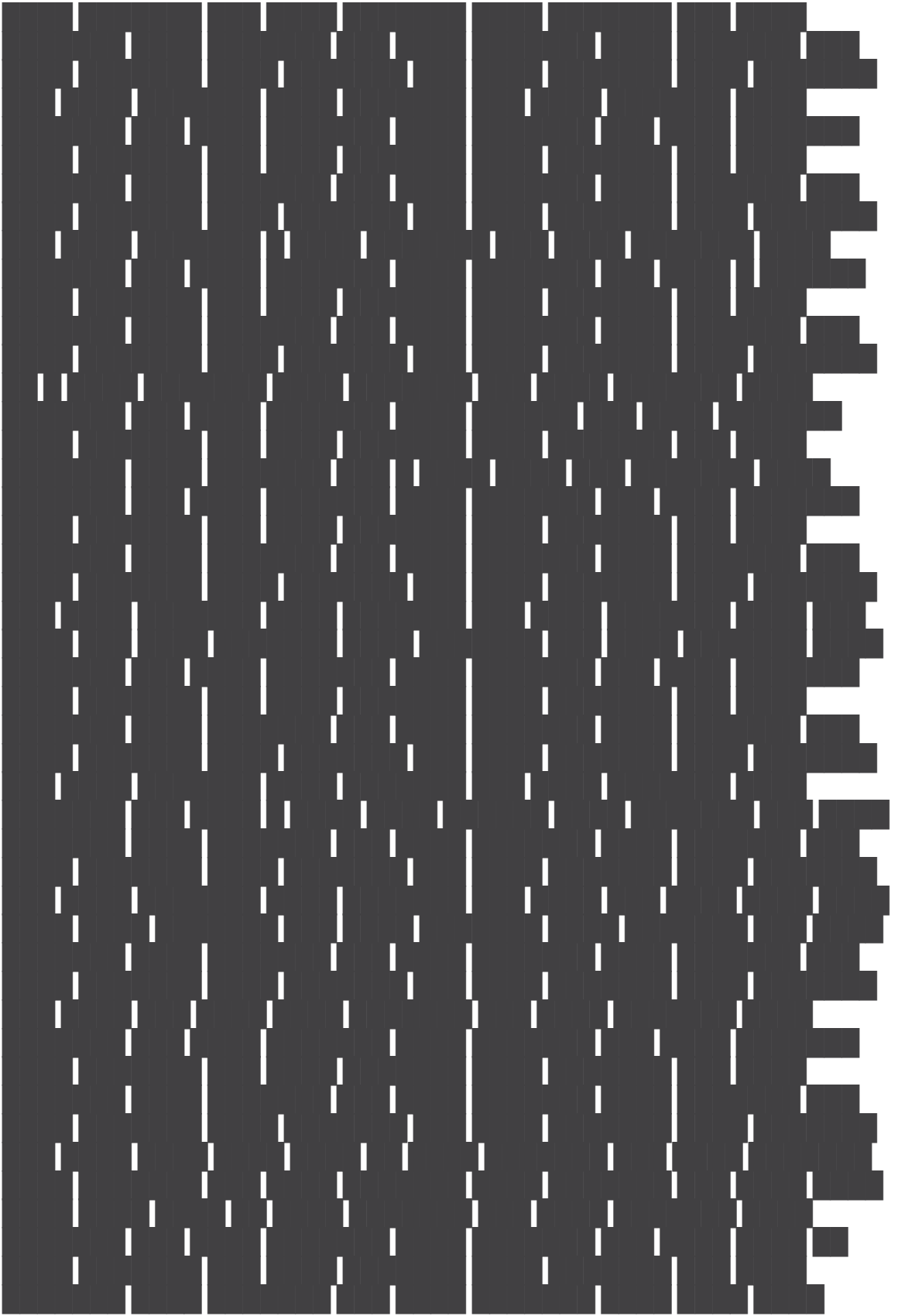
Moore

Valuable, valuable stuff, and as far as I know they've never been published. They tracked the whole Johnson Presidency.

I met with Bryce Harlow, who was very helpful in giving me some good advice on the sequence and pace of things, and generally what to expect. He had been with [Dwight] Eisenhower and came back in President [Richard] Nixon's first term for two years. He said that during the Nixon years they had terrible Congressional relations. He asked at the time, So what are we going to do about it? He called a meeting, went up to Camp David and had the Cabinet sit around. He opened the meeting by saying, Gentlemen, I'll read you something from the *Wall Street Journal*. This is one of those little stories that come out about this time of the term I suppose. It says, Important party members are not getting their phone calls returned from the White House, party members are miffed because of lack of appointments, Hill insiders are critical of the White House for lack of coordination. White Housers are mad at Cabinet officers because they are not coordinating their work with Congressional liaison, and on and on and on.

He said that all the Cabinet officers and Nixon were nodding their heads in agreement. Then he said, Now I'll read you the date. It was in the spring of [John F.] Kennedy's first term at the height of Camelot, and they were speaking of Larry O'Brien. He had told me, Now Frank, you're going to get a story just like this, so I want you to use it the same way I used this one. The press pulled it out every four years. He said it happens every four years, and it sure as hell happened. It came true right on the date he said it would. He was very helpful by putting it in perspective for me. Let Dan talk about the organization of the Senate, and Bill the House, and what it was like when you came there.

Tate

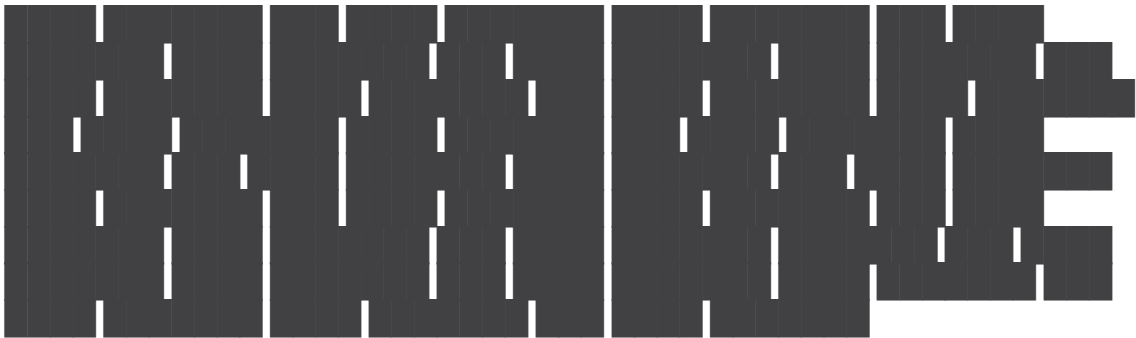




Jones

Just a point about the secretaries. Were these people that you had with you before in some capacity? How do you hire somebody like that? How do you know in advance that they will be able to fill their crucial role?

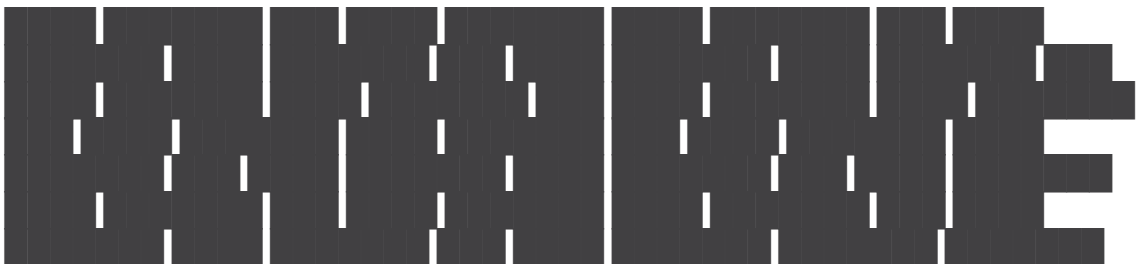
Tate



Jones

Savvy but not intelligence?

Tate



Mosher

Can I ask another question? You mentioned 95% of the job was expounding to and clearing appointments.

Tate



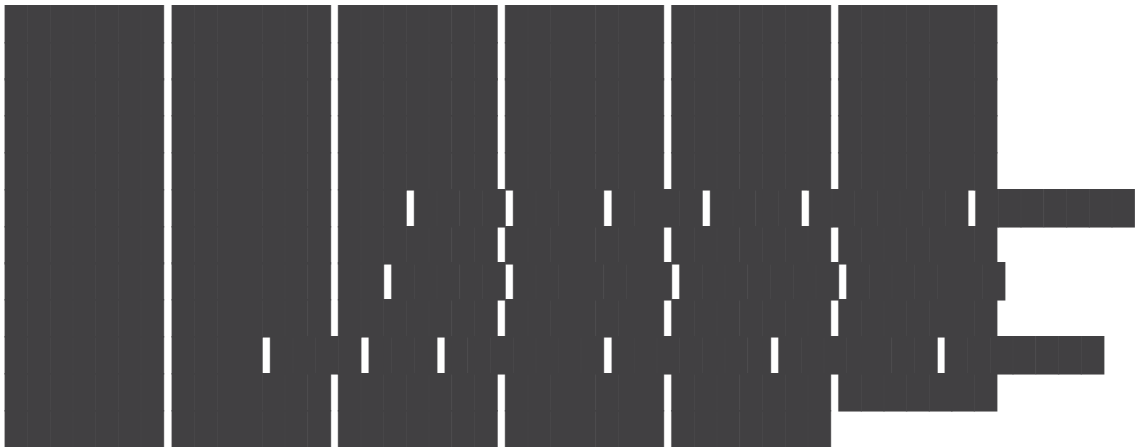
Moore

Presidential trips. Good example, particularly your two campaigns.

Mosher

Did the job dictate what you had to do or did you go in and dictate the plan: We're going to do this, we're going to do this. Or was this something you learned simply by the pressures that hit you?

Tate



Cable

As Frank mentioned, I was recruited to the White House in March and again in May. I was a smart Washingtonian who sat back and knew that Jimmy Carter wasn't going to get elected. I worked for [Morris] Udall and lots of different people and stayed comfortably ensconced on the Hill, as did a lot of my colleagues, during that election. There was little or no enthusiasm in the staff level of Washington for Carter. We were more interested in getting our own principals elected. This is relevant to a lot of what happened in the next four years.

Frank asked me to come to the White House once and I said no. And then I said yes when I got asked a second time. I've been asked several times why I first said no, why didn't I

want to go to the White House? I don't really have a good answer for why I said no the first time. One of the things that I was critical of, as Frank and I discussed then, was the organization, and I came to exactly the opposite conclusion that Dan did about office reorganization. I didn't prefer the way Rick Merrill and Frank had organized it in the beginning by dividing among the three House people the business of government along the lines of collections of agencies and departments.

In my view, I would never do, and did not want to do, as good a job of dealing with the Department of Transportation issues as the people in the Department of Transportation. If I never saw anybody from DOT at the White House, so much the better, because that meant that there wasn't a problem. We never got any of the easy jobs to do because those were always done in the routine course. Ninety-five percent of the time most of the legislative process was taken care of in a routine fashion. We only got called in by an agency as visiting firemen.

When I went down there I felt three bodies were not enough for the House. Frank and I talked about that in the beginning. There was an agreement that we were going to get another lobbyist. It turned out to be Bob Beckel before it got to be another exclusively House lobbyist, but that was a very good choice. I wanted an organizational structure that let somebody be responsible for issues. When we did the Department of Education, Civil Service Reform, Real Wage Insurance or the Energy Bill, somebody on our staff was responsible for each issue. Complementing that was a responsibility for a group of individual House members.

I asked people on our staff to take a set of noncontiguous states, which is different than the way Henry Hall Wilson and the Johnson guys did it. They had a southeastern guy. I didn't think having Jim Free be the southeastern guy was the best use of Jim Free's time. I didn't need a regional guy. I didn't think that the regional competition that would result would be useful. I got concurrence on a system that was based on noncontiguous states. We eventually divided up 435 members into five groups of around 90 members each. The plan was poorly executed, which was probably mostly my fault.

It was originally designed so that we would see to those people, and make sure that we got to know them, their districts, and their states. We didn't divide states up; we kept states as units. I let everybody pick their groups of states and I took what was left. My idea was that we would develop a relationship with members on a member's staff, get to know about their district and their concerns, and see them on a regular, non-need basis. We wanted to develop a willingness to help; to go out and almost solicit initial casework from them.

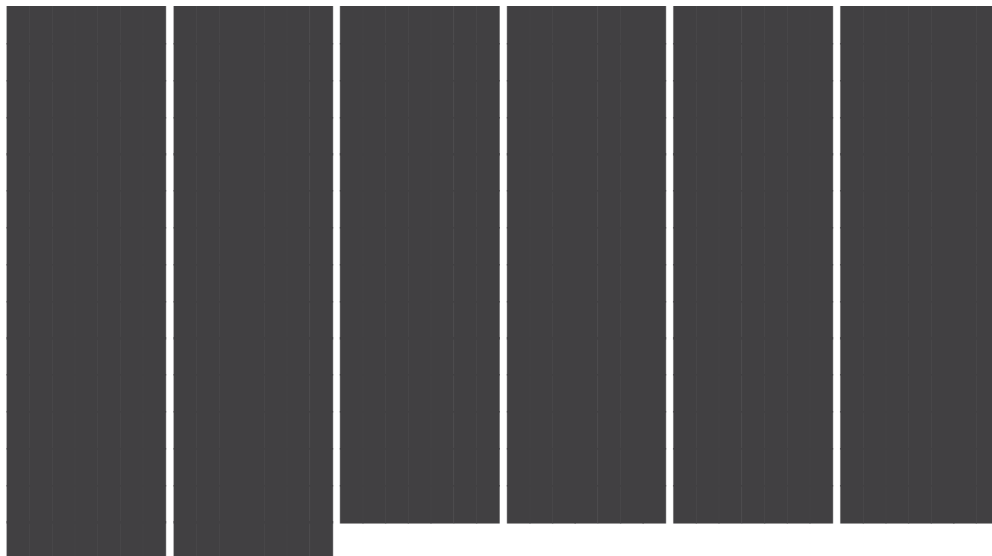
In the context of coming in six months into the term, with a noticeable level of tension that had grown up between the White House and the House more in the press than in reality, I thought it was useful to make these individual visits. If we couldn't see the member the first time, we went in and saw the AA or the personal secretary and tried to develop a sense of working together. We tried to do that. We restarted that project about

three times in the four years, and it never worked satisfactorily. Part of that problem was the pressures of getting through the day doing the projects that we had to do.

The first time I went to work at the White House, I got dropped into the middle of the Ways and Means Committee, the energy bill and the crude oil equalization tax. I spent the first two months doing nothing except getting called out while there was a vote on the AWACS [Airborne Warning & Control Systems] going down in the Foreign Affairs committee. But mostly I did energy stuff. I spent all day trying to see that the President's program was not totally destroyed. We did a pretty good job in the House on that first time. You wouldn't have known it during the process, but a couple of months later it looked like the House performance was much more to the request of the President than the ultimate package was.

I want to talk about two things related to personnel. I couldn't agree more with Dan Tate about the importance of those young ladies who worked in our office. About 80% of the good feeling that I got from the Hill was because Pat [Patricia] Carroll and others took care of responding to their requests. Whether it was a letter to be sent out commending the hundredth anniversary of the town, a note answering a question about what's going in this place, doing case work, or running other kinds of errands, I would guess that nearly 75 or 80% of the good vibes and the good feelings that went up from our office went out because of the work of those kids. It's awfully trite, but most of them worked hard and as long hours as we did. They're all individuals. There were some who did better jobs than others, but we seemed to be pretty lucky in having three or four who really did do a magnificent job for us.

Thomson



Young

[REDACTED]

Tate

[REDACTED] 18 [REDACTED] 19, 1981 [REDACTED]

Mosher

What did you call her?

Thomson

[REDACTED]

Moore

You might explain, Bob, that from the beginning the Congressional staff handled all the Presidential mail, both incoming and outgoing, that came from the Hill. We opened all the letters. We did the President's daily mail log. Maybe you want to talk more about that but it didn't go any place else in the White House. We bucked it or we got it answered. We prepared the letter in reply and got the President to sign them, or else I signed them. It was a pretty big load. The mail log had about 20 or 25 letters to the page and it usually ran four or five pages a day, more than that.

Thomson

[REDACTED]

Cable

Just from the House and Senate. It was done on a computer. One of the first things that we generated was a move to the computer. It was a pretty good system.

Thomson

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Moore

Bill mentioned how we were organized when we first came there. I think it may be important to get this on the record. The reason we had such a small staff to begin with is because President Carter originally felt he was dedicated to Cabinet government. He asked, Why have a big White House Congressional liaison staff? HEW had 40 people in Congressional liaison; the Defense Department had hundreds. Commerce maybe had 30 people. The smallest, SBA [Small Business Administration], had a larger Congressional liaison staff though. The smallest federal agencies, even NASA [National Aeronautics & Space Administration], had as big or bigger Congressional liaison staffs than the White House.

Our idea was to farm out the stuff; let them do it. What we were doing in the White House was to coordinate this. The reason it didn't work was that every Senator and every Congressman first wants to talk to the President. If they can't talk to the President, they want to talk to the next person, and during 1977-78 in our administration, they thought it was Hamilton Jordan. They want the closest person to the President who is making decisions. And then they want to talk with somebody they know sees the President every day, which in our case was the Congressional liaison. We had fought a constant battle the whole four years to keep other people out of our Hill business and phone it to us. It's not unique to our administration. I noticed everybody we talked to, including the Johnson administration speechwriters, going up and lobbying stuff. They said that these amateur lobbyists always got it messed up, and others had to straighten it out. We won't get into that.

Tate

[REDACTED]

Moore

There was an arbitrary 25% reduction in the number of staff members without looking to see how much work had to be done. So that's one reason we were organized like that.

Thomson

[REDACTED]

Jones

Where did they fit?

Thomson

[REDACTED]

Light

Was that just in the last year?

Cable

No, the cuts began in January of 1978. We proposed that first round of big budget cuts in January, 1978.

Moore

They were very successful. It went all the way through the subcommittee, the full committee, the floor and the conference committees. We didn't have time to do that.

Young

The Budget Task Force came into being at this time, or was it there from the beginning?

Thomson

[REDACTED]

Young

It came with the budget cuts?

Mosher

Were they appointed by [James] McIntyre or OMB people?

Thomson

[REDACTED]

Cable

They were detailed.

Thomson

[REDACTED]

McCleskey

Both Frank and Dan stress the lateness of their designation for Congressional liaison. How would you account for that?

Moore

The preoccupation was on selection of Cabinet officials, particularly the four big ones: Treasury, State, Defense, and Attorney General. That appointment process went slower than we expected it would go. The White House staff was on the back burner until that was done. That's the principal reason for the lateness.

Young

Was it assumed from the beginning that there would be a Congressional liaison staff?

Tate

[REDACTED]

Young

You were talking with [Lawrence] O'Brien and maybe Bryce Harlow even before the thing had been formalized.

Moore

Yes, because I did Congressional liaison. Peter Bourne was deputy director for the campaign in Washington, so I came. I didn't want to take that title, so we created another one of Congressional liaison. I really wasn't doing Congressional liaison, I was doing campaign coordination. We didn't care what bills were going on, we wanted to win the election. We had a flap with the speaker early on the postcard registration. We well knew that we didn't want to get involved in legislation at that time. When I took on the Congressional liaison, we suggested CL be organized in this way. I didn't ask him for a job. I had never lobbied before. I don't even recall how I learned that I was going to be the White House Congressional liaison person. It may have been down at Sea Island. The press probably forced it by asking, Who's the White House staff going to be? Hamilton and Jack Watson had a thing going on with them about who's going to be Chief of Staff at that time. Maybe when that was settled and they decided on who would head CL.

Mann

Bill mentioned that the Congressional staffers, who were late arrivals to the Carter administration, were much more concerned about the election of their principals and had a certain attitude toward the Presidency early on. I'd be interested to know how Frank and Dan viewed the Hill and especially the Democratic members on the Hill. Did you have a sense of support there? Did you feel people were generally open minded and cooperative at the beginning, or did you sense that there was some pain from the election with which you had to deal? What was your general perception of the Hill at the beginning?

Moore

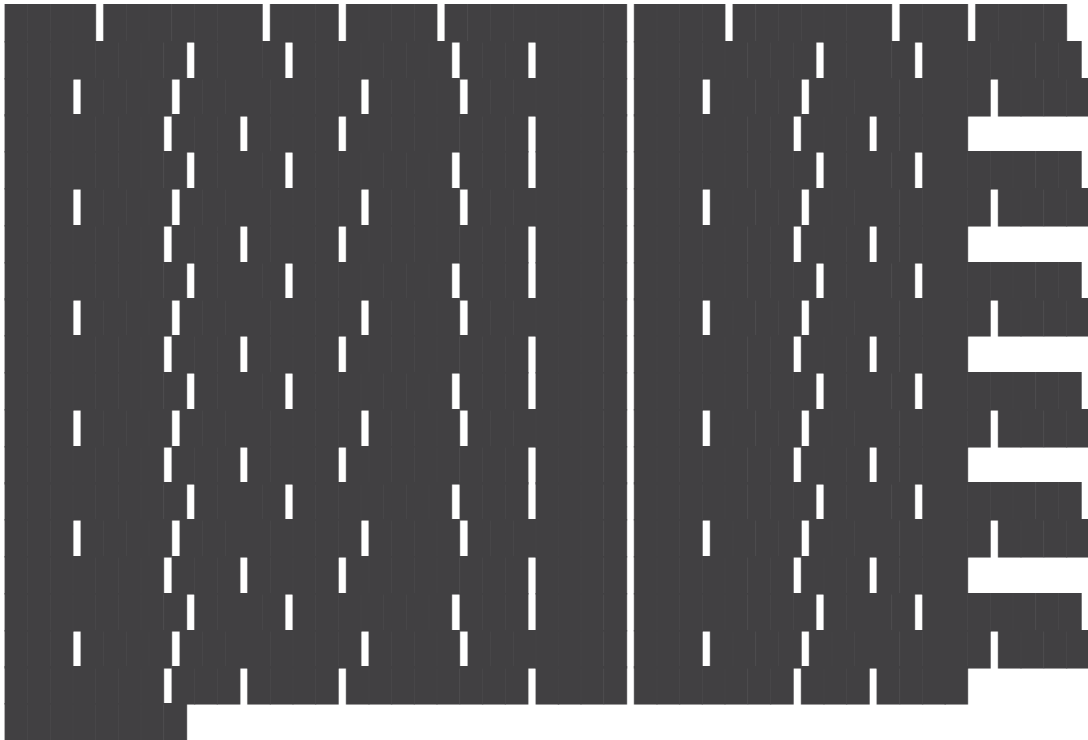
Dan's view is going to be different from mine because he was part of the Hill and I wasn't. I was an outsider. Well, first of all I think you have to realize who we ran against in the primary. Scoop [Henry] Jackson, Birch Bayh, Mo Udall, Sargent Shriver, Jerry Brown, Frank Church, Lloyd Bentsen—and plus look at the list that was considered for Vice President. [Edmund] Muskie, John Glenn, a whole parade of people that went down to Plains between June 9 and the convention in July. And so there were some people there who either weren't elected President or weren't asked to be a Vice-Presidential running mate. And each of those people had their own loyalists, people who had gone through the campaign with them, who had raised money and stayed on as Senate or House staffers.

I remember the first time I met Jack Brooks. I walked in and he said, Moore, I've been here before you got here and I'll be here after you've gone. I've seen Presidents come

and go, but I think we can work together. When in the hell are you all going to quit running against Washington? I said, On June 7th. He said, What has that got to do with it? I said, That's the day of the last primaries. I think June the 6th was the last primary, so we're going to quit on June the 7th. But we did run against Washington, and there was some residual resentment when we got into office.

A large number of positions in the White House staff went to Georgians. A lot of people who went to work in the transition ended up getting jobs, which is part of the way it happens. I'm sure it's happened this way in the Reagan administration. So there was a degree of resentment, and there was also the feeling that here's a guy who came from Georgia, has had no previous experience in Washington, so what does he know about the White House or the Hill? There were some people in the Senate, and maybe some in the House, who felt like they should have had my job. They felt that they were better qualified for it; maybe they were.

Tate



Moore

I think there was a sigh of relief when Bill came on from the House. Members of the House felt more comfortable knowing that someone was in the White House who was one of their own.

Thomson



Young

Bill, I think we might benefit from your perspective from the outside coming in. How did you see Congress as perceiving the new administration?

Cable

Had you either not lived in Washington or not cared about politics, you might be able to not agree with everything that's been said. You would either have to not have lived here or not cared to not agree with everything that's been said. The Hill perceived that it went both ways. It wasn't just that the House members thought they should have been Senators, others thought they should have been in the White House either at the staff level or as President. You don't spend a year and a half running against Washington, then come to Washington and not have to pay for some of that rhetoric.

A lot of the things that Jimmy Carter did in his campaign challenged the way things had been done traditionally in the Congress. Here's the first example: the day I first was in Frank Moore's office in March was the day that Frank, Tate, and Free were announcing the proposed elimination of 32 or so water projects. I happened to be very familiar with one of them because at the time I had spent nine years working for Carl Perkins, and you couldn't say Yatesville Lake without me knowing precisely what those words meant and what was going on.

They were not trying to hide it, they were announcing it. The President decided that a national water policy had to be considered in terms of where public money was spent. Water projects tended to be given to those people who had the most ability to affect the system within the Congress without regard to, and almost in spite of, Presidential review. The President did promise to be different. Most of the guys in Washington who were the most bitter either didn't believe it when he was campaigning on it, didn't hear it, or didn't want to hear it. When he did do it, they blamed him for doing it. They resented him for it. Some of the people who are considered Jimmy Carter's friends and supporters in the Congress resented the hell out of the President for publicly raising an issue about the way

they spend money, for the way they conducted the public's business. People didn't like it. People described the President as having some sort of feeling toward the Congress that they were all a little bit dirty or tainted or somehow or another less good or less clean.

Tate

[REDACTED]

Moore

And over half of the House.

Tate

[REDACTED]

Cable

Let me just add something right there. Part of it is their own doing. Part of the fact is that from 1966, with Lyndon Johnson and the mood of the Congress, legislation was written to take away executive unilateral discretion. Not just in the big things, the War Powers Act and the Budget Act, but also in the grant and aid programs. You used to write a statute that said, Go out and do good for the world, administrator, whether you are the OEO [Office of Economic Opportunity] director, the model cities guy or whatever. We spent the twelve years that I was in the Congress taking away executive discretion. We put formulas in that said, If you meet a, b, c, and d, you get x percent of the pot because we didn't want [H.R.] Haldeman or Nixon or somebody cutting Pikeville, Kentucky out of a program because they didn't like Carl Perkins.

The Congress passed the law in 1970 that said it's against the law for them to call anybody down at the postal service and ask them to hire or appoint or raise a postmaster. Well, that's a reversal of a hundred years' trend. Civil service protections were built in. The Nixon people did a very good job of depoliticizing or taking away the schedule C positions that were political. The fact that Congress concurred in that changed the discretionary programs and contributed to our inability, to any President's inability, to exercise and to grant unilateral discretion. Congress has got to play by the rules they wrote. And they don't like the rules a lot of times.

Moore

Bill was with me, I'll never forget going to explain to Danny Rostenkowski why there were 80,000 federal employees in the city of Chicago.

Cable

Eighty thousand in the regional office.

Moore

And there were four or five discretionary jobs out of 80,000.

Cable

Appointments that we had the unilateral right to make. Then we gave those to the Cabinets.

Fenno

I wanted to go back to the education of the Congressional liaison staff for just a minute and ask Frank Moore if he could fill us in a little more on what he was doing during the period around the election. You said you started meeting with Congressional delegations in the early period. I wondered if you could tell us something of your earlier experiences

with members of Congress, particularly in reference to the comments in the press that you'd had experience with the Georgia legislature and were finding your early meetings with Congress to be somewhat different from the Georgia legislature.

Moore

Well, I always stayed away from that comparison because there certainly were more similarities than dissimilarities between the two bodies. I really never compared my legislative experiences, for obvious reasons. I don't know how that got to be an issue. Some people were saying, You know, he must think this is the Georgia legislature. It wasn't a comment of mine, but of somebody else. In our earliest contacts up there we had different interests. My interest was to get a delegation organized and their political apparatus back home to their campaign managers, their fund raising people, and their get out the vote people. I was trying to get joint campaigns going.

We had enough money in the federal campaign law to maybe run campaigns in 12 states out of the 50. We had \$80,000 for the Presidential campaign in Massachusetts for the whole state from Labor Day to November. That amount could easily be spent in Boston on one local office. And they were just incredulous at this. I was trying to say, But you're all running instead of putting so and so for this. Why don't you put so and so and Carter, or can we have joint buttons? But they were thinking all the time, *Gee, this guy's got it made, how can I get my administrative assistant to be the Assistant Secretary for the agency or department related to my committee?* We were going down different paths.

That was my first time meeting a lot of them, and their first time meeting me. They were full of a lot of advice, good advice. We'd have been better off if we had taken some of it about how things really worked in this town. You have to get my staff director, who really knows how this thing operates, because he wrote the bill and created this department of so and so.

Again, we didn't have a legislative agenda. People asked, What's your agenda going to be? We didn't have one at that time. Our agenda was to get elected. We stayed away from issues in our campaign. Part of our campaign strategy was never to talk about issues. The only time we ever did we got in trouble for it. The people said, Well, Carter's fuzzy on those issues. He sure as hell was. And so we didn't have a legislative program. People asked me about it. I said I don't know what we've got. They said, Moore's dumb; he's supposed to be legislative liaison and he doesn't know what he's doing. People were developing agendas. People unknown to us at that time, I suppose. Does that answer your question?

Fenno

Well, just to follow up, did these contacts with member of Congress give you a core of supporters, of people that you could start with when you became Congressional liaison?

Moore

Yes, they did. Many of them were freshmen. This big freshmen class came in. But our core support came out of those people who had been elected two years before. They were our best campaigners since they were people who identified with Jimmy Carter. Many of them were called the Watergate babies, having been elected to Congress without endorsement, without working their way up through the ranks in the party or having come from Washington. There were a lot of state prosecutors and weathermen and housewives in that class, and they identified with Jimmy Carter much more closely than the folks who had been here a while. We also had a core group with a lot of southern pride. They were proud that a southerner had been elected President. So we had a core group we drew on from the South.

Fenno

How about the Georgia delegation as a unit of support?

Moore

That thing went through some evolution. Elliot Levitas had been in the Georgia Senate with Jimmy Carter. He had been a liberal and progressive legislator. For a while, Levitas was the guy in Congress who you had to see to get something from the White House. We went through a phase, and the Georgia delegation did support us, but some of the moving into the national Democratic Party alienated some southerners. We moved more to the left from the center, and that hurt us some.

There was also a core in the Senate that didn't follow any particular pattern. It's just the individuals, according to how they felt about an issue and also felt about Carter. There wasn't a large network of people up there who would step up and say, Carter's getting in a little trouble, let's all get together and help him. They would step back. I imagine we had a core in the Senate that ran about 10 or 12 Senators, and continued that way for four years. Some were lost; new ones came in. You could expand that to 22 or 24 on some issues but really as far as a core group cutting across a lot of issues, there were maybe 10 or 12. In the House, the really hard-core group was maybe 40, 35, and expanded to where on some issues, you'd get it up to 70 or 80 as a core group. They were people who'd just say, By God, you know Jimmy Carter's for it; I'm for it. You guys don't have to explain it to me. Maybe 35 in the House.

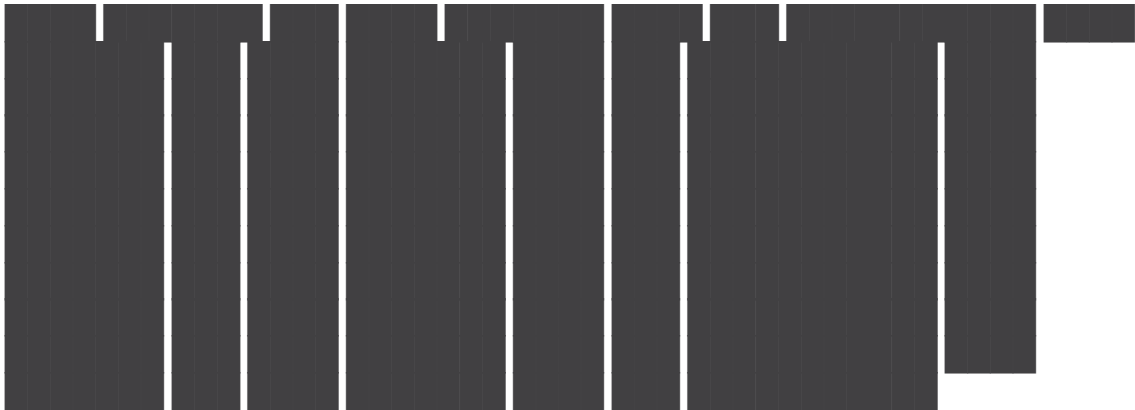
Mann

It was personal though. It wasn't general philosophical agreement. You're talking about people who'd go to the board for Jimmy Carter because he's Jimmy Carter.

Moore

Yes. We had a good measure of that when Kennedy announced, when we were 21% in the poles. We had the October the 4th dinner.

Tate



Jones

I'd like to go back to the initial organizational operation and how that got set up. You mentioned that the small size of the staff originally was in part a consequence of the President's feeling that it wasn't necessary to have such a big operation since the departments all had individual liaisons.

Moore

And in part because of the arbitrary cut of 25% of the White House staff.

Jones

Right, because of the problems. Did the President have other specific ideas about Congressional liaison that were important in the way you set it up initially and in the way that it was changed later? What was his role in spelling out Congressional liaison operations, both initially and then later on as the organization developed?

Moore

He had some preconceived ideas on how the Cabinet government ought to operate. It was largely a residual attitude from the Nixon years. He didn't want a strong White House staff. Other than that, he looked at it primarily in terms of numbers of people. How many people does Stu [Eizenstat] have to have, how many people does Hamilton have to have? Getting an extra staff person out of him was tough. It came from having been in public life before and seeing how things grow.

Larry had a grant announcement operation that we got working late, but didn't initially have. He had one person who did nothing but sit on the telephone upstairs in what was Anne Wexler's office then. Congressional liaison had all the end of the second floor where Stu's office was. He had one person to sit with a StarSet on so he could use both hands, and the grants came in from agencies he just sat and called all day long making

grant announcements. They used those announcements, who was going to make them, who was going to notify them, whether the Senate or House got them and used them for rewards and maybe punishment. We didn't have that in there.

Thomson

[REDACTED]

Moore

You called the President.

Thomson

[REDACTED]

Moore

When we brought Beckel along and said, Gee, wouldn't it be good in foreign affairs where there's so much difference than other stuff, because the two foreign relations committees and House international relations committee have much bouncing back and forth on one issue, Greek-Turkey arms deal, the AWACS sale, the F-15 fighter sales, Angola, you can go on and on and on. You couldn't have one person working the House and one working the Senate. The State and the Treasury Departments, along with 12 or 15 different agencies, were involved in foreign affairs. I told the President one morning, I'm going to let Bob Beckel work on foreign affairs between the House and Senate. He said, Fine. It was the same way on the budget task force. Jim McIntyre and I said, We think it'd be a good idea if we detail some people to work jointly for us just on the budget, and to keep a track from subcommittee level on up, because we don't get involved until it gets to the full House and then it's too late. He said, Fine.

Young

Even though the President left you a free hand as to methodology, how you wanted to organize your staff, and didn't specify his preferences there, I'm wondering if he anticipated the degree of problem he might be heading for with Congress. Did he

say, This is going to be a real problem area. We need this? Did he give you any particular priority to Congressional liaison and the context of his anticipation? What he was going to face in Washington?

Moore

Well, we had priority in terms of issues and of what was up there on the Hill. We gave him daily reports. We would give him listings, and he'd say, Make this one number one and work hard on this. Turn this over to somebody else. I don't know if he anticipated it or not. I think he didn't underestimate Congress. I think he maybe underestimated the amount of his personal time that he would be spending with them. We really reorganized his daily schedule in the spring.

Young

You mean spring of the first year?

Moore

Spring of the first year, which was maybe 60 days into the legislative session. The inauguration was on the 20th. The Senate didn't organize until way up into February.

Tate

[REDACTED]

Moore

It was after Lincoln's holiday before they began doing any work.

Tate

[REDACTED]

Moore

I think he underestimated the amount of time he would spend with them. I remember one time Dan came back shaking his head and said, Frank, I've got to have some of the President's time. I know he's going to think it's silly. I mean we had a lot of earth shaking ideas going on at the time. I said, What is it? He said, Senator [Wendell] Ford of

Kentucky has a man from, I've forgotten where in Kentucky, who has made a painting of Jimmy Carter out of peanut butter, and he's coming in from Kentucky he wants the President to sign it. So I said, You know, Mr. President, some of the guys want something like this. Wendell Ford hasn't asked us for any appointments that I can remember. He runs his political business pretty well in Kentucky. He does not need our help. But this is a big thing with him. But look at your schedule. There's no place to bring in Senator Ford. There's no place on your daily schedule from the time you get here at 5:30 in the morning to 4:30 there's no gap where we can bring him in.

So I think initially he said, Well look, Frank, you can have an hour one day or two days a week when you can just bring anybody you want to with that kind of stuff. I'll understand why Wendell Ford wants that done. Don't hesitate to ask me about those things. I won't question your judgment. So if you all think it's important, you don't have to explain it. We sent these scheduling requests to the appointments office. Tim Kraft was running the appointments office then. Kraft would say, Peanut butter painting, no. I believe that may have happened.

I said, Look, I can't have somebody else making judgments about whether it's important to sign a peanut butter painting. It's just not going to look good on paper. He said, OK, I understand. So we began doing a lot of things like that. Bringing in the strawberry queen from the festival.

Cable

The President met with the West Virginia queen four times, right?

Moore

Yes. Wendell Ford's now forgotten. He was embarrassed to ask us for it, but it was important. And the guy took the thing back where they auctioned it off. The guy has since died, and he took it and auctioned it off and got like \$12,000 for it and donated the money to build a mental health facility.

Light

And the painting's been made into school lunches.

Moore

Carter underestimated how much of his personal time would be taken for ceremonial duties connected with Congress. He also underestimated how much of his time would be taken personally lobbying. We had the bulk of his schedule. Zbig [Zbigniew Brzezinski] would want to have the premier of Bongo Bongo in to see the President; in fact he got in to see him twice during our term. We'd take a look at his schedule and see that he had 56 meetings with heads of state. Why does he need that many? Zbig would look at it and ask

why Carter was spending 25% of his time meeting with Congressman so and so, who was a freshman on a subcommittee.

Well, we finally came to an understanding. We got a slice of time and we got a slice of seats at state dinners. We had a quota there, we had Kennedy Center boxes, and we got so many seats on Air Force One. That really wasn't cut and dried; we had to bargain for that each time, but we got a number of seats on any domestic flight. We got a process going. Bob really got it going.

We ought to talk about the seven o'clock meeting sometime here. People around the table are interested in the organization of the White House. I think if there's any one thing, the President's schedule is important. Most of the White House revolves around that. A lot of it does, but another whole section of the White House revolved around that seven o'clock meeting we had every morning. We set agenda priorities at those meetings. Those guys are laughing because they never were on time.

Cable

I was mostly on time. Tate was never on time.

Moore

It was a Washington week in review. What did we do last week, what's coming up from your area? Bob Thomson chaired those things very briskly and very crisply. He passed out assignments, people reported back, we had accountability, and we meshed things. That meeting, as much as anything else, had a lot to do with setting the procedure. Weekly schedule and monthly schedule.

Young

We want to discuss your role in policy development inside the White House. That's something of interest to us all. We'd like to hear at some point about how, if at all, the development of the public liaison staff under Wexler affected your operations. Perhaps they'll want to have some more explanation of this whole question of the two kinds of organization of your work. There'll be some more questions about your connections with the departmental liaison people in terms of appointment. Perhaps we'll want to talk a little bit more too about the frustration you expressed in one article about appointments. I noticed you did not say that you had a person dealing with just appointments. Maybe that was an omission, but I'd like to find out a little bit how that was handled in the White House. Larry O'Brien I think sort of handled that, Vic Donahue himself.

Kettl

You mentioned the two different kinds of organization and the role of the department liaison. I'm wondering if there was an assumption at the beginning when the issue-based method of organization was set up. First of all, where that assumption came from, and

secondly, whether or not it was envisioned that that's all that would be needed because the departmental liaison would be doing most of the front-line liaison work.

Moore

You were almost forced into making it like that because of the lack of staff. The agency liaison people were going to be doing it. Grouping of issues was really a grouping of departments. Somebody did HEW, somebody else did HUD [Housing & Urban Development] and somebody else did Defense, somebody else did this with essentially five people working the Hill. There may have been some other logical way to do it, but that was it.

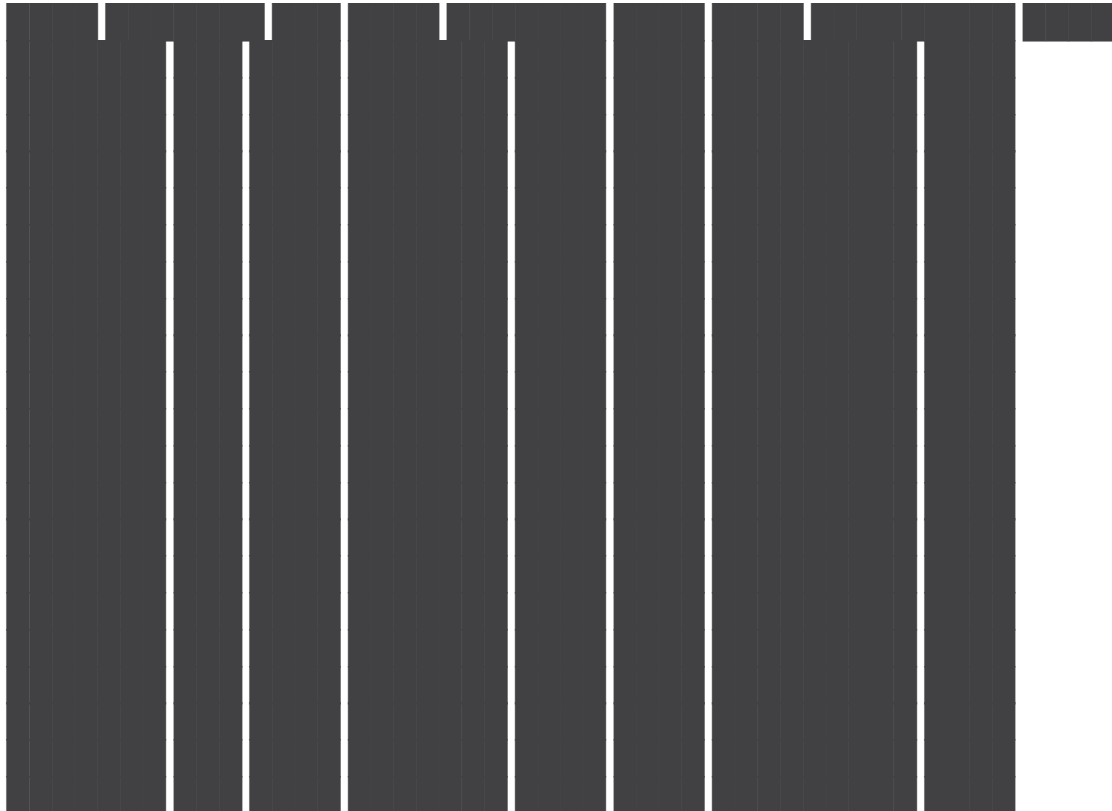
Kettl

Was that all part of the Cabinet government philosophy in the beginning? Or was it just simply because of the lack of numbers?

Moore

It was lack of numbers. It was our reacting to the lack of numbers: How can we organize this thing so it makes sense?

Tate



[REDACTED]

Thomson

[REDACTED]



Jones

Like Jack Brooks, We were there before you got here and we'll be here after you.

Young

I'd like to hear Bill Cable's perspectives on this problem. I'm sure there are some.

Cable

The Defense Department always has great respect for the Commander in Chief as long as it agrees with him. That's the same for nearly every Cabinet department. We had arguments with Cabinet people and Congressional liaison. When they got their way they were OK. When they didn't, they usually tried some way or another to get their original position. One of the things done on the Hill side and on committee staffs is to go into those agencies and departments.

I spent nine years of my life trying to find out who I could talk to in various departments and agencies to get straight answers. If Jim McIntyre didn't tell that you could only have ten dollars, how much would you like? Or why don't you show me the submission that you made to the Assistant Secretary that then went to the comptroller that then went to the Secretary that then he took to the OMB. Let me see what you started with, let me see your wish list, because my Congressman or my Senator is an advocate of whatever it happens to be that you want. I knew it happened all the time. You're never going to stop it.

Defense was the most frustrating, without a question. The Army Corps of Engineers guys on the water project were up there and flat just 180° opposite of Presidential decision. You can get mad; you can't do anything about it. We tried to do something on a couple of those Corps of Engineers guys on water projects to the point where the President at one point spoke with the Secretary about what could be done. I don't know how you deal with it. It's going to go on forever. We did not deal as well with it in the beginning. I say we. It was a decision the President made before I got there. In my view, President Carter overreacted to the excesses of the Nixon concentration of power in the White House. We went too far in Cabinet government. It was basically good, but you need some people in every department and agency who are beholden to Jimmy Carter and not either to the program of the agency or the Secretary. I would like a deputy as Under Secretary, a Deputy Secretary, somebody in the top of that decision-making line in every department and agency reviewing stuff that's going on with the best interests of President Carter, or any President, in hand.

President Reagan is very smart in having the White House appoint a lot of the Assistant Secretaries and making the clearance process appointment process go through the White House. That does not violate Cabinet government. It helps the Cabinet to govern by means of a joint decision that's made in conjunction with the President. It's the President who was elected to make those decisions. Our administration was partially to blame for some of the problems we had because there wasn't anybody there. A lot of agencies' staff not only got here before the President, and were going to be here after him, even the ones who were appointed weren't appointed with any sense of team playing with the administration and with the President's goal.

Young

You'd think that's a function of President Carter's initial feeling.

Cable

That's my personal assessment.

Young

Partially in reaction to the centralization under Nixon.

Cable

That's not something anybody's stated. They are assumptions on my part.

Young

Naturally from that would flow the delegation of authority to designate the departmental liaison people to the Secretary. It wasn't done this way in the Kennedy administration. The central took a very powerful role in the selection of departmental liaison people.

Tate

[REDACTED]

Cable

Califano never would have tolerated Secretary Joe Califano when he was in the Kennedy White House. Absolutely never.

Tate

[REDACTED]

Kettl

That in turn meant that departmental liaison people would be relied on to a much larger degree to actually do the work on the Hill.

Moore

It was spotty. Ones that we had made recommendations for were hired off our list and had some degree of loyalty to me or somebody else in the White House. We had, for example, people who had worked in the campaign who were placed in a department. I'm thinking of Chuck Parrish. Interior and other people who might even have been assistants to the Secretaries or policy coordinators. There were a lot of success stories as well as horror stories. It made the horror stories look even worse in comparison because you could see when it worked right how well it worked. We had people who'd call us and say, Something's going on over here, you can't believe what I just saw. So that worked. It got stronger and stronger and stronger and was more central, particularly after the first Camp David. There were some changes made in some of the departments. We got rid of some folks. We submitted a list of people we wanted to get rid of and some of them went.

Thomson

[REDACTED]

Young

And to distinguish it from the departmental agendas?

Thomson

[REDACTED]

Moore

We had some degree of success, again spotty, where we had a particular issue we wanted to push. We gave out assignments to Cabinet Secretaries or Assistant Secretaries for legislation to make calls on an issue that was unrelated to their department. We had one Cabinet Secretary who never made any. It was interesting that the ones who always made them first were the Defense Secretary and Secretary of State, who had to be the busiest

people in town. It was they who were effective. I'm sure people, Bill, on the Hill would say, Why in the hell is the Secretary of State calling me on hospital cost containment or something like that? But then you had that many other people who said, You know, this bill must really be important to President Carter if he had the Secretary of Defense or the Secretary of State call me on something. Of course, people had called the people on their committee, so the Secretary of State may have to call somebody on the international relations committee and say, I want to talk to you about something that's not related to the State Department, but it's important to the President. If you had to put it's effectiveness on a percentage basis, would you say it was 75% effective?

Cable

I think that's high.

Thomson

[REDACTED]

Cable

Calls made, oh yes.

Thomson

[REDACTED] made.

Cable

I think that's probably right. The reason it was done was that there were certain people who just didn't do it. Why should I spend my political capital on something that isn't in my agency's interests? There is that whole captivity thing that happens at agencies too. You become a captive of your constituency when you become a Secretary of a department or an agency.

Light

I would like to get an idea about what each of you were thinking about the institutions you were going to deal with when you first joined liaison. What did Mr. Moore think about Congress? What were your impressions of what Congress was like? Then, Mr. Cable, coming from the House, what did you think the House was like? What did you think were going to be your problems? Then, Mr. Tate and Mr. Thomson, on the Senate, your perceptions of what the institutions were like must have influenced how you thought you were going to have to organize your different shops. The size difference. What were you thinking about these institutions? What did you feel about them?

McCleskey

Jim, that bears on what I was going to ask. Could I ask my postscript to that? How did that perspective change over time, or did it?

Cable

One of the reasons that I didn't like the departmental issue departmental clusters is that we failed to pay attention to members as members. We tended to look at members as votes on hospital cost containment. I thought what was really needed was to make the Congress feel like they were important to the President. I don't think they came predisposed to that feeling. I don't think there was a popular impression to that extent. Part of it was running against Washington, part of it was some of the negativisms that had been written about and what I perceived and what I wanted to do with the organization. I wanted to pass the President's program. The best way to do that was to make the people on the Hill feel that we thought they were important as people, as members, by paying attention to them and developing a sense of mutual good will and trust.

Most members of Congress want to support the President without regard to partisanship. Even with post-Watergate and the resulting hostility to the President and all that stuff, there was a magnetism, a fascination, a *something* about the President and the Presidency. You don't gratuitously stick it in his ear. It's not good for you to do it, one, politically. Two, there's a desire to help, to want him to get on with the governing of America; to get on with the program that is necessary to make this country a better place to live. That may sound a little hokey but I really do think there is kind of an underlying supportiveness. We tend to think of changing minds and votes, but there is kind of an underlying desire to do a good job at governing. It gets lost sight of in a lot of the discussions that go on around this table and in many places like it, but there is some of that and you find that in members of Congress. They're not venal people. They're not evil people.

Light

Do you think that they feel differently about that than in the Senate?

Cable

I wasn't trying to distinguish House and Senate, but I felt that there was; I'm a House person. I've been a House person, I think in those terms. I spent too many years, 15 years, all my adult life with them in that institution. I like the institution, I think it's a good institution and I think that they felt like they wanted to be brought in. When I went to the White House, Tip [Thomas Patrick] O'Neill gave me a memento as a going away present that hung in my office the whole time I was in the White House. It was a four-foot-long green Pennsylvania Avenue street sign that had a double-headed arrow hung below it that said Two Way Street. That was a real physical statement of what he wanted. He wanted me to help make it a two way street, but he really wanted it for his institution. He was a

new speaker, there was a new President. He wanted communication, he wanted to work together. History will probably prove me wrong, but the best friend Jimmy Carter had in the Congress was Tip O'Neill.

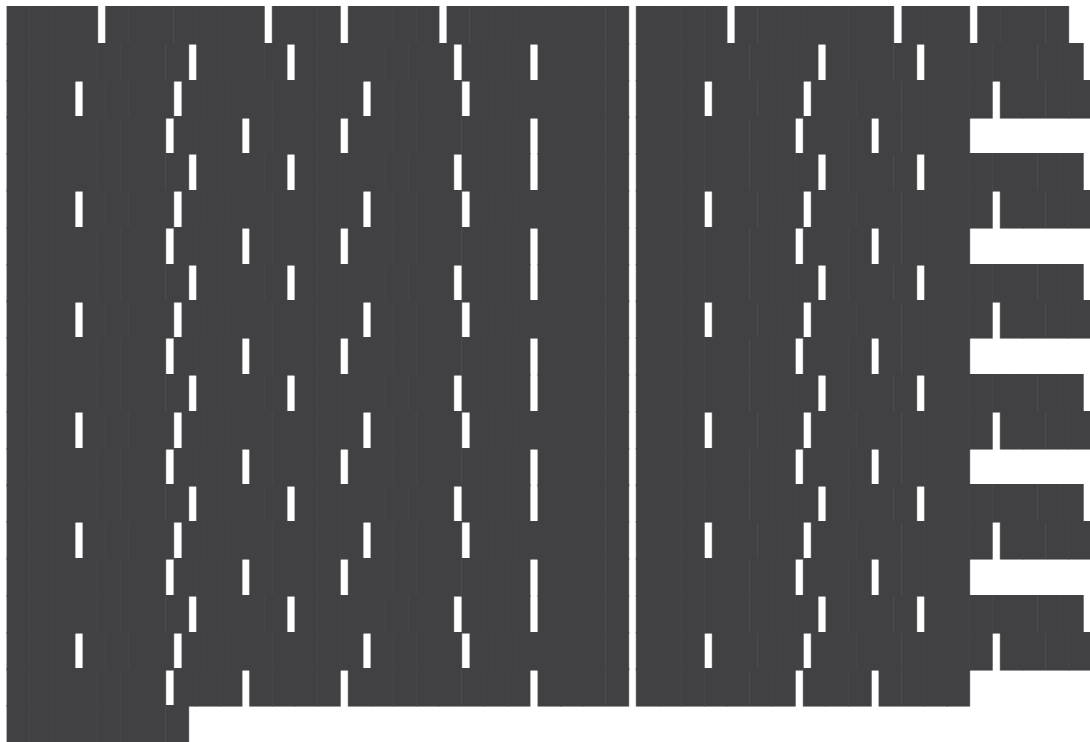
Young

I noticed that you went back and were more eloquent on a point you'd made earlier about the importance of working legislators as legislators, not as votes. I remember you also said you couldn't devote much time to that because the minute you got dropped in it, issues overran. Should that be understood as how far you got?

Cable

We didn't do as good a job of getting to as many members as we could. Every one of the people on our staff had very good relationships with groups of members. While we didn't cover 435 with the same intensity that we covered some, we did do a better job. We made some new friends. The record's pretty clear that we didn't do as good a job as I had hoped we could have done, but we did a better job just talking to guys about airline deregulation or energy or cost containment or whatever it was. We did those issues, and that's a part of the discussion about the deputies meeting and the task force arrangement and that whole Thomson coordination operation. The personal relationships and issues got interrelated.

Tate



Young

Can you give us an example?

Tate

[REDACTED]

Cable

You remember that day we went to the EPG [Economic Policy Group]?

Tate

[REDACTED]

Moore

Energy was another example, but that bigger story deserves more comment.

Tate

[REDACTED]

Moore

Sometimes in spite of the President.

Young

Can you expand on that a bit? You've identified what you considered important, the prior consultation. I wonder how successful you were.

Tate

[REDACTED]



Thomson



Tate



Thomson



Cable

But it really is a continuum. Consultation is a continuum between making a decision and notifying him of a decision. I view consultation along that line. You don't ever want to give away the President's right to decide, but in a consultation process you can do more than notify. We did better and worse jobs on various occasions, but there were lots of times when it was difficult to get anybody to get the process to look at consultation as other than telling them right after Jody [Powell] released it to the press.

Young

Widespread accounts in the press claimed that this was a true problem in the Carter Presidency. And we need to understand more about that. To what was that traceable?

Moore

Some early appointments.

Thompson

Dick has said several times that you thought the President maybe underestimated this or that. Is there any chance that you overestimated, because of the nature of the campaign, the requirements of loyalty and commitment in coalition building? That's maybe too pointed, but we've had four or five people here talking about the [Franklin D.] Roosevelt Presidency. Every one of them has brought up the same issue, failure of a high-level person to attend the Roosevelt reunion.

Moore

You know the reason for that? No one was invited. We all checked the next day because we were criticized in the press. At the senior staff meeting I asked who was invited, and not one damn hand went up. Nobody ever received an invitation to it that we could find in the Carter White House.

Thompson

Is it a perception problem? They perceived that somebody had invited you and each one said they'll never forget it. One wonders whether the coalition building methodology is in any way related to the nature of the Reagan campaign, the same way one wonders about your attack on the coalition. How would you have strengthened relations with the Georgia delegation, broaden and deepen the coalition in any way? One of the things that used to strike me about the Rockefellers was that they never really sat down and talked about the perils and risks of having that much power. That was the one thing I always thought they would do. There was a television program and some correspondent asked them Did you ever worry that you might do wrong with all this wealth? John Rockefeller said, We never thought of it; we never thought about or talked about it. Did you ever worry about the fact that you'd been a close-knit group? You won the election because you had campaigned against Washington and now you had to do something utterly different to build a wider coalition. Did you talk about it?

Moore

Yes, we talked about it. We talked about the need to reach out and broaden our base in terms of White House staff. We didn't have a background, not having worked with so many people. You mentioned the word loyalty, that's very important to me and very important to a lot of people around Jimmy Carter. It still is an important word. You wanted to reach out, the people who were available oftentimes had shown a remarkable degree or lack of loyalty in the previous associations they'd had with people. There's no doubt that we didn't do enough.

The most natural groups we had in the Congress were the sophomore and freshmen classes. They really wanted to work with Jimmy Carter. They wanted to meet with the President and form a close relationship with him, maybe have a CL person assigned to them, remember that, Bill? It may have been prior to getting there. I mentioned it to the new speaker, a new majority leader in the House, and to the new majority leader in the Senate, Senator [Robert] Byrd. All new officers on both sides. The speaker said, Wait a minute, the President doesn't meet with freshmen; the President meets with me and I meet with the freshmen. Looking back on it, it was a mistake in our not doing it that way, it was offered to us; it would have been natural.

Cable

We did it later. We did it after a while.

Moore

We did it after the speaker came back and said, Gee, Mr. President, will you meet with the freshmen? I can't do anything with them.

Tate

[REDACTED]

Moore

Well, we missed an opportunity there. But we analyzed the Congress, we broke it down regionally, broke it down on both counts, we said here's a natural from the boll weevil point I want to make. That was a core group with us.

Cable

They identified very closely with Jimmy Carter as a southerner, as a good person, as the kind of person that they liked. They objected vehemently to most of the legislation that we proposed. Jimmy Carter didn't fare any better with the Georgia delegation on a percentage of votes on the floor than Lyndon Johnson did.

Moore

I think we did fare a little better regionally.

Cable

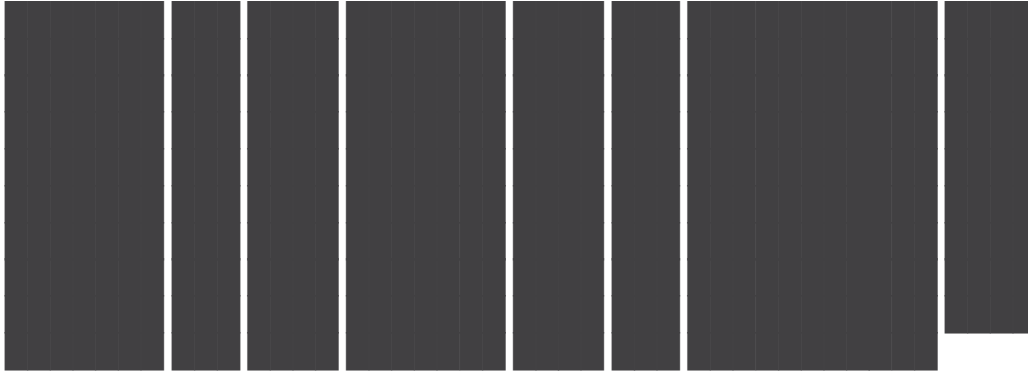
It's a different South now than then too. I remember analyzing the Georgia delegations specifically over a series of votes, and we didn't fare any better than Lyndon Johnson. But that wasn't because they didn't like Jimmy Carter. When you came to the camp politics and the other kinds of stuff that they don't like, they didn't like hospital cost containment, they didn't like the change in the standards on water projects, they didn't like to face the fact that we have been over using energy and had no energy policy. We asked them to do a lot of things on which there was no consensus.

Jones

Is this then related to your point on organizing; that if you haven't got issues that are all that popular on the Hill, why organize that way?

Tate

[REDACTED]



Mosher

Bill, was that the situation in the House too?

Cable

Yes, I was just playing with some numbers too. We had a little bit more of an advantage in the House in both Carter Congresses than the Democrats do now. Now the numbers are sort of common knowledge. There's a 26-person Democratic majority on paper. I guess that's down to 25 with [William] Cotter's death. There were 47 members of [Charles] Stenholm's conservative caucus when we were doing the tax bill. This time there, about 19 guys out of those 44 who were there were solidly for the President, and I think they're gone. In the House of Representatives, for the balance of this Congress there are 19 or 20 of those guys who might as well be counted with 191 or 189 whatever the number is of Republicans. There are 20 Democrats out of that 27 or 26 majority who are gone and were the President's almost without question. So in the House you're down to the guys who are part of that boll weevil caucus, the Democrats who want to be Democrats, mostly all of them who have to be persuaded. You're down to that kind of a nut.

In the Democratic Party this time around, there's stuff like Democratic defections. Tip can't control Democrats. His numbers this time around are tougher. There is more discipline in the Democratic Party in the House of Representatives shown in the first six months of this Congress than in the four years of the Carter Congress.

Moore

Yes, we could waste some. But generally on a tight issue we would lose, again depending on whether it was a liberal or conservative issue. The margin usually came down dragging, screaming, and kicking reluctant southerners along to vote for something. They really didn't want to vote for it if it was going to cause them political damage at home.

Cable

The other difference is that Reagan has not lost a Republican yet, and we always knocked off 10 or 12 or 15 Republicans. We always would get a Margaret Heckler or a Matthew

Rinaldo or Marc Marks, or Pete McClosky, or [Sedgwick William] Bill Green. They're mostly New England, northeastern moderate big city Republicans. That's a list that anybody who's ever worked the House vote will rattle off; the same 15 or the same 20 names every time.

Thomson



Jones

And meanwhile you get hit with the Kennedy thing on that side.

Thomson



Young

There is still a lot we need to learn about the executive end of the Congressional liaison operation. I'd like to try to get a handle on the problems that all Congressional liaison operations, since they first began in the White House back in Eisenhower's time, have identified as a real problem and a real consumer of time. One of these problems is getting a sufficient handle on the executive end of the operations to do an effective job on the Hill. That relates to roles in policy development. How did you relate to the policy process, particularly in a time when policy staffs had become almost the glamour staff, and had grown greatly in size from the executive end? This is related to questions of coordination within the White House. It relates to the question of how one gets a manageable agenda. How does one select those issues on which your time, and the President's reputation in building this legislative record, is going to be based from all the mass of issues and legislative agendas that are pressed upon the President?

Maybe a good way to start is with the early morning meeting, the deputies meeting. You had an independent interest in that too. All of your colleagues who have been here earlier have advised us to pay attention to the deputies meetings because it was the first meeting of the day.

Moore

We could discuss the underlying reasons why it was created.

Young

Yes, I'd like to hear about that.

Moore

Bob may be the best one to talk about that.

Thomson

[REDACTED]

Young

So the initiative for these meetings began with the Congressional liaison staff?

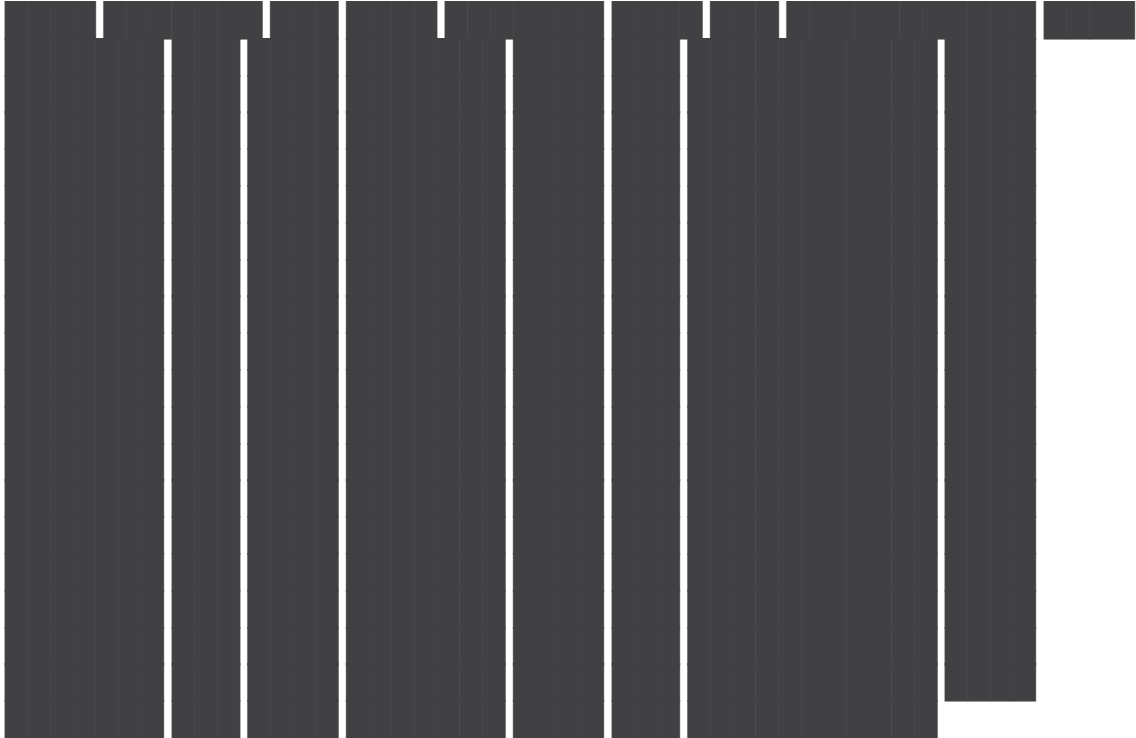
Thomson

[REDACTED]

Moore

First people started coming, sitting in and eavesdropping so they could find out about the things that were happening.

Thomson



Young

How do you mean trouble spots?

Thomson



Mosher

What deputies were represented in this?

Thomson

[REDACTED]

Mosher

This would last from 7:00 o'clock until?

Thomson

[REDACTED]

Mann

Anybody from Gail Harrison's?

Thomson

[REDACTED]

Mosher

I remember the seniors meeting—

Thomson

[REDACTED]

Young

I find it very interesting that the whole idea started out, originated as you described it.

Thomson

[REDACTED]

Tate

[REDACTED]

Thomson

[REDACTED]

Tate

[REDACTED]

Young

The meeting of the senior staff with the President followed the nine o'clock one at ten or ten-thirty or something like that.

Thomson

[REDACTED]

Mosher

What was the liaison between this meeting and the senior staff? Did you attend the senior staff?

Thomson

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Young

Michael Rowny explained that process to us when he was here.

Mosher

There was a paper product each time?

Thomson

[REDACTED]

Moore

Sometimes you would say, Look, this deserves more attention on Friday. Bob would pass out assignments asking, OMB, will you find out more about this? Would somebody please call the Defense Departments? Would somebody on Stu's staff call HEW and get us a report and bring it to us tomorrow morning?

Young

So the day started out with this meeting that served several purposes. See if I just understand correctly for the record. One of the purposes was to get yourselves filled in on what was going on around you on the executive end, to spot trouble where you found it. Second, it was meant to develop some sense of important items for senior people to take up amongst themselves or later with the President. You referred to the deputies meetings telling people what was going on on the Hill. Did this go beyond just reporting the status of bills? Was it an effort to educate and sensitize people to the Congressional dimension to what they were doing?

Thomson

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Moore

We left out one person who was there: the President's scheduler, Phillip Wise. That was an important part. Didn't they usually begin the meeting by working on the President's schedule?

Thomson

[REDACTED]

Moore

Whether the schedule was for a certain day or week, they would say if they were thinking about a trip or accepting an invitation. Sometimes they'd say, We're considering these four invitations. We'd get a sense of what was important. We could use that as a shot for him if he was to make a speech on something and we were going to put a bill up that week or if that was the week a vote was going to come. If the House schedule called for a vote that week, it would be better if it were here rather than there.

Mosher

Did those meetings start in at the beginning or in the middle of the administration?

Moore

We always had a Congressional liaison meeting from the beginning every morning at seven o'clock. They changed the times. Les began having these things formally. They began as a core group. People just started sitting in. They wouldn't sit at the table, they would sit back, listen, take notes, leave, and then ask, Did you guys not know what's going on in the Hill? or This was what Dan Tate, Jim Cable or Jim Free said was on the Hill.

Thomson

[REDACTED]

Moore

Say June of the first year.

Thomson

[REDACTED]

Moore

Very near the beginning of the administration.

Mosher

Did you continue with the seven o'clock meetings after the deputies meetings?

Moore

We combined those. No, we had meetings in my office on an as needed basis. We started out with them daily. After we'd had that meeting and the senior staff meeting, we would try to fit a meeting into my office. They'd usually disintegrate because somebody would have to run to the Hill.

Cable

More than likely everybody was on the phone.

Moore

Everybody was on the phone.

Thomson

[REDACTED]

Moore

Sometimes there was a need for three of us to see the President. Then the rest of the staff wanted to be debriefed on that meeting so they could pass the word back down. We talked to him about this, this, and this, and he said these two things were really what he wanted us to work on. He asked us to do this or he asked us to get the Vice President involved in this one. Or he said he'd be willing to make phone calls this weekend from Camp David if we give him a list early enough to take with him when he left Friday, so will so and so prepare that list of names to call?

We learned that the deputies meetings weren't secure. There were some things that we didn't want to talk about in front of other folks. The press soon learned that it was a good source of information to find out who went out to the deputies meeting, call them and find out what was going on in the White House. There wasn't anything that secret about

it, but we were pretty careful of our vote counts. We were very careful with them. We usually adjourned to my office to discuss vote counts. A lot of times you'd just say, Well, here we go again. We'd make assignments, who's going to lobby who, somebody had been working an issue. They'd go down and say, These are the fifty undecided, you start from [Douglas] Applegate or whoever and go through [Leo] Zeferitti. Doug [Druie Douglas, jr.] Barnard, I'll take him.

Tate

[REDACTED]

Thomson

[REDACTED]

Young

Will you pick it up from what happened after that? I'm interested in tracing the impact of these meetings straight through to the Oval Office.

Moore

The deputies would go over for their principal. There was a gap between that and the senior staff meeting. Sometimes a small group would get together. We had a senior staff.

We really had a lot of people attending the senior staff meeting. Sometimes a few senior staff members would get together and say, All right, this is what we're going to do at this meeting. The deputies' agenda was to distill the issues down further. The assignments were discussed and made. That usually ran into the ten o'clock meeting with the President. We began the meeting with the President by discussing what went on in the senior staff meetings. It was distilled down. Then we had additional things that were discussed. Did someone from NSC [National Security Council] other than Madeleine [Albright] attend the deputies?

Tate

[REDACTED]

Thomson

[REDACTED]

Cable

Christine Dodson, who was secretary to the NSC, was there a lot of times.

Moore

Brzezinski didn't attend the senior staff meetings. That's what made me think of it. He often would have been with the President before we went in to see the President. I don't think Lloyd Cutler attended the senior staff meeting. The counselor's office is someone else we left out of the deputies meeting. They were an important part of the deputies meeting. Usually both of his deputies attended, didn't they? But it was distilled down to a meeting with the President. The President had a list of things he wanted to bring out. He squeezed it down. There was some internal lobbying going on for prospective positions among different departments and agencies.

Young

That went on in front of the President too?

Moore

Yes.

Young

How useful do you think following this distilling procedure was from the deputies' and senior staff's points of view? How useful do you think it was for the President?

Moore

Mixed. Its usefulness depended on the quality of the meeting and on how many issues were going on. We'd like to think that the reports that we gave him on what was going on in the Hill were very useful to him. If he'd already read about it in the *Washington Post* and *New York Times*, they were redundant. You didn't want to say, Senator so and so had a press conference yesterday, and have him say, Yes, I read about that. Usually we weren't the ones saying that, it was somebody else.

Cable

That's right. The President went through almost all the papers that we prepared. Our weekly legislative reports weren't summaries of what had happened. Most of the papers that we prepared were prospective, looking at the way we in the deputies meeting looked at the day. In the senior staff meeting and in the meeting with the President, you weren't analyzing or reporting on what happened; you were looking ahead at where you were going.

Moore

On Monday I would say, Mr. President, the House goes back in Tuesday at ten o'clock. This is going to be a tough week for us. The schedule says this, we've got these four things coming up, and Bill Cable tells me we probably won't get to all four of them. We'll probably do three and adjourn early Thursday. These are crucial votes, and I wish you'd call Secretary so and so and tell him his troops need punching up a little bit. Secretary so and so is doing a good job. It's in hand. We've got confidence in what they're doing. We don't need any help from you on that. This is one that could turn sour. You know, Mr. Vice President, I heard at the senior staff meeting this morning that you're having lunch with five Senators on another issue tomorrow, could you please bring it up and say that the President is also interested in this because three of those five Senators you're having lunch with are important votes to us. He'd make a little note. Then I'd say to Brzezinski, I notice that you're having a briefing on whatever, the Mideast. So and so and Senator so and so are coming down. There's a national security aspect to this, could you tie it in? It was an exchange of information meeting.

Thomson

[REDACTED]

Young

This collects, identifies, and gives some background to all the items of importance.

Moore

They didn't lobby. Oftentimes a conversation would begin, Mr. President, a memo is on the way to you and we have so and so and so and so and so and so. Jim McIntyre thinks this but I think this.

Thomson

[REDACTED]

Moore

And the President said all the time, I keep hearing about this memo, where is it? He'd say, I'm ready to make a decision, give me the memo. I want to see the paper and I want to make a decision. Will it be here tomorrow? If it didn't get there tomorrow, it'd get there the next day.

Young

Is this series and what went on in these meetings connected? Were they useful to you in coping with the problem of how you allocated your priorities in your work on the Hill? I'd like to hear something about how you managed to boil down your agenda, if you did, to something manageable. You are perfectly aware of the identification of the problem of what was called prioritizing very early in the Carter administration. I'd like to hear something about how you went about that.

Moore

It was an allocation of resources sometimes. You'd come down and you'd say, Look, there are three things up there. We can win two of them by concentrating on it, but we can't win all three. There's no way because we've got 20 guys identified in the House who say they'll give us one vote but they won't give us all three. We can switch it around, swap off and squeeze out two victories, but we aren't going to get all three. I'd say, Now we can go see the speaker and ask him to pull this thing off the schedule. Which one do you want pulled? He'd say, Come see me later. You're invariably choosing between different constituencies. You might just say, Well, this one's less important right now. It's more important we do this. Following that is almost a debriefing. We went back to our own staffs and said, The President said do this, do this, or do that. Or the President would pass out assignments, You call so and so, will you call so and so? I don't know what his reason was for choosing one person versus another to call Secretary so and so.

Young

There were a lot of articles to the effect that [Walter] Mondale, for example, was brought in to try to establish some priorities in the whole mess of legislative agenda. Is that correct, and if so, to what extent is it correct? How did one check off the number one, number two, number three things, and decide on what they were going to be?

Moore

Well, it may be useful just to talk about how that process went right now. It was the Vice President's committee. All the Cabinet people competed for getting the stuff on there. They wouldn't be satisfied with saying, Bob Thomson, Gale Harrison, and Les Francis got together, and these are the ones they choose to do. But if the Vice President chose those, they could hardly argue with him. This thing was started. Congressional liaison would come up with an all-inclusive list.

Thomson

[REDACTED]

Moore

We would start the process, say, Send them in. Agencies would send them in. We would screen those. Congressional liaison would come up with an all-inclusive list. Domestic policy staff would come up with a list.

Cable

When the thing started, as I recall it, it was November 1977. Late in '77 it became very apparent that there were many more things in the Congress to be done than were do-able in the time available. Some of the Congressional leadership also reinforced this point that unless we had a mechanism to tell about our priorities, we were going to run the risk of losing a lot more than winning. We sat down and I remember that painful process of taking what we had proposed and crystal balling. Dan Tate, Bob Thomson, and I were assigned to a project: hospital cost containment, real wage insurance, Panama Canal treaties, labor law veto on the floor.

We took the number of working days that were left in the balance of the first session and the second session of that first Congress and came up with a number of days. I don't recall the number, but it was not a big number. Then we went through in a very arbitrary, unscientific way and said it was going to take x plus of those days to pass our program, even if the Congress would do nothing but just concentrate on what we'd asked them to pass. It still would have taken all of the remaining legislative days in the House. That wouldn't have given them time to reauthorize expiring legislation, pass the 13 regular appropriations bills or conduct minute speeches or the morning hour in the Senate.

Moore

We were setting ourselves up for losses. We're trying to modestly say that we were the ones who initiated the agenda setting process.

Thomson

[REDACTED]

Tate

[REDACTED]

Cable

That's the first one after Camp David. I came back with Vice President's group. That memo showed those times, I think. That's my recollection of it.

Light

The memo was from late '77?

Cable

I recall working on it over the Thanksgiving holiday.

Thomson

[REDACTED]

Cable

Another thing that was done because of the President's time was that we got Zbig to do both foreign trips and foreign visitors so that the President had more time.

Moore

We did an overlay. We did what working days Congress had. We knew what the President's schedule was, the times he was going to be out of the country, and what he was going to be doing. We did an overlay on that to see what time was available.

Thomson

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Young

What stood for A?

Thomson

[REDACTED]

Cable

They were also things in which there was no logical agency lead, where there was a crossed agency issue like civil service reform, or a Department of Education where we had an unenthusiastic Secretary.

Thomson

[REDACTED]

Tate

[REDACTED]

Moore

Because someone's issue was on the C list, we had a published list that we put up. It kept going through the process. It went through the Vice President's committee, the principals would look at it, and then it was presented to the President. The President either rearranged them or agreed to it. Then we would go to the Hill and present it. We had already talked to Senator Byrd and Tip and gone through kind of a draft of it and given the President feedback on that before this ever got to the press. The press thought we

would go up and have a meeting with the speaker and Senator Byrd to go over what our agenda was going to be for the year.

Thomson

[REDACTED]

Cable

Those were always on both of our lists.

Young

So you've now got your A, B, and C list.

Moore

Then there was one further step in the process. Stu and McIntyre and I would have all the reporters in and tell them what our agenda was going to be for the coming year.

Tate

[REDACTED]

Thomson

[REDACTED]

Young

A, B, and C without distinction? Or just A and B?

Cable

Kind of a combination A and B.

Young

The reason I'm asking this is that in past administrations you had a clearly packaged legislative program that became public at a certain time. It was usually announced in connection with the State of the Union or the budget. This is how the fair deal program was announced. Yours seems to be a more complicated process.

Thomson

[REDACTED]

Young

At the point when you go public with the President's priorities, and the public may be guessing about what they are, they're well known within the staff because you have these categories A, B, and C.

Moore

The press would find out we were going to see the speaker, and they'd keep bombarding, What is it? What is it? Rumors would leak out and we'd start getting calls from Senators or members saying, I understand my piece of legislation is not on your list. Is it on it or is it not on it? That's why we handed it to the press so we could put it out to the public domain for everybody to see.

Young

Then you go back with the further step you talked about. Bob Thomson earlier waxed strong about a decision that was made on the defense budget. The President makes up his mind, goes to the Hill and the decision doesn't stick. Does that happen also when the President's program is announced and the priorities are clear? Does it stick? When you start working on it on the Hill, who else gets into the act and how do you handle that?

Cable

Can I interrupt for just one second and read a sentence out of this morning's Washington wire in the *Wall Street Journal*? It's talking about the appropriations bill. It says, Pentagon lobbyists mobilize to hold the line. This morning's *Wall Street Journal* has the very same story that we're talking about. Pentagon lobbyists are the scrambled eggs guys and they're up there doing their own thing. I mean they want their weapons, they want their airplanes; they don't want any more cuts.

Thomson

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Moore

If some Assistant Secretary came up with a legislative program and said, This is one we've really got to have, I mean I've seen things change, we'd say, Sorry, the President's already said it, it's not on the list.

Thomson

[REDACTED]

Tate

[REDACTED]

Moore

And keep all the extraneous stuff off of it. I tell you another point on the thing too. This is the genesis of it. We recognized when we first went there the first year that we had too much legislation up there. We overloaded the circuits. We also realized that the White House wasn't unlimited. We had limited resources. We identified what the resources were: the President's time, and the Vice President's time. Our efforts up there fit into this legislative calendar that was dictated by the calendar. We had only a certain number of working days in a year. It was an attempt to prioritize things so they could fit in there.

It also gave you a unit to measure. You needed some kind of benchmark to measure your own success internally. We'd go in in January and by Easter we'd have a review. Like Dan says, we might have then dropped something or we might have added something. During the August break, we did another review. We mobilized coming back from Labor

Day, and we massaged this thing. We polished it up and added another something. We needed more help here. If the President's going he'd better make a speech on this and emphasize this more so he can get a breakthrough here. We've got to redouble our efforts. This was really broken through. It was going to pass easily, so let's pull some of our manpower off of that, turn it over to an agency and let them work on it.

Mosher

You said that this agenda was too long during the first year. Did you systematically cut the number of items down that first year?

Tate

[REDACTED]

Young

Saying it didn't necessarily reduce the number of items, but it gave a priority.

Moore

It did reduce the number too. Things would always slip in.

Tate

[REDACTED]

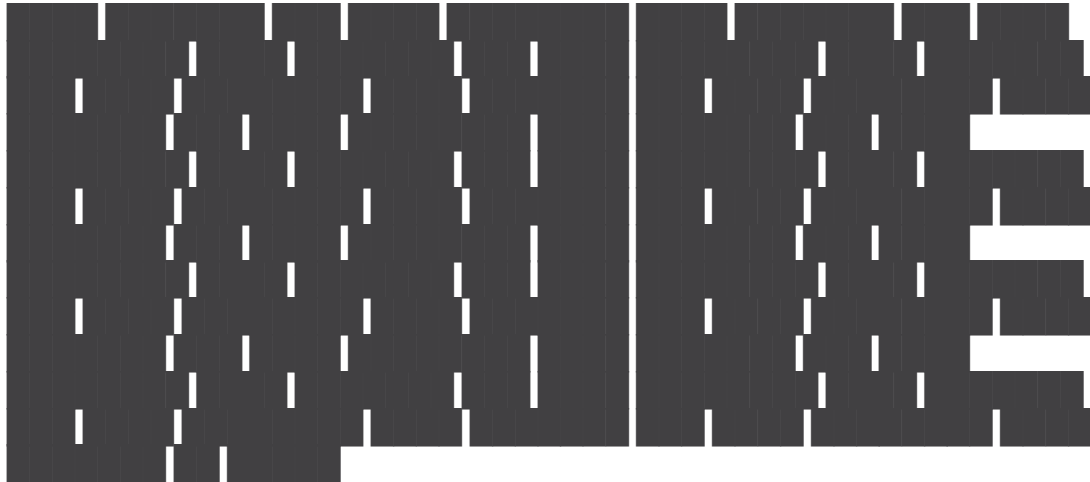
Mosher

Yes, but I'd like to get an opinion from you fellows about whether in fact President Carter tried to do too many things.

We've got a contrast today with Reagan, who has been pushing hard on two things. One is cutting the budget and second is reducing taxes. He let a lot of other stuff go by the board, which is the opposite extreme from what the Carter people did. We had one

scholar here in one of the earlier meetings who said the big mistake was that the President was trying to do too many different things at the same time.

Tate



Moore

We had some private complaints of the leadership. You've got all this stuff up here and I've only got so many days to schedule in my House. Which way do you want to go? We were also criticized for putting too much stuff up. We passed a lot of that stuff.

Mann

Wasn't part of it that much of it was queued at the Ways and Means committee? It wasn't so much that Congress was overloaded as that one committee in particular was overloaded.

Moore

In tax reform, welfare reform, and energy.

Tate



Cable

Some of the early stuff was the economic stimulus package: hospital cost containment, real wage insurance, tax reform.

Young

We will want to talk about some specific examples, good and bad, problematic and easy.

McCleskey

I just wanted to get clarification on the list. Did I understand you to say that the list that was finally developed and released to the press was not necessarily the same list that you all were working from in your minds?

Cable

Well, it was the same list, it just didn't have all the same details. We didn't create things or take things off. I don't think we ever went through the kind of explanation of what some of the asterisks meant.

Moore

We had stuff that came up like when we were faced with the decision—Dan, you worked this issue—on what to do with the farm bill, which was expiring. The Clean Air Act was up in 1977. We had advice, probably pretty good advice. The farm bill was a big, big bill. It affected a lot of people, particularly from Jimmy Carter's constituency. We just had a lot of other stuff on the plate, Take a look at this, will you extend this for one year as it is? Do you put it off until next year and then dig into it, or do you go ahead and open that thing up this year? It was the same way with the Clean Air Act. It forced you to take a look down the road as a forcing mechanism to see what was coming up. The farm bill wasn't something that Carter ran on. It wasn't a campaign promise, although he talked a lot about it. It wasn't part of our legislative agenda, but it had to be done. It was going to expire; it was going to take a certain amount of time, about two weeks, on the Senate floor.

Tate

[REDACTED]

Moore

So we had tradeoffs like that.

Tate

[REDACTED]

Moore

It was known we'd gone to the Hill with a list. It was going to leak out. It was going to be out when it came from the Hill, so we went ahead and put out an all-inclusive list ourselves.

Young

How well do you feel that you mastered the problems of getting surprised by the Congressional consequences of White House policy decision? This is not a peculiar problem in the Carter Presidency; it's common to all.

Cable

One of the things that happened over time was that it became very clear that there wasn't a decision that was made in the White House that didn't have Congressional consequences.

Tate

[REDACTED]

Cable

Okay. But that was a realization. You're talking about a learning process. Nobody is made to be what we are, but that was learned. I remember the deal with the Mideast policy statement about letting the Soviets be involved with it, the flap that that caused and the questions of why we were never involved in that. One of the reasons I always thought that having Beckel around was good was because that kind of stuff got forced to let us say, Hey, wait a minute, guys, I mean Senator whoever or Congressman whoever is going to go nuts over that. That's going to have an impact on your ability to pass an energy bill, your ability to pass a tax cut, and your ability to do anything else. I don't think it was ever perfect. No one has ever attained a hundred percent system. The system did produce a much greater sensitivity over time toward that in somewhat of a satisfying way. I don't think there is an answer to your question, but I do think that it got better.

Moore

The seven o'clock meeting was the best mechanism we had to cover what you spoke of.

Cable

He thought they were 7:45. No wonder Tate never made it.

Thomson

[REDACTED]

Young

Did you or a member of your staff ever informally attend an NSC affair?

Thomson

[REDACTED]

Cable

Madeleine always reported to us.

Moore

There were different levels of NSC meetings where the President attended; I don't think any of us attended. Beckel never attended one of those, but he attended staff meetings at NSC.

Young

What about the press briefings and the President? Did you have a person there before a press conference?

Thomson

[REDACTED]

Moore

Attended some.

Cable

We always worked with David in the preparation of those Q and A books. They were thinking about what was going on in the Hill. Here are some likely questions and some proposed answers. I worked with David [Aaron] on those at times.

Tate



Moore

We also had an input into the opening statement. That was one shot we had at the Presidential press conference. We were also influential in changing the times they were held. Jody was under some constraint when you asked for time on them, but insofar as we could, we would try to time either the day of the week, the time of the day, and opening statement to impact something we were doing on the Hill. Obviously we didn't always control that, but we had some success with it.

Jones

This discussion of priorities seems to be so important given what the initial legislative program was. However I've lost sight of the role of the President. I get the picture of a realization on the part of you folks working on the Hill that, my God, there are only so many days in the week and on Capitol Hill those are even fewer than the normal week. There was a development along that line when you started to line up to here's the time and here's the President's schedule. The realization emerges that we've got to begin to set some priorities. That fact bubbles up to the top and results in the Mondale group and the President concurring on that. Was the President taking initiative along these lines? Was he realizing the same thing at the same time? In other words, was there a front end to the priority setting with your meetings, Frank, with the President, or was it the other way around?

Moore

It was feedback that we gave. We said, We've got to have some kind of priority setting.

Thompson

The original memo was to the President, wasn't it?

Cable

To the certain extent that you generate a piece of paper and it goes to the President. By any standard, what we suggested did not always, not even regularly, come back from President Carter with an OK on the top of memo. There were lots of changes. I remember the great debate with the agenda-setting memo about what we would do with mental health. What level would the mental health issue that the first lady was so involved in be put on? The joke was, who was going to tell the Carters that it can't go on list number one?

Young

An additional part of our trying to get a handle on the agenda: the President would obviously not necessarily accept a proposed list of priorities. He'd scratch some out. All right. But was it always a reaction to a list? That's part of Chuck's question. Did the President have priorities proposed that he then changed or okayed as the case may be, did the whole thing start out from the front end saying that this is the important thing, or was it a response to a list of a culled agenda?

Cable

Well, I think the agenda-setting process was a response. A realization occurred at some time in lots of places, not quite simultaneously, and probably more acutely felt in some places than in others. The President engaged in a weekly agenda-setting process or prioritizing process in terms of Congressional legislation. He reacted to and pushed us toward having to work on things one way as opposed to another. That happened on a daily basis. This process started in November or Thanksgiving of 1977. It was a culmination, a realization that there was not somebody who just would say, Hey, you've got to set some priorities.

The President set a bunch of priorities. He sent them all to the Congress. He would have liked to have had the Congress do all of those things. There was a realization that we had to look at that again, that we couldn't get them all, and that there wasn't time for all of them. It's like so many things in Washington. Probably ten people, if only ten, are going to take credit for every single good idea that's ever been thought of. It's a set of experiences that are similar, and in time sequenced the same. People who work in the process come up with those things. I'm sure the leadership had some significant role in enforcing or encouraging the formalization of a prioritizing process.

Jones

Congressional leadership?

Tate



[REDACTED]

Jones

I'm just trying to see the role of the President in relationship to the process.

Tate

[REDACTED]

Moore

I'll just throw out one item. There was one issue called black lung that was on one priority list. It was on there because of the Senate majority leader. If we hadn't had it on there, he would have put it on there. If you sat down and looked at a smorgasbord of all the things that you've got to do, something might be an important issue, but it may not have been in your top five, but it was in your top ten. It was going to be on the Senate calendar anyway.

Fenno

Bill got to what I was going to ask at the very end of his comment. Frank just got to it too. What were the relations between yourselves and the Congressional leadership? What were the relations like? More specifically, what happened at leadership meetings with the President? How often did they occur and what was their purpose?

Moore

We had different kinds, but the one we had most regularly scheduled had a predictable agenda and had constant participants. That was a Tuesday morning Democratic leadership breakfast in the family dining room of the second floor of the White House. It's called the family dining room. Those were every other Tuesday morning when they were in session. Toward the end of the session when things were running hot and heavy, we had them every Tuesday morning as needed. You decided at one meeting if you were going to need one next week or not, generally speaking. There were five members of each the House and Senate in attendance.

The membership in it was different from other administrations. Shirley Chisholm was secretary to the Democratic caucus. She was the only black in the leadership. The first time we had one, we had the speaker, the majority leader, the assistant whip, chief deputy whip, and the caucus chairman. The black caucus went to the speaker and said, You know, those are all white faces you see there. Why don't we have a black? He said, Because there are no blacks in the leadership. And he said, Oh, yes there is, Shirley Chisholm is secretary to the caucus. So we invited Shirley Chisholm. So the two Houses of Congress were coequals. Ordinarily in the Senate, the Democratic leadership was essentially a majority leader and the assistant majority leader, Alan Cranston, secretary of the caucus and the president pro tem. Then we got Danny Inouye, who was the secretary. So we had six and six.

Cable

We had [Hubert] Humphrey in the beginning.

Thomson

[REDACTED]

Tate

[REDACTED]

Moore

It was a constant battle to keep that even. Additional people in attendance were the Vice President, Dan, Bill, myself and usually two other Congressional liaison people, sometimes different people on the staff. Bill Smith from the Vice President's office on the Hill was an integral part of our operation particularly on the Senate side. He was always there. The agenda was the thing we usually felt. We would go meet with the President. We'd give him a briefing paper the night before and he was going to decide what the issues were and what he thought he ought to emphasize and mention. He would generally open with a briefing on foreign affairs. It lasted sometimes longer than others. He talked about that he spoke to so and so yesterday on the phone, or this is an issue that's coming up, and this is what's happening.

Then we would go down a list that followed this previous list. We talked about the list very closely. I see this dragging, I see this. He would alternately turn one week to the speaker first and the next week he would turn to the majority leader and ask for a report. We stuck pretty closely to those subjects that he mentioned because they would each

make a list. The speaker, more than the majority leader, would come with his own list. Members knew that he was going to see the President and ask him to bring a message.

Thomson

[REDACTED]

Moore

But Bill, myself and other people worked closely with the speaker's staff on the speaker's list that he brought. We had copies of it as well. We knew what the speaker was going to talk about. We never knew what the majority leader was going to talk about unless we just happened to see him the night before.

Tate

[REDACTED]

Moore

Did we always have the chairman of the Democratic Party attending those meetings?

Tate

[REDACTED]

Moore

Generally when we went through that, they turned to general discussion. Different members would bring up different things and talk about the mood of politics, what was going on regionally.

Young

We've still got to get back to Fenno's question. Some of the liaison staff would say the main usefulness of the regular legislative meetings was to educate the President about what was on the mind of the Congress.

Moore

There was a general discussion part of it. They did a good job of that.

Tate

[REDACTED]

Cable

Tip used to like to refer to it as family. We very irregularly had bigger leadership meetings that included other people. Sometimes it was just Democrats and we'd include the committee chairman on the tax bill a lot of times.

Young

There were obviously meetings between the President and the leadership other than the formal meetings.

Fenno

Looking at the world from your point of view and your problems, did you find these meetings useful or helpful, and if so why?

Moore

Well, we each had our list too. It was a captive audience there. We did our business before the meeting began, during drinking orange juice, and afterwards in the cars on the way back to the Hill. Sometimes one member would stay behind and go over to the Oval Office and talk to the press on one particular issue. Yes, I found it useful, because you do best on your own turf. Any kind of association you had with them was good. The thing was done well. People looked forward to it. There was a lot of joking and kidding around. It was a nice event that people looked forward to. You got a lot of business done standing around in the state dining room fifteen minutes before the meeting. If somebody had just made a trip to their district or state, or another country, they'd give you a report.

Thomson

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Moore

Particularly if they were discussing domestic issues.

Thomson

[REDACTED]

Young

Why do you suppose that was?

Cable

There is a combination of reasons, one of which was the leadership. Tip wasn't going to promise the President that he was going to deliver Jack Brooks on revenue sharing. I don't care how many times the President asked the Democratic leadership to deliver a particular vote.

Thomson

[REDACTED]

Moore

There was another reason for it too. It worked better than I think Bob remembers it, but it worked more slowly. First of all, they were leaders to their constituency, which was either the House or the Senate. They viewed that constituency as their first priority. Senator Byrd told Dan and me, First of all, I'm a Senator from the state of West Virginia. Second I'm majority leader for the Senate, and third, I'm a leader for President Carter or the Democratic Party. Do you remember his saying that, Dan?

Tate

[REDACTED]

Moore

Something to that effect and order. That's how he viewed it. I'm sure that's the way. First of all, they were representing their state, and then secondly they were representing people who had elected them to that position. They didn't see themselves as floor managers for this President or any other President. They weren't going to run their body the way he wanted them to do it.

Young

So the leader's meetings were not the principal vehicle of clinching strategy or trying to knock heads?

Thomson

[REDACTED]

Tate

[REDACTED]

Young

And not use the leadership meetings as such?

Tate

[REDACTED]

Mann

Were you constrained at all by working with the leadership? Was it an advantage or was it a disadvantage that Tip O'Neill was probably Jimmy Carter's best friend in the Congress? You also suggested at one point there was a downside to it, which was the reluctance to work with the class of 1974 and meet regularly with them. What were the downsides to focusing so much on the leadership?

Young

Not the people who were leaders but the leadership as such. There's a little background to this in political science. When we look at the changes that have happened in Congress, particularly the reforms, the question arises about contemporary Presidents. The leadership can't deliver. The question is not a personal question about O'Neill or Byrd, it's a question about how one deals with a less well-organized Congress than the one we might have had in the past. That may be part also of Dick Fenno's question. How did you approach this problem? What was your working with the leadership and how did that suffice?

Cable

You're right on the Congress, it's a much more democratic, small d, institution than it was a decade ago. The changes, particularly on the House side but also substantially on the Senate side, have gone from a more autocratic individually controlled Congress ruled by a dozen powerful men making decisions, to basically a majority of the majority in each body holding the power. This is true whether the body is the committee or the subcommittee or the whole Congress. The majority of the Democrats in the House set the policy rules in terms of making the decision. It's been taken away from committee chairmen. Committee chairmen aren't even very good anymore at enforcing no, which used to be almost a given. They could always say no. You can't even do that any more. You've got to refer bills to subcommittees, subcommittees have got to have staff, and they've got to be able to report.

In terms of working with them, you had to work where the power had gone to, which was through that dispersed network. It's always harder to get something done than it is to get something stopped. We had to go to the subcommittee chairman. In a lot of cases subcommittee chairmen have a lot more individual authority over the fate or outcome of a piece of legislation than does the full committee chairman or anybody in the leadership. The leadership is management. Its authority is more in the way the institution is managed and run rather than in the decisions that the institution makes. We dealt with that by dealing with the guy who ran the subcommittee and got a majority on that subcommittee to want to do that. We had to deal with the majority on the full committee, and we had to build the consensus piece by piece in order to get to a majority in the Congress. We would maybe even ask the speaker for a rule that protected us here or there, or a rule to help us get something. Those kinds of things are where the leadership could play a role.

We sometimes had a recalcitrant subcommittee chairman or a subcommittee chairman who didn't agree with what the President wanted for whatever reason, which is not a

negative attribute. I remember that thing with [Lawrence] Fountain from North Carolina. He just didn't like the program. The Congress never liked revenue sharing. There wasn't a doggone thing you could do about that except build a majority around them and run over them. It's not fun or easy. That's not to be critical of the speaker or the leader. It's the reality. It's one of the reasons you can't do it as easily as it was done. It's never going to be the same as before.

Young

When you started out, you maybe had different perspectives on this because you had worked within the House for a number of years. Do you feel that you started out assuming that if you worked closely with the leadership, that would carry you further than if you fanned out?

Moore

No. But you have to observe protocol. Again, go back to the freshmen. We couldn't meet with the freshmen who wanted to meet with President Carter and who wanted to be helpful to him. We met with the leadership. We met with the chairmen of the thirteen standing committees, the exclusive committees first. I remember Chairman [James] Delaney from New York was chairman of the Rules Committee. He was nearing retirement. Maybe he had already announced retirement. Anyway, it was generally known. Some other members on the rules committee actually may have been more influential in what happened there. But you couldn't meet with them. He was the chairman and you met with the chairman first.

Cable

You have to define a group. You have to define a group of people you're going to meet with in one of these kinds of meetings. You have to make the group. You have to define a group and you have to have a justification for it. That's the only safe way to invite people to be with the President. Maybe the group is left-handed blondes, but that's okay too. If it's a group, you have to have a reason for it to make some sense.

Moore

We knew who the person was to talk with on certain committees, who had the balance of power, but you couldn't invite them and not invite the chairman. If you invited two people from that committee, then you had to invite two from the Senate committee.

Tate

[REDACTED]



Moore

We scrambled to get him to call Russell Long.

Young

You're not alone. Henry Wilson talked about the time that Johnson decided soon after he got in that he was going to get this foreign aid thing off his back, but he didn't let his Congressional liaison people know about it. He called in the relevant committee chairman and finally cut a deal. He was very proud of himself and called in the Congressional liaison staff and said, Well, I've settled this one for you. They said, Well, that's fine. Johnson described the deal to them, feeling quite proud of himself. One of the members of the staff said, Well, Mr. President, we had already cut the same deal at half the cost.

Moore

I don't think you can ever find an occasion where you can beat Jimmy Carter on the cost.

Jones

Wonder where that staff person took up work next?

Petkas

Mine's on a different line. Another comment about the leadership and Tip O'Neill, and seeing if there was any downside to it. The speaker is naturally a Democratic partisan. I understand he's not all that interested in working with Republicans. Was there any cost to the President by working closely with the speaker and therefore making Republicans feel left out, which at some point cost you?

Moore

I personally feel that we made a mistake as a CL staff by not working more closely with Republicans, aside from the President having regular meetings with them. Again it was manpower. We had a limited number of people, so we were going to see Democrats first. Bill and I talked about it. Had there been a second term, I wanted to put on a person who worked exclusively with Republicans. I think we would have got a lot out of the Republicans. A lot of Republicans wanted to work with Carter. They wanted to feel included. We had the problem on the natural gas act. We had some Republicans led by [Clarence] Brown in the conference who we said, Why won't they come on board? They

finally said, Look, we've been cut out of this whole deal. Nobody's ever said anything to us and you just take us for granted.

It ended up that the President had to meet with them. And he met with them. I said, Okay, now you've met with us, we've told you what our objections are, you've told us what yours are, we'll go back and vote. Deadlock was broken pretty soon after that, within what a week or something. So we did pay some penalties for doing that. But again, one of the reasons for it was as we went on, members of the Congressional liaison team developed friendships with Republicans. We made new friends oftentimes on a Congressional trip. Bill had a lot of friends on the Republican side of the House because of his previous service on the Health, Education, and Labor committee. That was a core group of folks we knew. We knew some socially. Jim Free, who'd come new to Washington, had a lot of Republican friends coming off of his trips.

Cable

That's a point worth pursuing. In domestic versus foreign areas, especially in the House, we tended to work much more regularly on foreign policy issues because it was less of a partisan thing, as it always has been.

Moore

[Clement] Zablocki almost forced, I mean he and [William] Broomfield his team.

Cable

Zablocki and Broomfield were nearly inseparable, I mean they never did anything that way.

Moore

You couldn't invite Zablocki to the White House without Broomfield; he wouldn't come without Broomfield.

Cable

He made it very clear that you weren't going to participate in splitting up the relationship that he'd built. That's something that was good for him and it worked well for him. On the domestic side, it's back to your four parties in the House rather than Democrats and Republicans. I tended to work with those Republicans who tended to vote with and work with us on issues as they came up. They have lists of what are now being called gypsy moths. They have been there for a long time, and they've been very visible to anybody who's wanted to work that system. They're part of a group of probably 25 or so dead Republicans in the House who tended to be more progressive than the more conservative Democrats. You go where your time is rewarded. On those domestic issues, there weren't that many that needed that you were ever to get any of them. [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Moore

Bill, there's one point I wanted to make. Sometimes on a vote there will be occasions where the vote just doesn't matter one way or the other to that member. It doesn't affect his district. It doesn't affect the committee he's on, and he can go either way. If you've got a relationship with him and you ask him for a vote, oftentimes he'll give it to you. If you don't have a relationship, if you totally ignore him, you don't even know his first name, you haven't met with him, and he doesn't know you, then you're not going to ask for it. You've got to ask for the votes to get them.

We had some lobbyists, not on our team but in some places in the administration, who never understood that. That's what I meant by it. If you had more time to spend with them, you could pick up three or four votes sometimes, maybe five of you together. If every person had one vote they could get on a personal basis on something that didn't affect the guy, we would have been better off. He'd say, Yes, I'll give it to you, it doesn't matter to me. A lot of the stuff we passed up there we passed by margins of three votes and four votes. So to answer your question, I think we would have done better had we picked up votes like that by spending more time with the Republicans, at least on the House side.

Tate

[REDACTED]

Moore

We came up with three in a brief caucus. Dan wasn't included in it, so we outvoted him. We thought one example that worked was civil service reform. That was sort of an inside Washington, outside Washington kind of issue in terms of building coalitions. We didn't even put that up there on this priority list. It kept reappearing and arising from ashes like the Phoenix. It was on reorganization of natural resources. Because of a consultation that Bob Thomson did on the Senate side, and that Bill and Jim Free did on the House side, we didn't put it up there even though everybody thought it was a great idea and would be a good thing; sort of shows the value of the consultation. We chose to talk about that we didn't pass hospital cost containment. We show that one because it illustrates the power of the grassroots lobby. Different forces are brought to bear on different issues. A lot of members just never had thought about whether he was for it or against. We'll describe the reasons, all the pressures were there.

Thomson

[REDACTED]

Young

Well, do you want to go through your cases?

Moore

Yes. Let's take the one that passed, talk about the one that we didn't try, and then talk about the one we tried and failed on. Bob, it might be good if you lead off on civil service reform because that one illustrates the use of the task force very well. It cuts across interagency. We had Scotty [Alan] Campbell always involved in it. Did Les chair this task force? We really haven't talked about the task force, and that's a good way to illustrate.

Thomson

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Young

What were the tasks?

Thomson

[REDACTED]

Young

This is after the bill has been introduced?

Thomson

[REDACTED]

Moore

Get editorials in all the Florida papers you can because six members of the delegation from there are undecided.

Thomson

[REDACTED]

Moore

Scotty might generate some figures for us to support a particular argument that we were making on the Hill.

Thomson

[REDACTED]

Young

Would these activities arranged by the public liaison staff include the East Room or Cabinet Room meetings with outside people?

Thomson

[REDACTED]

Moore

That was one incident that we used Cabinet officers to make calls on. They could make a good argument for it because they could say the current law doesn't let me operate by department like I ought to be able to operate.

Cable

The other thing it did was to provide a place to get quick reaction, reports and be able to react quickly to problems that were occurring on the Hill. Sometimes the biggest problem was getting anybody who could make the decision in a place to make that decision in a timely fashion. I don't know how many times it happens, but there are a lot of times you're up there and a subcommittee is marking up something and the choice is not yours versus something else. It's between two or three less than acceptable alternatives. If you don't have a ready source of a decision, you're left to my judgment. That's not always the best. You do the best you can, but that was a good place because you could appeal to the boiler room. Near the end we actually had somebody on detail to get quickly through the maze to find people.

Moore

Yeah we moved them up on the Hill into H206.

Thomson

[REDACTED]

Moore

And on the carrier.

Thomson

[REDACTED]

Cable

There were other problems, but that contributed to it.

Thomson

[REDACTED]

Mosher

Going back to the civil service reform bill. You yielded on one very important part of that bill, which has to do with veterans' benefits. Could you tell us the circumstances under which this concession or this amendment was made on veterans and on civil service reform? At what stage did you decide to give up?

Thomson

[REDACTED]

Mosher

Would this have gone to the task force?

Thomson

[REDACTED]

Mosher

By the task force?

Thomson

[REDACTED]

Young

How did you read the vote when you went into activity? Was it going to be very close? Was it uncertain?

Moore

You mean civil service reform?

Young

Civil service reform.

Moore

It was an unknown. No bill had been put up there like it. There wasn't an identifiable constituency. You couldn't look at previous votes and see how somebody would vote on the thing. We always felt if we could get it out of the House Civil Service Committee and get it on the floor, it'd go. The airline deregulation would go too if they ever get it out of the Commerce Committee. It was an inside beltway and an outside beltway kind of thing. Inside the beltway you had the government employee unions. You had people like Pat [Patricia] Schroeder who was also on the committee, but who had maybe forty thousand federal employees living in her district. There were also other members who had a lot of public employees in their district.

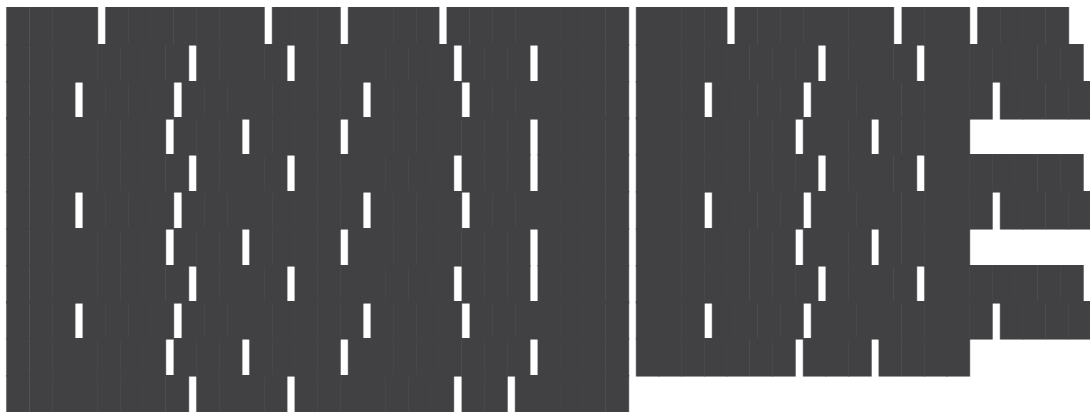
Young

Were there occasions that you—

Moore

But you didn't have anything to fight it. If you went in a barber shop and asked anybody if they were from civil service and then you explained the issue, they'd say, That's a great thing. Why don't you pass that? Who could be against it?

Thomson



Moore

Those committees just didn't have anything that major go through them. In the Senate we usually had a problem of getting a quorum in the committee meeting. The reason was that that was maybe the third committee for most of those Senators.

Thomson

[REDACTED]

Young

Would civil service be an example of an issue that wasn't a real tough one for you?

Moore

It was very tough. I don't know how the final vote reflected.

Cable

It was not tough on the House or Senate floor.

Moore

But it took us forever to get it through subcommittee and committee level.

Young

When a sudden amendment, or some other change, would be offered, it would have to be referred quickly to the President himself for a statement of position. Or did it always go through a task force with recommendations to the President?

Thomson

[REDACTED]

Mosher

This was unusual in that you had two things; you had a reorganization plan and you also had a bill out of the same area. Did the same task force handle both? As I recall, your organization didn't have much trouble with the bills. Is that correct?

Moore

No, there was resistance to creating that Office of Personnel Management.

Cable

But the mechanism is different. It's a disapproval mechanism, it's a different committee. The post office committee has to plead their case before a committee, which is not particularly a special interest. It's less of a special interest home for civil servants.

Thomson

[REDACTED]

Fenno

No, I'm just wondering if this was an issue on which you used the President in any sort of personal lobbying or contact with members. If so, how and when and what were the President's strengths in this sort of thing? What setting was he best at? What was he most comfortable in doing? Which kinds of things did you tend not to use?

Moore

We met with the whole post office civil service committee in the House and the Cabinet, to start off with. This is what we're going to do, this is why we want to do it. I don't remember if we met with the Senate committee.

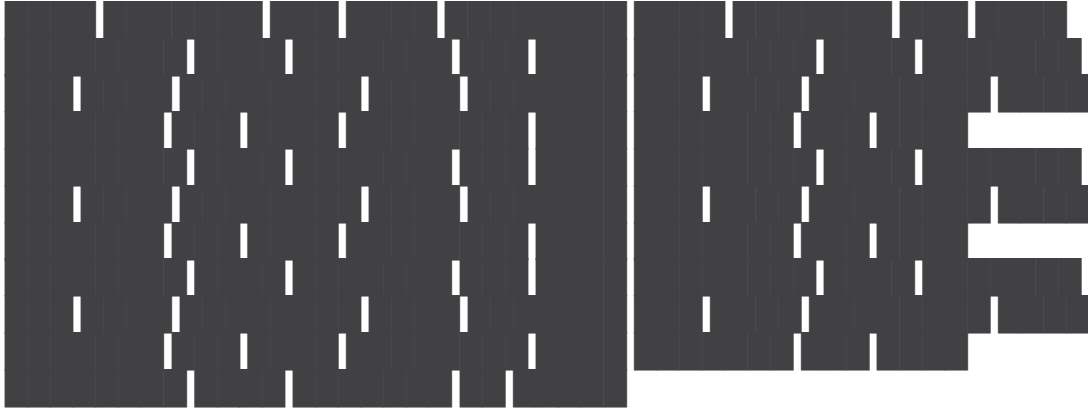
Thomson

[REDACTED]

Tate

[REDACTED]

Thomson



Moore

Further along, the President would make phone calls. He'd bring in individual members or groups of them. At the Cabinet meeting he would use the same list that the Cabinet member used for the leadership. He'd read it over and say, This is going well, this is not going well, and we've got a report that you aren't doing your work on this thing.

Young

Pointing to a Cabinet member?

Moore

Yes, a Cabinet member. You have success on your calls, Mr. Cabinet member, and so I want you to continue with this. We're going to put the things together this week, and I want to put a big push on. You'll get a list from Frank and I want all those calls made. I want you to give them back to Frank so he can give them to me or whoever. I'll be looking for the results. The Cabinet officers were particularly successful at this because they were able to call people and say, If you had my job, how would you like it if you couldn't do this, couldn't do this, and couldn't do this? I really need this flexibility to run my department, so will you please vote for the bill? That's an oversimplification.

Cable

I remember the mix up on that one with Ford. Billy Ford was on the Civil Service Committee. I wouldn't quite say he was an enemy, but he was hostile. We gave Congressman Ford's name to the GSA administrator, Jay Solomon.

Cable

The Ford that he was supposed to call was Harold Ford from Memphis, Tennessee, and Solomon was also from Tennessee. Solomon picked up the phone and called Billy Ford. I got chewed out for 20 minutes about that. Incompetent White House. They can't do anything right, and this, that and the other thing. It was very clear to me that I would

never ask Solomon to call Billy Ford. That's ridiculous. But Solomon spoke of Congressman Ford, and he called him Congressman Ford, not his Tennessee colleague.

Moore

I had to go up and meet with Billy Ford.

Cable

We all met. I spent more hours with Billy Ford than anyone.

Fenno

[REDACTED]

Thompson

[REDACTED]

Thomson

[REDACTED]

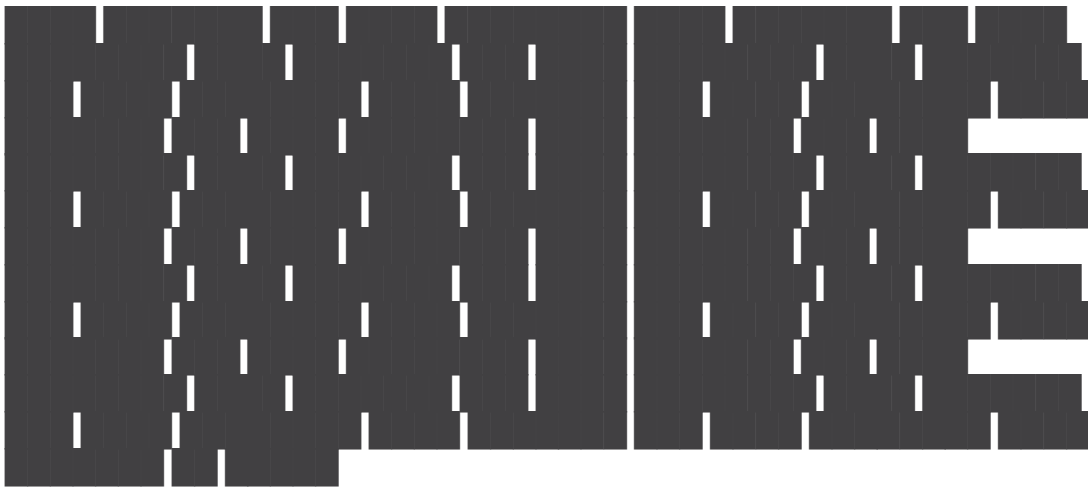
Jones

The dynamics means knowing the substance and the effect of what was going on and explaining something that they didn't see.

Thomson



Tate



Jones

Going to the mat with him then means you're trying to get the votes and beating him?

Tate

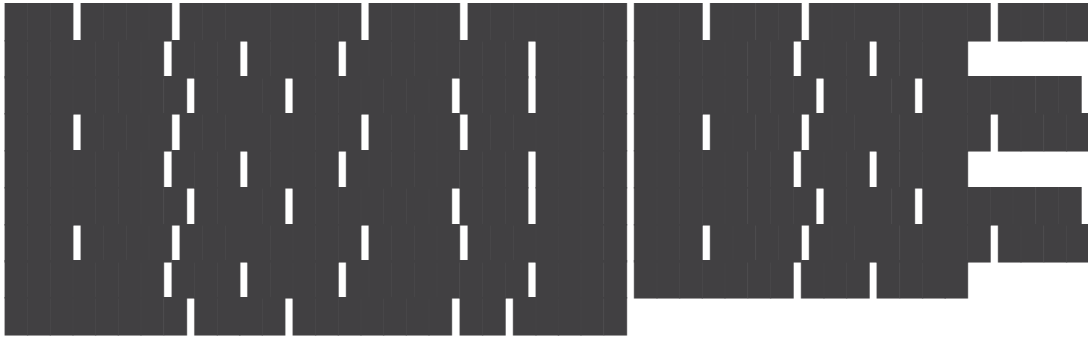


Jones

Not threats or anything of that sort?

Tate





Cable

A couple of things. Understanding why a guy is doing it is very important. Sometimes it's not being done for the apparent reason. Sometimes it's being done to get your attention so that you have to deal with him on something else. Congressman X says, I have the ability to screw up your bill for another two days in this committee. I don't really want to, but your XYZ Secretary won't even return my damn phone call, Cable. That's easy for me. I'll go make sure that that guy makes the phone call.

One way or another, usually you don't have to do anything other than call the Congressional liaison guy or the Secretary or whatever. Depending on the urgency of the situation, you can handle it a lot of different ways. Knowing the person well enough to understand why he's doing it is important. Sometimes you've just got to exercise pressure on the system where you can and when you can, or you as a Representative or Senator don't have an ability to impact the outcome. Maybe you never get Secretary of whomever. You're not on the right committee. Your project is a turkey. You can't get someone to respond to your phone call. But if you can make it painful enough to the White House to have you screwing up the pot in one other place where you are a player, then that's a very important thing.

That's different from the way Bob described this staff person role. You've got to be right on the merits of your position. You've got to know the merits of your position, you've got to be able to articulate and explain them well. I've very rarely known a member of the House or Senate to vote against his own best interests. You've got to convince them it's in the national interest. Some of the things that we had to sell that were tough were some of the foreign policy things, like AWACS and Turkish arms embargo and some of that stuff. You really had to go in to those guys and do well on the merits. You had to prove that it was in the national interest, or at least be able to make a case against the kinds of arguments that he made.

My example of wanting an organizational structure that focused on members as members in a non-need basis was to develop the sense of, I can go with you. You'll help me when you can, and when I need you later tomorrow . . . A situation occurs where a guy gives you a vote one day and it was important to you, and the next day when he calls you back and says, Hey, Bill, I have this real serious problem with this or that or the other thing, your interest in responding positively is increased. You don't give him anything.

We don't have anything to give. We didn't exercise any discretion in the sense of approving grants, contracts, or rewarding. Accepting or rejecting proposals were usually done by Cabinet Secretaries. Those were the people and their process is the one that does favors. The President doesn't do that. The Secretaries do that. We sure didn't do it. Whether we wanted to or not, we didn't do it.

Young

Do you want to talk a little bit about natural resources and then about hospital cost containment as other illustrations?

Thomson

[REDACTED]

Tate

[REDACTED]

Thomson

[REDACTED]

Moore

He had the thing on his desk.

Thomson

[REDACTED]

Young

Where did it come from?

Thomson

[REDACTED]

Moore

Chairman [Thomas] Foley, Chairman Brooks.

Thomson

[REDACTED].

Cable

No, there was a meeting. There was a McIntyre and [Cecil] Andrus Oval office meeting. I remember it well.

Thomson

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Moore

He thought you were trying to torpedo it.

Thomson

[REDACTED]

Moore

He was committed to it. It came from Georgia. We did it in Georgia. It was the toughest battle we had down there. Almost the same line-up.

Thomson

[REDACTED]

Young

So what happened?

Thomson

[REDACTED]

Moore

The President and Andrus wanted to go with it. The President said, Well, this is what Frank's people have found out. Cecil, does this stand true? Cecil may have gone back. The President gave him the option of going back and checking himself. I don't know what the process was once I took the memo in and gave it to the President. But I think that was an example of consultation and no surprises. Of course that doesn't mean that if you go up and people say, Well, that can't be done, that you don't try it. I can't think of any of the big issues that we worked on where we ever had anywhere near a working majority to start with. You can usually start it off. We started off in the Senate with a base of 22 votes, 16 votes, 30 votes. In the House maybe, depending on the issue, we had

anywhere from 140 to 160. We wouldn't have worked on it if we knew we had a majority.

Thomson

[REDACTED]

Young

So the President withdrew it in effect?

Thomson

[REDACTED]

Moore

It was his decision with a reluctant concurrence with the Secretary of Interior and the director of OMB.

Young

Roosevelt tried the same thing.

Moore

We were reminded of that.

Jones

So this was a success in the other way. It brought information from the Hill to the President to prevent something happening that would have been extremely difficult for the President? This is carrying water the other way.

Moore

This is a success story.

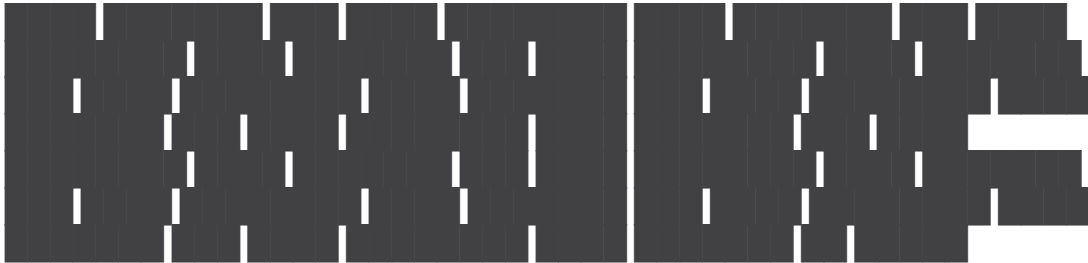
Mosher

Did you often survey Congressional reaction prior to sending something over?

Moore

We did so with increasing frequency through the years. Oftentimes the President would say, Why don't you get your guys to do a quick check, or more detailed check?

Tate



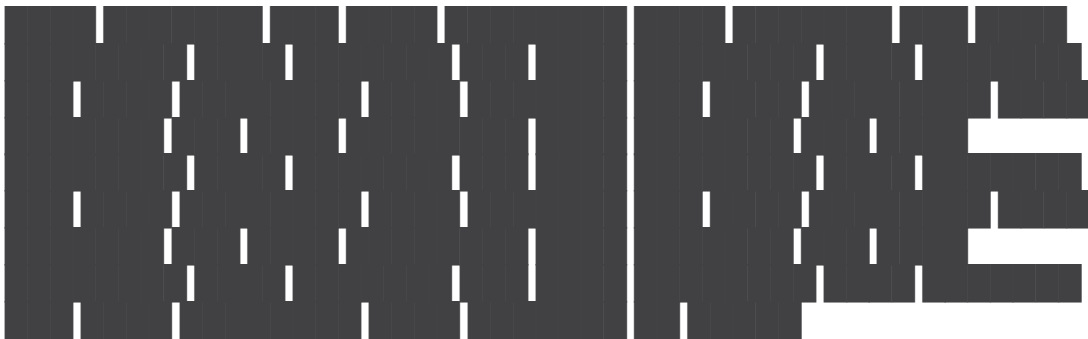
Moore

We handicapped bills if we sent them up. This is what's likely to happen.

Kettl

Can you explain briefly how your vote counting worked and what kind of problems you went through both to collect the information and the story?

Thomson



Moore

Sometimes in the process of consultation you get surprises. You might discover a horse you could use in somebody whom you just wouldn't expect. You could start building coalitions by doing that. Again, it all takes time. You have to sit down, identify the members, set up your schedule, assign people to do it, get the appointments, and invite people to see them.

Young

What about hospital cost containment as the third illustration?

Moore

The reason we chose hospital cost containment is that it shows the power of outside lobbying groups. Oftentimes you would go through the process and sit down and draft the arguments you're going to use. You get into the process, and the arguments that you expected and were ready to counter just disappear, and a whole new argument crops up. Somebody interjects a new concept or new objections into the discussion, and you have to go back and counter those. Hospital cost containment was something we worked on. The President instructed Secretary Califano to work on it early.

The logic of it was clear on the face. Hospital costs had been rising at a rate greater than inflation. You studied it. Why did it happen? It happened because no one was really responsible. It didn't matter to anyone. Nobody was personally responsible for a bill. It was Blue Cross. There was nobody on it. They made a direct payment person to person. Suppliers raised their prices, the hospital raised the prices and passed it on to Blue Cross/Blue Shield; Blue Cross/Blue Shield raised the premium rates. It's a vicious cycle.

Cable

Instead of costing you a dollar for a dollar, it costs you a penny in your premium a year later. The third party payer principle was a real cost insulator.

Moore

We tried it one year. I don't even think we ever got the thing up. We got it because we had one particular member who voted against it in committee.

Cable

We lost at the full committee twenty to twenty.

Moore

That's right.

Cable

The other reason that was necessary to do is that it was very clearly one of the President's commitments during the campaign. A certain segment of the Democratic Party wanted to proceed with a national health insurance program. You could not in any way afford to even begin talking about affording a national health insurance program if hospital costs had an unlimited straw into the Federal Treasury. Without some kind of a cap on hospital costs and a Federal payment program for national health insurance, a segment of the industry that has proven by any objective standard to be greedy already would have had a straw right down into the guts of the Treasury that enabled them to take all of the money out they wanted.

Moore

You had to have cost containment first. Just the threat of it passing held down hospital costs.

Light

But were the two issues linked? Hospital costs explicitly?

Cable

Absolutely.

Young

What were the politics of this? Did you use the task force on this one?

Cable

We did that before we started task forces.

Moore

We might have had one later. We formed one the second time we tried. The reason we got beat, the reason we lost, the reason we had such a problem with it, wasn't that Congressman so and so was against it. Hospital administrators were a force that was hard to deal with. If you just think about your own home towns and your hospital board, think about who's on the board. It's usually the blue ribbon committees; usually a philanthropist who they put on in the hopes that this old lady is going to die in the next five years and she'll give them a wing named after her.

The hospital administrators have some damn good people in Washington who understood hospital and community politics. They mobilized the trustees and the boards of the hospital to call the Congressman. You're getting ready to vote on this thing, the administration presented their views and it makes sense. Suddenly you get a call. Maybe you've got four or five towns of any size in your district, and in three days you get calls from 15 people who are the wealthiest, most powerful people in those towns. In addition, they're people who said, I've never called you before. You've been my Congressman for six years or eight years and I'm just asking you this one thing for me. Vote against that. We can't run our hospital if we're constrained. We'll have to go to the county commissioners if it's a public hospital, and raise additional money. If it's a private hospital, we'll have to raise additional money. If it's a university hospital, you know, I'm the president of the university and a powerful, powerful force, and one that you can't combat on a one to one. We couldn't go into that town and pick somebody who's equally influential and get them to call their Congressman to say, No, it's not true.

Cable

Besides that, everybody raised the argument that government can't regulate anything effectively. It was going against the grain of the decontrol that we're much closer to, but never got articulated well. Deregulation effort began in the Carter administration. It was one of those mutually inconsistent things. You could always badmouth Uncle Sam getting into any new program. I don't care how sensitive you are.

Moore

That wasn't a driving force. The most Congress said was, I'd rather just as soon put the thing off. Please don't put me in the position.

Cable

Don't make me vote on this, Congressmen would say.

Moore

They'd say, Don't make me vote against these people in my home town who called me on this. Can't we just put it off? It only rose 14% this past year. Once the bill was off, hospital costs took off again. It was like price control. It's a good example of an outside constituency.

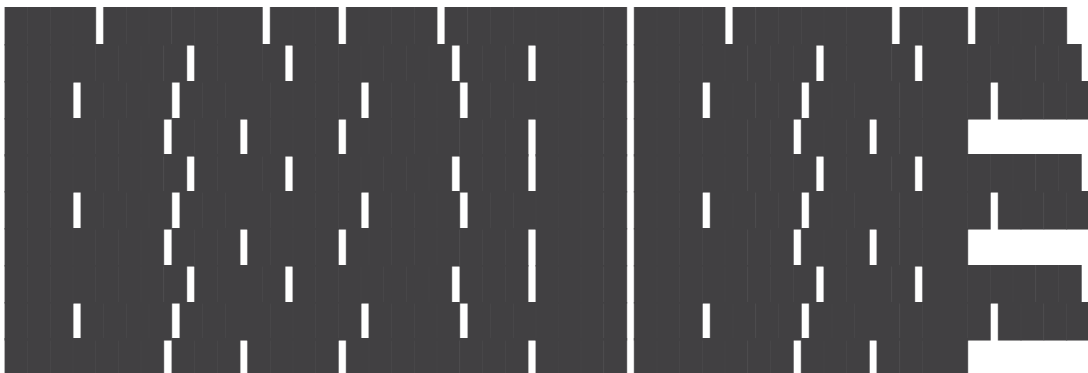
Mann

The question is, what did you do wrong? Is it a failure on your part, or a legislative loss because of things entirely outside your control? Did you do anything wrong on this from the legislative liaison point?

Young

As you look back on it.

Tate



[REDACTED]

Young

Because of their own plans?

Tate

[REDACTED]

Mann

In spite of the heavy hitters against the bill in the first go around, in the House you came damn close, didn't you?

Cable

Yes, because every one of those people who were organizationally against us probably intellectually could rationalize and understand the reason why the country shouldn't have one industry that far out ahead of other industries. It was easy for me to understand why certain organized labor groups were against our tax provision on the three-martini lunch for the same reason. The bartenders and hotel workers were afraid that we were going to cut down their business. They thought, *me first*. Whether it saved them tax dollars at the other end of the line was beside the point. Organized labor was mostly on our side. They were primarily the organized group we had on our side.

Tate

[REDACTED]

Young

Was the public liaison staff operating under Wexler at this time?

Cable

We must have proposed this thing at the very beginning of 1977 if my memory serves me correctly. So Anne probably didn't get involved in it until after it had been in place. We did the editorial board stuff, and Anne also did a lot of that stuff. It was one of those things where you just couldn't get the engine going. There was just no way to get any fire in anybody's gut for it. Tip would sit there and bring in somebody's hospital bill. I remember him bringing to a leadership meeting one morning some friend's hospital bill for 12 hours in the hospital, not for even an overnight stay. It totaled twenty-six hundred bucks. Tip was trying to personalize it. We just never got the thing rolling.

Mann

This is a case where you lost by one vote in a subcommittee markup. Was it a

Thomson

<p> 1. Identify the problem. The problem is that the company is not meeting its sales targets. </p> <p> 2. Analyze the problem. The problem is caused by a combination of factors, including a weak marketing strategy, poor timing of the product launch, and a lack of competitive pricing. </p> <p> 3. Develop a solution. The solution is to develop a new marketing strategy, improve the timing of the product launch, and implement competitive pricing. </p> <p> 4. Implement the solution. The solution is implemented by developing a new marketing strategy, improving the timing of the product launch, and implementing competitive pricing. </p> <p> 5. Evaluate the solution. The solution is evaluated by measuring the company's sales performance against its targets. </p>	<p> 1. Identify the problem. The problem is that the company is not meeting its sales targets. </p> <p> 2. Analyze the problem. The problem is caused by a combination of factors, including a weak marketing strategy, poor timing of the product launch, and a lack of competitive pricing. </p> <p> 3. Develop a solution. The solution is to develop a new marketing strategy, improve the timing of the product launch, and implement competitive pricing. </p> <p> 4. Implement the solution. The solution is implemented by developing a new marketing strategy, improving the timing of the product launch, and implementing competitive pricing. </p> <p> 5. Evaluate the solution. The solution is evaluated by measuring the company's sales performance against its targets. </p>
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Tate

THE **WORLD'S** **TOP** **100** **UNIVERSITIES** **2015**

Moore

It first started because the secretary of HEW crossed up with the staff director of—

Young

I was going to ask you where was HEW in all of this.

Cable

Due to the report, we were in deep trouble.

Moore

Why don't you guys at the White House do something? He probably took it over.

Thomson

[REDACTED]

Cable

There was some other politics in there too. You've got to keep throwing national health insurance into that mix.

Mann

Wasn't it seen by the left as being kind of a deviation from that?

Cable

I don't mean to point it at the Senate, but you got mixed up in catastrophic coverage versus national health coverage too. That is absolutely right. It was an issue that was doomed to lose the way we did it. I don't know that we should have done differently. The other way to do it, or the way the Kennedy crew wanted it done, was to put it into a national health insurance bill and put it all together as a package.

Tate

[REDACTED]

Young

Frank was just saying that the Congressional liaison people picked this issue up not from the outset, but after it ran into real trouble.

Tate

[REDACTED]

Young

But it was not your baby from the outset apparently.

Tate

[REDACTED]

Young

If it had been otherwise, do you think it would have made all that difference?

Tate

[REDACTED]

Young

On many of these issues you've mentioned—civil service, natural resources, hospital cost containment—what were the public liaison people doing on the Hill?

Thomson

[REDACTED]

Young

Did they ever report to you leads that you found useful?

Thomson

[REDACTED]

Moore

We never took their vote counts without double-checking them; we would do a crosscheck kind of thing. Somebody downtown would call a member, check, and report back. It was a good crosschecking mechanism. We never would have taken on vote counts.

Young

Did you ever call on them for any particular kinds of help?

Cable

Sure. It wasn't going to the Hill; it was the bank shot. We can get your media guys or whoever you deal with to get an editorial in the Stanford paper so Thomson has to read it in the morning.

Tate

[REDACTED]

Cable

Yes, outside constituencies.

Tate

[REDACTED]

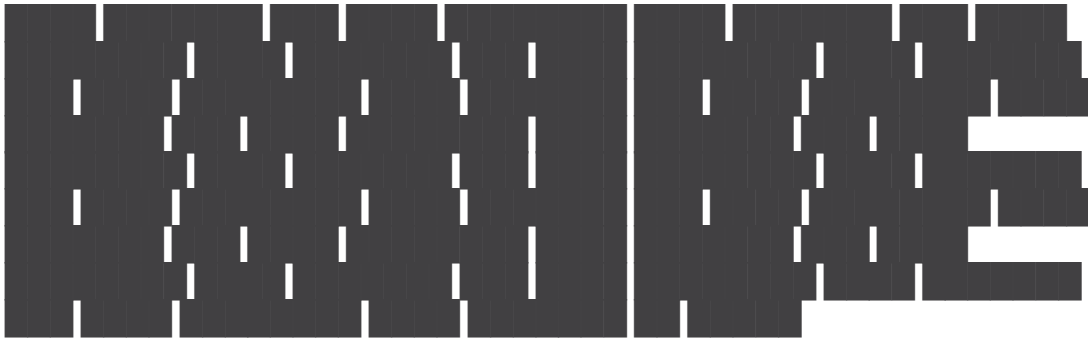
Young

Did you find that helpful in the latest after the initial phase?

Moore

I wish we had had public liaison from the day we opened for business. We would have fared better. It would have made a difference on some things, but also it gave the Washington community a sense of working with you, of being involved, which we missed because we didn't have a chance to go across and meet with the roundtable or chamber. Nobody much else at a high level in the White House was doing it. Is that right?

Thomson



Cable

Jimmy Carter got on TV in April, 1977 and said something like, In order to be a good American and do good for your country, you've got to drive cars you don't like, insulate your house, turn up the thermostat in the summer and down in the winter, and you're a pig, you've been using too much energy all your life and you've got to change. This is true in one sense, but that's a difficult message for anybody to get real turned on about to do anything. Ronald Reagan gets on the tube to push the tax cut and says, If you want to be a good American and feel good about America, call your Congressman and demand a tax cut for yourself, dial yourself a tax cut. That's real tough. There's a very different level of message in those two things.

Light

But is it a real difference in policy or is there an element of making decisions about rhetorical style? Do you feel that your effort was often constrained by the nature of the rhetorical style used by the President?

Cable

In my opinion, Jimmy Carter was too honest to be a good demagogue. You need that quality to a certain extent. You need to push your program in leading people the way Ronald Reagan did. He nearly told the truth about that tax bill he was proposing. President Carter was not inclined, in my judgment, to go to those extremes on those kinds

of issues. He wasn't comfortable doing it. The communication styles have been compared by people a lot more competent than I, but I agree with the assessment.

Young

Every President seems to have a distinctive way of dealing with Congress and dealing with those issues. Kennedy had one, Eisenhower had one really, not very obvious, and certainly LBJ had his. We're all mystified about what Carter's style was in his approach to Congress and approach to these things.

Moore

You had to see him at work in one of those East Room meetings. His was an educational process almost. By mid-term we had had more Congressmen in the White House than any other President by everybody's count, the old timers on the Hill, the records of the White House and so forth. Yet publicly President Carter had the image of a person who didn't ever deal with Congressmen. Why didn't he have them down for private dinners, people said. We had more private dinners. We chalked them up.

Mann

What accounts for that disjuncture between what was going on and what the impression was outside?

Moore

I don't know. The impression is formed by a couple of little things like that. People put them together. I've had people say to me since we've been out of office, You know, if Carter had spent more time on the big things and less time on deciding who was going to play on the White House tennis court, you guys would have been better off. The people you talked to felt that he sat in the office and decided the tennis schedule.

Hamilton and I went in there one afternoon and the President was in his tennis clothes in the Oval Office. We asked, Are you getting ready to play? He said, Well, I went down there, but there were some guys playing on the court and I didn't want to disturb them. Somebody from OMB was over there. He said, I don't want them to leave the courts, I can play later. I said, That's ridiculous, the President ought to be able to play on his court. I don't know if Hamilton or I did it, but we developed a memo that cut at who ought to play on the tennis court. We sent it to him in a typical fashion. He changed some of our suggestions, and made marginal notes. Essentially what we came down with was senior staff and Cabinet officers could play.

I hope you all ask Jim Fallows about it when he comes down, but I think Fallows was in Susan Clough's office one day. He saw that memo. He saw that now you were to call the usher's office—the usher was always on duty—and say, Can we get the court at two o'clock this afternoon? He'd say, Fine. The usher made sure he didn't give away the

President's time spot. He would call Susan Clough, the President's secretary, and ask, Susan, is the President going to play tennis today? She'd reply, Well, it looks like his office work ends about three. I think he probably may want to play at four o'clock. Then he's going to come back here and work another two hours. That was the extent of his deciding who was going to play, if he was going to play. I guess Fallows left the staff and wrote an article for the *New Republic*, or the *Washington Monthly*, I've forgotten. Anyway he said, Here's a guy who sits and decides who's going to play tennis on the White House tennis court.

Tate

[REDACTED]

Moore

Fallows spent maybe an hour with the President all told.

Tate

[REDACTED]

Jones

Just trying to make him feel good.

Tate

[REDACTED]



September 19, 1981

Young

You may have an agenda for this morning. We don't have all that much of one but maybe we can start out talking not so much about your own particular work on the issues with Congress but instead a little bit about where the Carter White House was going in terms of its own ways of working. Maybe the best way to start off is just to ask, if Carter had been successful in getting a second term, from your perspective how would things have gone in the second administration? What are the changes that might have been made?

Moore

Just in the organization of the White House or policies?

Young

Just in the way things worked in the White House.

Moore

You know, we never really sat down and talked about it. There were some what ifs. I mentioned yesterday about adding an additional person to work Republicans, particularly on the House side. We had a pretty good operation going toward the end. I can't think of anything we would have changed. I'm sure you would make some minor adjustments and of course some people do get burned out. When you had time to sit back and take your breath and look at the way things had operated you would have done it probably differently. Jack Watson was running a good operation toward the end. The staff system was working well. We would have changed some of the people in the agencies.

Young

Some of the departmental liaison?

Moore

Yes, I think in the second term there's no doubt that I would have insisted on having not only veto power but hiring power over the assistant secretaries for CL. I think a lot of people on our own staff would have gone out to the agencies if they had been chosen for Assistant Secretary slots. For most of the women on our staff the entry level was

secretarial type work. They were already competent professionals when we got them and through their work with us were recognized as such. They had identified career paths of their own and wouldn't have chosen to do that when we were doing another. But they were doing another after one year, much less four years, so I think we would have placed them in relatively high places—key spots—around the government and agencies.

Young

You mentioned that things were running well with Jack. So some kind of Chief of Staff or those functions would have continued?

Moore

Yes. It wasn't my choice to make, but I would have voted for it staying like that.

Young

Did you feel the need for that from the beginning? I know a number of staff here who felt that that was a very good move and wished it had happened earlier.

Moore

Yes. I think when Hamilton comes here he will tell you that he didn't consider himself a management type person, or even very organized. But he was a lot more organized than he thought. I think someone who writes as well as he does must be more organized than he says he is. He's a beautiful writer.

Jones

It doesn't always follow that good writers are well organized.

Moore

When he does a memo it's broken down—subjects a, b, c, d—without ever having to go back and change anything. It's in the sequence of it. But enough on Hamilton's writing ability. I think we all sensed a need for the Chief of Staff arrangement. Again, maybe I was more blind to the need for it because I really wasn't ever cut out of anything. I mean I didn't have the need for staff organization up to the President and then coming back down as I now see the way some people did because I always had access to the President. No matter who was Chief of Staff I didn't go through them. I didn't report to anybody else but the President.

Young

It's possible that for the people on the Hill this was much more useful.

Moore

It's for a selfish personal reason that I didn't see the need. I think the people on the Hill sense a need for staff structure. They want to know who's in which box, in which pigeonhole, and who do you call for this and that. And our original organization didn't allow for that. I remember, Bill you remember, one night we were sitting around in Jody's office and a Senator called wanting an appointment with the President or something. Jody said, Why are you calling me? The Senator said, Well, you know, you're close to the President. Odd things like that would happen and maybe because of a lack of staff structure.

As I told somebody at the break yesterday, the first six months we were there we had a deluge of appointments requests—bigger from the Senate I think than from the House. They were like Las Vegas junkies—give them a handful and say, Let's go down and put a silver dollar in the slot machine, put coins in every machine and pull to see what will come up. We were getting a hundred telephone calls a day on stuff like that. Just anybody who had any connection with Carter was pushing that button to see if they'd get a response. And I think probably a staff organization well understood by both sides might help some of that. Although I guess they'd just wait and see what shakes down and see who really does have the power close to the President.

It's the first time I've really ever thought about it, but I don't think we would have changed that much in the Congressional liaison organization. I think we would have asked for the use of partial pick-up on cars. They seem like small things. We never did really get a good handle on the appointments process with the personnel office. I mean we had it 99% but occasionally one would fall through the cracks and you didn't know why or how. If it was a system error or a personal error you never really could identify the thing. We would have wanted a stronger hand in the appointments process. We had a strong hand, much stronger than anybody realizes in the grant awarding process. Has Bruce Kirschenbaum been here?

Young

Yes, he has.

Moore

He ran an operation there that we were involved in. Actually we started it. Somebody on our staff.

Moore

We had it for six months or something and then turned it over to Bruce. We saw the need for it and created it, got it started, imposed the discipline on the people and then, I guess [James] Copeland did it.

Mosher

I didn't understand what you were saying.

Moore

On the grants process. Announcements.

Young

I think Bill had something to add to this.

Cable

Yes. I think I basically agree with that. I think the biggest changes you would have seen were probably personnel changes. I think that there were several of us who were ready to move on for all kinds of reasons, including myself.

Moore

I had decided that I was going to stay until Easter and then leave. You can come out of it physically exhausted, emotionally exhausted, and I imagine psychologically exhausted too. You're burned out in every way you can describe.

Young

On the personnel and also on the appointment of the departmental people, what would you have done?

Cable

I think it was important to get a better control of that. I think you saw from the Camp David Cabinet reorganization a move that would have taken back some of the discretion that was given almost exclusively to the Cabinet. And I think we really got some first-rate people without criticizing who they replaced. We just had a really good group of new folks in that new Cabinet group. I'm thinking particularly of Secretary [G. William] Miller and Secretary [Neil] Goldschmidt. They really did make a difference. It was a spirit kind of difference. There was more of a team spirit in the process after that. I think that would have continued in another round.

Jones

This resulted in more attentiveness to what the President wanted and therefore more appointments of people on the liaison side in the departments too?

Cable

It was more in the way things worked rather than in the numbers. I don't think there were any more liaison staff in those departments. As a matter of fact, Treasury stayed 100% the same as it was. Secretary Miller kept Gene Godley and that whole crew over there. There were some changes but not a lot. Goldschmidt promoted Susan Williams to Assistant Secretary.

Moore

We were dealing more directly with the Cabinet officers after the change. Bill or any of us could have picked up the phone and called Goldschmidt as quickly as we'd call someone at an agency. And Jack's being there also helped with the Cabinet. They had a mechanism you could go through in the White House. It was coordinated.

Cable

It was a spirit. It was a better cooperative spirit. I don't think we got anything much more from it. It just all felt better, we all worked better together.

Moore

Well, I'll tell you one thing that worked a lot better, Bill, was appearances. That's another operation we had going. I don't know if anybody's ever written about it. In 1978 the Congressional liaison people coordinated the travel of the Secretaries and their appearances. First of all, we got a commitment of a number of days and then we advised them where to go and when to go—on behalf of members. Appearances, fundraisers, speeches—this type of thing.

Moon [Maurice Landrieu] and Neil were so good. You'd get a tough, tough deal on the Hill with some guy saying, This is going to cause me problems at home if I vote for you. So you'd ask why and he would say, Well, people won't think I have any clout in the administration. You know back home the papers have been writing that I'm ineffective. Then you'd say, What if you had a Cabinet officer who came in at your invitation? Well, that'd make a difference. That would show he had some clout. We had the ability after the first Camp David to request appearances from Cabinet officers and to get them and deliver on those requests.

Young

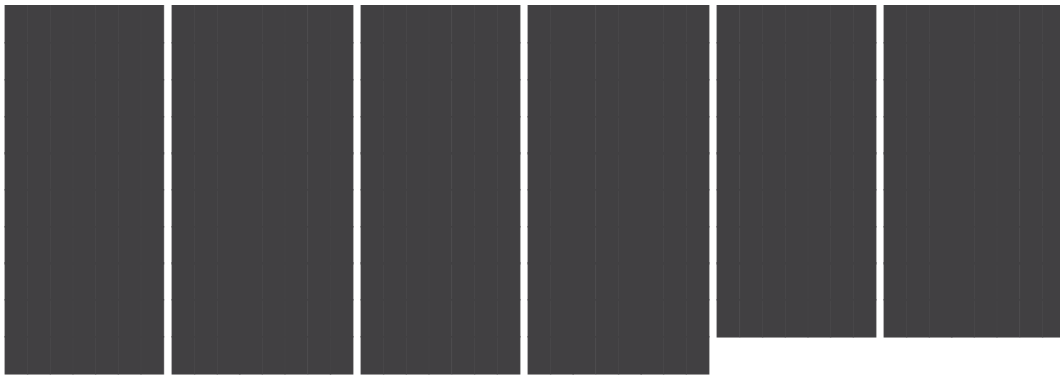
The impression we've consistently gotten is that at some point in time, it varied I think for different staffs, a fix was gotten on your problem, and what was very loosely organized at first somehow came together. It's important to understand how that happened. The publicly propagated image of the Carter White House got fixed at some early point in time and then the later changes were not recorded. Successful efforts were made to correct early problems but somehow that never got fed out—they kept reporting failures, never the successes. I believe you said that during the transition the Reagan

people talked to you about Congressional liaison. I'd like to know what you advised them.

Moore

It looks like they took the advice I remember giving them. They probably already had it figured out anyway; I just reconfirmed it. I advised them to have a limited agenda and Tate did and Cable did. They had sort of a fixation on moving back to the East Wing. It was something that was very important to them. I suggested that they go talk with their people over there and see if they really wanted to do that, considering the limited space you have. We didn't talk about organization with them that much.

Thomson



Cable

That whole informal communications network is probably the biggest plus. We worked better with the Domestic Policy Staff. They were one floor above us. The proximities really did improve communications. I never saw Bert [Bertram] Carp for the first two years that I was in the White House until we moved over there. Then I saw him every day.

Thomson



Young

Your change in location came at mid-stream?

Thomson



Cable

All of us except Frank went over there. We consolidated what were three different locations in the East and West Wing into one whole hallway on the south side of the EOB [Executive Office Building], from corner to corner. The offices were embarrassingly large. It's a spectacular building in itself. I think Danny feels strongly that we lost something in moving out of the White House. My view is that it didn't mean all that much.

Moore

Everybody knows the pecking order there. New EOB, old EOB, in the East Wing. Within the West Wing it's whether you're on the second floor or the first floor. When Midge Costanza moved into the basement, she started calling it the ground floor. Then this was in proximity to the Oval Office. I remember Larry O'Brien telling me when I asked him about it. He said it was the damndest thing; all of them ran from the inaugural platform to the White House, he said. Guys were moving desks because nobody made any assignments. He saw that all the offices on the ground were going to be taken so he ran up the steps to sort of an attic, where boxes were stored.

So Larry ran to what was for us Stu's office and Jack's office and Sarah Weddington's office. It's actually supposed to be over the Oval office. All of his people were in one end and he said it worked out great. In fact he advised me not to get on the first floor. I asked why. He said, Well, you have tourists and people coming in, plus you can't have a beer or take your shoes off down there. You guys will get back from the Hill late at night and you will want to take your tie off and sit around and talk and it's hard to do that downstairs. You'll always get interrupted, and he was right. But the office I got was the one that [Max] Friedersdorf had had prior to me and [William] Timmons had had prior to me and now Friedersdorf is back in it again. I don't think they've changed it.

Young

I have two questions here not related to each other. First, you mention maybe adding a person to the staff to deal with the Republicans. I'd like to hear more about that because it relates to the question of the Democratic Party and the relations between the Carter administration and its party in Congress. The other thing I'd like to hear about is the meeting the President had after Camp David to tell the staff how things were going to be changed.

Moore

I don't remember that.

Cable

A senior staff meeting.

Young

How did this change come about in this formal way? How did that happen?

Moore

Some things weren't going right. We gave a memo to the President with recommendations. I was up at Camp David and I guess the rest of the senior staff—Hamilton and Jody were there, Jack and Stu.

Cable

Mondale, [James] Johnson.

Moore

Yes. Then we sat around in the room, and everybody kind of spoke their piece about what was wrong and so forth. The options were already there I believe. I wasn't involved that much in that process but I was involved in it because I kind of knew what was going to happen before it happened. The meeting I remember was when he called the Cabinet meeting, when he told people the way it was going to be. And he said, If so and so calls, consider it a call from me. I want it done with more responsiveness. That's what I saw in the change.

Cable

I viewed most of that as really being supportive and positive of our efforts. I knew that was the way it was portrayed verbally and I really do think that a lot of the things that happened and changed helped us do our job better over time. The changes in our operation were related to the creation of the budget task force and the organization of the administrative unit coordination that sort of occurred as it went on. I was trying to think about your question in terms of how we got our act together. Some of that preceded all that stuff.

Young

It preceded it but at some point it became public knowledge and a Cabinet meeting was held.

Cable

From our standpoint that was almost irrelevant to what we were doing. Maybe I was just oblivious to the whole process. I viewed changes in our operation like the agenda, the whole working on the prioritization thing, the budget task force, as separate from the rest. The budget task force was sort of a precursor to all the budget cuts that are going on now. President Carter submitted a budget in January of 1978 that had what were then dramatic reductions in social programs. We were villains. Worse than Ronald Reagan.

It was our viewpoint, and I think the opinion of others, that there were two ways to view that process. The worst of both worlds was to make the decisions and take all the political heat from our traditional Democratic constituencies but then not to get any of the benefit of having accomplished the reduction in federal spending, the reduction in inflation. We'd have lost the political advantage of the impression of not being sensitive to those kinds of people and then not get the economic advantage of having accomplished something about reducing spending levels and targeting. I know that sounds probably as fictitious as anything that's ever been said, as fictitious as Jimmy Carter spent more money on defense than Jerry Ford. But that's true. Those aren't easy perceptions to have people believe. But that's really what we did. I mean those were the kinds of changes that I think packaged our deal better.

Young

I think we understand that the changes in your own staff operation were not dependent on the changes in the larger staff system. They were going on independently, but you did not mention that you thought these other changes that occurred and were announced at the Cabinet meeting were helpful to your operation. I'd just like you to be a little specific about that. In what ways helpful?

Thomson

[REDACTED]

Moore

Yes and earlier.

Thomson

[REDACTED]

Young

In other words, it became easier to put the Congressional frame of reference into decision-making in the White House.

Moore

It wasn't a big sea change, though. We already had the thing going.

Thomson



Fenno

Bob Thomson talked yesterday about the organization at its height and assuming that there was a height, there was a period of getting to the height. I think as scholars we want to make sure we have all the key landmarks on the way to the height.

Moore

Well, I described them yesterday and I'd measure it from inauguration day to the time Bill and Bob came on the staff, in April and May respectively. We constantly improved from there. We had the thing running by that fall. The same Congress. From there we had Les and Jim Copeland setting up the legislative coordination.

Cable

Beckel came on in the fall.

Moore

Yes, well actually he was already there working with us on Panama.

Cable

And [Terence] Straub came on sometime in that period.

Moore

Straub came in the fall and that helped tremendously.

Cable

So we ended up with four: Free, Pinson, Cable, and Straub. Clearly by Christmas of the first year we had that base and we didn't get [Robert] Maher until Paul Rogers left, which was in 1979. We didn't get Maher until the beginning of 1979.

Thompson

Was it all a matter of people and numbers or was there something also that was changing with the process and procedure?

Thomson

[REDACTED]

Moore

Yes.

Thomson

[REDACTED]

Moore

I think there is another dimension to Les' role and that was an analysis function. I remember on some of the key votes we could say from memory what happened but Les would go back and get votes, previous votes.

Cable

I have a great example.

Moore

The public works?

Cable

No, Joe Waggoner's amendment on the energy bill on the House floor. We pulled that one out of the computer before anybody on the Hill even realized it was going to be a problem. And the computer told us it was going to be a problem. I mean it was really incredible. That was the deal where [Gary] Fontana and the staff did a survey of the House on a questionnaire. Then we went back with the energy committee staff and pulled the voting records on a whole bunch of different energy related votes, put them into an automatic retrieval system and asked a bunch of questions about upcoming votes. Waggoner had a motion to recommit to require all the dollars to be used to pay COET (Crude Oil Equalization Tax) Social Security benefits. Remember we had that whole set of task force groups when the House was passing that thing? Nobody was working on that and I remember Fontana looking at those numbers one night and saying, We're in trouble on this. There wasn't a task group on the House floor—the House leadership included—that had looked at it seriously. That was Irv Sprague's process up there. I think we only beat that thing by seven or eight votes. I mean it was very close.

Moore

We wouldn't have beaten it if we hadn't been prepared.

Cable

That's right; we never would have gotten to it if we hadn't been prepared. That was even earlier than all this. That bill passed the House mid-summer of 1977, right on the Speaker's predetermined timetable, if anybody cares to remember.

Moore

The point of an effective operation is that it was a big part of his operation.

Cable

I don't mean exclusively but that was a good example of a very hard set of facts that I don't think could have helped us without that system.

Moore

It was part of our reporting process to the President and senior staff. Say there's a vote coming up in two weeks—how does it look? Well, you can't get a vote count until just before a vote. People aren't going to commit themselves. But you can get a base, so what we did was try to get a similar vote sometime in the past, pull that thing, analyze it, and take a look at upcoming votes. We'd then prepare for them and allocate our resources accordingly.

Cable

There were other profiles other than on votes.

Moore

Yes we ought to talk about that: regional stuff, the southern committee chairman, the sophomores. We analyzed voting patterns, different blocks. We'd start building coalitions based on the computer printouts.

Fenno

Could you say a little more about the block you saw out there in the Congress?

Moore

Well, I think I've already identified them. Another thing, Bob, that I think you spoke about earlier but bears repeating relates to the larger question of when we got our act together. I would agree with Bill that it was by Christmas of the next year. But important to that was an education of the rest of the White House staff to the importance of Congress and how you treated it. You just couldn't leave it exclusively to the Congressional liaison to handle it. We could do a lot of good work and one person at a party or function could blow it. A vote or a carefully cultivated friendship could be undermined, just in terms of attitude.

It's hard to put a finger on when that happened, but it really began with the seven o'clock meeting, as a means of educating the rest of the White House. All of the people who did the work at the deputy level below stressed the importance of Congress and how it affected us and how it affected the President's popularity. And we sort of got the whole White House geared to upcoming legislative battles. Again, we used these computer printouts for that. We used them with Wexler's group by spotting where we seemed to be having problems, either in delegations or regionally or sometimes the H groups turn for service, and committee assignments. We did it every way in the world that you could spot things. Les was good at interpreting those and Bill was good at it.

Cable

That machine gave you a very good way to reformat data and categorize it in different ways. You could ask it for a region, everybody who's been there for more than ten years, people on the energy committees. It had a very flexible capability of doing data back and forth. And all we had to put in it was voting records, House votes basically. Then we also had a couple of those profiles working as certain kinds of predictors like ADA/ACA [Americans for Democratic Action/Americans for Constitutional Action] ratings.

Moore

We didn't put anything in it besides public records.

Mann

It sounds as if an important part of the effort was not just the hard data and research but really an educational process, and trying to influence attitudes within the White House staff towards Congress. I wonder if you could drop back a bit to suggest what those attitudes were at the outset of the administration and what you did to change those attitudes and how that developed over time?

Moore

It's hard to talk about when you're talking about personalities, but I think the problem that was most apparent to us and affected us most was the appointments office and schedule. The attitude was, why does the President have to see these people—they're not important to the operation of the country. But once Phil Wise moved in there, we never had that problem again. I just don't remember ever asking for something and not getting it. You may not have gotten it that day or the next day, but we had an inordinate amount of the President's time.

Cable

All you had to do with Phil was give him a program of what you thought you were going to need over time and he'd work out a way to plan that for you. If you could give him a couple of weeks of lead-time, we were in fat city with Phil.

Moore

And we got priority.

Mann

It was a couple of months in, would you say by the spring or summer of 1977? How long did it take to develop that?

Moore

Longer than the spring.

Mann

It was longer. Was it into the fall? What I'm trying to get at is an image developed from those early months that seemed to live well beyond the actual reality of what was going on in the White House. And that was a serious problem for you. Did you confront that constantly?

Moore

We had discussions, it was in the August break that first year when we sat down and talked about it. It was a marked improvement after Labor Day of 1977.

Cable

That sort of fits with some of the other things that happened.

Moore

I'm just kind of guessing at that, but I think that's about right.

Young

That's not the kind of thing you can draw a line for.

Cable

Yes, you can't throw down a line and say today it's this short.

Moore

The only time we had to sit and think about those things was when the Congress was off. And I think it was August of that year that we sat down and planned.

Jones

Well, I think for the record and our understanding it might be useful to reflect a little on these statements. It seems to me that we may be emphasizing organization too much here. Over and over again we have questions of how did you organize, how did you set up, and that sort of business. But I can draw a picture of some people getting to the White House and understanding—that is, Frank understanding and you two when you get there understanding—that you've got a job to do. Here's the United States Congress and what comes from the White House has got to get through the Congress. And you're so pressured by that that you don't have time to sit down and figure out all kinds of organizational things since you're down on the Hill figuring out what's going on there. You're learning along the way that there are a whole bunch of things that go on on the executive side—appointments, the travel schedule of Cabinet officers, the course of the policy developments—that have something to do with what's going on down on the Hill. So you're becoming a communications center, but, gee, every day it's back and forth between the Hill and the executive and you're feeling your way along. The point is, for our own understanding and for the record, I think maybe we don't want to over emphasize this organizational business as though you sat down each day to say, Well now, how is the decision-making process or our own structure working out? That's what I want to get your reaction to—this feel kind of thing.

Moore

It was a gradual evolution. I don't think we ever went backwards. I think we improved, and if you had to pick, we were pretty well humming in the fall of 1978.

Cable

Yes, and look at the way the Congress works.

Moore

I mean we were doing as well as anybody had done, better than a lot.

Cable

The Congress works that way too.

Moore

Regardless of the press accounts, you could go up and talk to people we worked with and they'd say, Yes, those guys have got a class operation, it works, and they're successful at it. We kept refining it and massaging it and polishing it a little bit here and there. But there were no benchmarks. Something would be bad one day and so we would reorganize and it would get better the next day. I think Dan's comment yesterday fits here: it didn't matter how you organized, just as long as you organized.

Jones

Well, that's what I remember. He said that two or three times yesterday.

Cable

I remember in the *National Journal* or *CQ* sometime in the late fall of 1978 an article that said, Will Success Spoil Jimmy Carter, or something like that. We'd had the veto sustained, we had civil service, we had gotten movement on several things that the President was interested in.

Moore

Ten or twelve successes in a two-week legislation period.

Cable

Yes, in a row. Important things we'd all worked on, things that had been high on our agenda list. And you know people would say, Gee, what did you do differently? We came back from a break that ended after Labor Day in 1978 and I had people come around

asking, What new door did you open? or Tell me why this is all working. And the fact is that it's exactly the way the Congress works. If you look at a flow chart of the way Congress acts, it does very little in the first year other than cranking out what it has to in appropriations bills. Nothing but holding hearings and getting ready until September and October come around and they all want to go home and campaign. So suddenly here comes this great blob of legislation out of the Congress, all at the same time. I mean that's the way the Congress works. They've got to be forced against a deadline or the inertia nearly can't be overcome.

Thompson

As you were doing all this and this process was going on, who was putting you down? One of the things in the foreign policy field we've studied fairly well, maybe we've got it all wrong, is what Sam Huntington was saying to Jackson and [Daniel Patrick] Moynihan, what somebody else was saying about the Secretary about this and about that. What I wondered about is what sometimes has been referred to as the bad image that you had of the Secretary, who was hurting you in this process?

Moore

I don't think I ever identified them. I could identify them, I guess, if you wanted but it's hardly worth spending any time on it. If you wanted to spend some time on it I think you could probably trace it back to some disgruntled staff members on the Hill and to the thing we talked about yesterday. You know, Jimmy Carter being an outsider coming into town, new people who sort of felt like they were owed jobs and didn't get them. They were smart, sharp guys who'd been running an adversary operation, a guerilla warfare against two Republican Presidents, and they had their own agenda. And now the Democrats are in town and they didn't have a piece of it. That's just my own impression. I really didn't ever spend a lot of time trying to track that down. Also, talk, information, and ideas are sort of a currency in Washington. We ran a pretty tight operation in terms of information in the White House. We had a lot of leaks.

Another thing, the President didn't think it was Jack's fault or my fault that people jumped on him. He said, You know, if people really want to jump on the President at first and if his popularity is high, they don't attack the President, they attack those around him. And they do it on a systematic basis. They pick one person who they think is the weakest in the group and attack him. Who they are, I don't know. But I didn't worry about it enough. I should have worried about it more. But I had the confidence of the man I worked for and that's what mattered to me. People who were putting me down, I think I realize now more than I did then, hurt our operation, and hurt its effectiveness because if you were perceived to be successful in Washington you were more successful.

I'll never forget the power of a profile piece by Judy Bachrach. I don't remember which paper she worked for at that time, was it the *Star*? It was just a fluff piece, you know. But it was amazing; I went up on the Hill and I had 20 or 30 people looking at me in a new

light. I could have spent more time on that type of thing and it would have affected our operation. But I just didn't worry about it.

Cable

I think that's a real fair assessment. We probably didn't spend enough time because we didn't have the time. But we didn't spend enough time telling our side of the story to the people who ended up writing the story.

Moore

It's the last call you return, the reporters call, the press.

Cable

Because that's the way the stories are written.

Thomson

[REDACTED]

Cable

The Hill press. I don't care about the White House press boys. They've got their own agendas. But the guys like the Ward Sinclairs who are going to write the thoughtful pieces about how the war was won. Things like the dairy story today by Kayser. Now Beckel did a hell of a job with Kayser on the foreign policy stuff. He really nurtured that and did a very good job. You can get to people and you can get them to not do things, or you can get them to do things, but we didn't do enough of that.

Moore

You had to spend a lot of time on that.

Cable

You've got to spend time on it. And I guess it was never a high enough priority. But I will take criticism personally for that. I mean I tried at times and Frank tried at times. *Newsweek* could come in and we'd do that every now and then but we never did it enough.

Moore

We'd make a list and say, Here are six reporters, you take this one and we're going to go to dinner. We'd do it one time and then the war's on and you didn't have time after that.

Thomson

[REDACTED]

Cable

Sure it was. And some of those same guys are now coming up to me in the House and saying, God, you weren't so bad after all. I think there's really something to say about that. I think what President Carter did in a lot of ways was to try to move the country gradually to where we have just been abruptly jolted in the last six months. I think it's true in energy, I think it was true in the whole area of irresponsible spending, deregulation, and regulatory reform. Getting rid of ten thousand OSHA [Occupational Safety & Health Administration] regulations in the first five months of the Carter administration that were designed by Nixon's group to piss off the business community to get enough support to kill a program that they didn't want. I mean a conscious decision of the Labor Department to get rid of a statute by regulating the size of toilet seats and ladders. They made a mockery of it.

Thomson

[REDACTED]

Cable

That's right. Non-traditional.

Young

That gets into the question I was suggesting about you paying more attention to Republicans, which is only a small part of it. One does get an impression of the President

moving to a new policy posture at about mid-point in his administration talking about limits and starting all kinds of things that created additional flack from the standard-bearers of the traditional New Deal party. I would suspect that a major part of the problem of the Carter Presidency was this problem within the Democratic Party, exacerbated particularly by the Kennedy move.

Moore

Speaker O'Neill said it was like wheat—very slight wind and it'll bend that way, very slight wind and it'll bend back the other way. You know Kennedy's savaging the President had repercussions back in Congress. People would take a look at us and say, Hell, those guys aren't going to be around, I don't have to do what they want. Then we started winning in the primaries. That gauge went up and down. The day after the Camp David accords we could have passed any damn thing we wanted to if we had it up on the floor. Really, the mood of the Congress and the President's popularity out in the country has a lot to do with it. We passed a lot of legislation in a lame duck session after we'd lost the election. We had eight or ten things that were priority pieces of legislation, and everybody told us we were crazy. But we passed Alaska lands, and we passed rail deregulation. I can't remember the others, but we did six of them in the period there, with a President who had already lost.

Cable

We stopped that busing rider from coming along.

Thomson



Cable

The grain embargo program.

Mann

Let me press you on the point if I can about Carter being hurt by the Democrats, partly because of the nature of his agenda and the tough things he was really trying to do within the party. It's got to be partly the nature of the issues, but I'm wondering if it's partly the President as well and his own posture coming out of the election.

I remember going to the White House early on, when the members of the Democratic Finance Council were there, and there was Ebby Duke Robb and there were the blacks, the big city guys, and the labor guys. So the President gave a speech about getting to the White House without the help of any special interest groups and I saw the looks around

the room, all seeming to say, Well, that's who we are and that's what we are. I'm wondering if that attitude towards elections groups within the Democratic Party accounted in part for the problem with the Democrats in the Senate. Do you think the nature of Jimmy Carter's successful campaign really had its costs early on?

Moore

It did. You weren't part of that network, that group. Mondale called it the safety net—unlike what the term refers to now. When something bad happened, the traditional Democratic constituency was there to kind of catch you, sustain you, and hold you until you could get back up. It wasn't there for us, because we hadn't built it. And we wouldn't have been elected if we'd depended on it.

Thomson

[REDACTED]

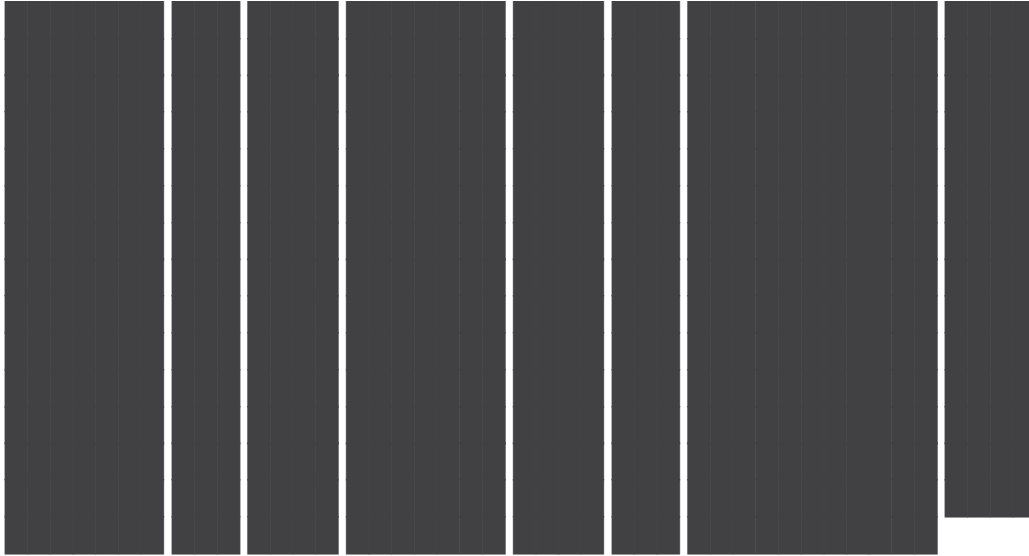
Cable

I really do think it was the leading edge of something that he saw very clearly as a necessary way to move this country. Any change is going to be resisted because you don't want to do things differently. It had to come. Four years later I feel much more comfortable saying that he was much more visionary in what he saw of the country, where he saw the country needing to go, than I was four years ago. It started from the beginning. It started from the first full Carter budget for FY '79, which went up in January of '78 and coincided with the conception of the budget task force.

We had begun the process that, compared to what happened the other day, makes ours look like child's play. But it was a gradual, more caring approach to getting control of spending, rather than with a sledgehammer or meat axe. When in March 1980 we did those 11 days and S211 to build that fifteen billion cut, we were beaten about the head and shoulders for two budgets in 90 days. Well, Reagan's now on his fourth one in just twice the time period. I mean it's roughly the same kind of thing. You know, we were accused of being inconsistent, of sending different signals. Well, I think we were following a path that had started four years before that. The President saw the need and was willing to take the political risk for things like energy and so many other things he did. And that's commendable over the long run. Politically it obviously wasn't real smart, but he saw the trend a lot better than anybody around him did.

Thomson

[REDACTED]



Moore

The votes, the votes, the votes.

Young

Chuck Jones had a question and then Cliff McCleskey. I know I keep playing the historian here but listening to these comments I was just struck by a parallel with the Democratic Party in Roosevelt's administration, when he moved out of step with significant elements in his party. He began to work much more closely with the Republican progressives, as they were called then, and tried to purge the unfriendly members of his party during the mid-term elections. He took to the stump to campaign in certain Congressional elections, and failed miserably.

Moore

He reelected the Senator from Georgia, by having a campaign against him.

Young

It had a backfire effect. But as it turns out, in the next general election he had seen the turn quite beautifully. Carter didn't benefit from that, Reagan captured that.

Thomson



Jones

Ironically, they are much more decentralized in the organization but much more unified. I'd like to pick up this matter of working more with the Republicans, let's say in a second Carter administration. That was going on, as you indicated, in the Senate, but wouldn't that have caused some problems in the House side? I mean, given speaker O'Neill and the more partisan operations of the House, wouldn't that have caused some problems trying to work with House Democrats?

Moore

That's why I say a person to work with Republicans. The obvious question is, Why don't you all work with them? You almost have to segregate it out. What we were thinking of was getting someone of their choosing, of going to [John] Rhodes and [Robert] Michel and saying, Do you know of a good staff member you want to work with us? We could have gotten someone from some place, somebody who was acceptable to them, but you'd almost have to segregate like that.

Jones

What would that do to you?

Moore

Cable couldn't have sat down and met with the Republicans.

Cable

It just depends. You've got to put the issue in the mix in order to get an answer in the House. I don't think you can say unilaterally that X, Y, or Z is going to work. If we continued to be more liberal than moderate, there's no way that we were going to get anywhere in the House with Republicans. If the issue tended to be more to the liberal side of moderate, then we weren't going to get more than a dozen or 15 or 18 Republicans. There are different mixes. But if you're talking about an economic recovery program at the beginning of this second Carter administration that included some more big budget cuts and stuff, yes, then you could and you'd have to because you'd have to do the same thing that Reagan did. Our disadvantage in a second term would have been we wouldn't have had solid Republican support. We clearly wouldn't have had gypsy moths with a Jimmy Carter proposal to cut x-teen billion dollars out of the budget. We never would have got it.

Moore

We saw some of that. Last year, we'd put a vote up there, we'd get the middle and then have two ends voting against us—the liberal Democrats and the conservative Republicans.

Cable

Even when they knew it was in their best interest to go with us, they'd oppose us, just to keep us from getting a victory. Some of those last energy pieces that we never got were done out of spite. I think they were done out of spite.

Young

You're describing the dilemmas and difficulties of the centrist Presidency.

Jones

But how are you going to get their support? What's it going to be? Again, as you described yesterday, is it going to be the attractiveness of the issue and that's the end of it? I mean, the Republicans are going to find the issue so appealing in the House side that they say, Gee, they're really right about that.

Moore

Cutting them in early on some of the consulting rhythm, putting in some stuff that's attractive to them in the bill might work. And they just weren't even consulted on it. The other word on Ways and Means you went to see [Barber] Conable, certainly on foreign affairs, Broomfield and the people on that side.

Cable

And [James] Broyhill and Brown on energy when we finally got down to having to put it together.

Moore

Yes, but not until we had to.

Cable


Not till we had to. But I mean that's what you would do differently the second time, when you went and looked at the issue again. EMB is a good example. Energy Mobilization Board is one of the things we didn't get. The Republicans kept us from getting that and I believe purely out of spite, for no other reason. What we had done on EMB was build a coalition that was a centrist coalition. I mean it was precisely that. We had 135 Democrats right out of the middle and about 90 Republicans right out of the middle and that's where our majority came from. When we lost that conference report on the floor we still had 135 Democrats, but only ten Republicans.

Moore

They got together and said, Listen, you can't give Carter a victory; we've got an election coming up.

Cable

We lost the ability to pass that with the Democrats alone because we built a moderate proposal. So I really don't think you can do this speculating without an issue, without plugging it into a factual pattern. And when you do that, you can pass this with Republican help.



What has David Stockman writing the reconciliation bill done to the relationships between the Bud Browns and the John Dingells of the world? Between the Bill Wampers and the Tom Foleys of the world? Between the ranking members and the chairman on the full committee and subcommittee levels? Those guys have long-standing relationships that don't relate to who is President. They made some deals and some commitments in those committees to try and comply with the reconciliation package in the House. They did a fairly good job of it. I think everybody was surprised by the size and willingness—you know, even Carl Perkins—to painfully undo what had been done for 20 years in the Congress.

And then to have it shoved in their ears by David Stockman and the bunch of gnomes down in the basement who wrote this document. A document with phone numbers in the margin and the repeal of statutes that were never intended to be repealed. No committee staff that I have ever worked with would have been allowed to put a piece of paper like that on the floor of the House. Your professional responsibility wouldn't ever let you do that. Going out half-dressed, it's just incredibly bad. And it's going to have a residual impact on the committee's abilities to work together. I think there are going to be some permanent scars that are going to be hard to heal.

Jones

Just along those lines, comparing Reagan to Carter, did President Carter ever have the issue flexibility, in regard to a specific issue, to meet with and court Republicans in the House in the way in which President Reagan was able to do with House Democrats? Was there ever that flexibility with issues?

Cable

Reagan denies that they made any changes in their program. I mean the fact that they eventually support a sugar price support program and a peanut bill and a tobacco bill that they probably didn't seem to support the first time is not a change in their position of any substance, so I don't know that there was any change in the Reagan administration. You

get it both ways. We were either totally inflexible or we had no principles. We built an energy bill that is criticized from both of those extremes. I guess I'm answering your question that yes, he was not inflexible. He had an ability to be quite flexible, to be reasonable.

Jones

I really was referring to the flexibility of the issue in the House itself. Were these issues that could collect House Republican support and—as a matter of partisanship the Speaker would understand—the President met with and courted the Republicans votes? Were there such cases?

Cable

Yes, there were such cases. There were things where we worked with Republicans very carefully, much to the verbal abuse of several of our Democratic friends. Civil service reform is one where we had a great deal of help from Republicans. Also, there was some of the early stuff we did with Frank Horton and the Brooks committee, where we didn't have very good support from some of the Democrats on the top of that committee. And on foreign affairs, the day we walked in there on AWACS, [Edward] Derwinski was part of the coalition. Foreign affairs I think is something different. With D2 lands, Alaska lands, we had some Republican help on that. We had some good Republican support on that. Some of the environmental issues, again you tend to be finding the more liberal Republicans, but there are a lot of people who don't think that leaving industry alone will do.

Jones

Was the President directly involved in some of these cases?

Cable

Absolutely. Alaska lands he was, civil service he was.

Moore

The President had a willingness, but sometimes we restrained him, Congressional liaison knowing the Speaker's sensibilities. President Carter would have been willing to meet with Republicans, but he did not like it when somebody said, You can't meet with the Republicans until you meet with the Democrats first. When we did meet them, a lot of time Bill, it was after we had kind of hit a stone wall or at the request of a Democratic chairman or Democratic leadership. They'd take a count and say, Hey, do this thing—you guys are going to have to get some Republicans. It was always with the prior knowledge of the Democratic leadership when we met with Republicans.

Thomson

[REDACTED]

Moore

I saw a piece in the paper the other day where he went to the Kennedy Center 32 times.

Thomson

[REDACTED]

Cable

We had a box every Monday through Thursday night. As long as there was something there we had at least one box every one of those nights.

Mosher

All Democrats?

Cable

No, sir. I took Republicans. But not often.

Thomson

[REDACTED]

McCleskey

I'd like to follow up on something that was said earlier about the parties. It's customary to make distinctions between the party in the government, the Congressional parties and so on and the party out there in terms of voter predispositions, attitudes and the party as an organization—Democratic National Committee and the state parties and the local parties. In the work that Congressional liaison did, scheduling and appointments and so on and in the senior staff meetings, to what extent did the Democratic Party as an organization enter into the calculations and considerations? You mentioned yesterday that Robert Strauss was present at some of the meetings. I think I remember that.

Moore

Well at the Congressional leadership meetings Jamie Whitten attended on a semi-regular basis.

Cable

More frequently than not Mike _____.

Moore

Yes, I think he was always invited.

Cable

I think that's right.

Moore

Whether he was in town or not. He'd get involved at the end of those discussions, when they'd gone through the lists and then would kind of talk about the party or the mood of the country. He had been traveling and he kind of gave a report on what was happening—fundraising activities and coordination. Plus we had a mechanism set up with the House campaign committee and Senate campaign committee, the DNC and Congressional liaison. I guess Bob Russell did those things. I went to a meeting on a regular basis and it was for the elections. We did a targeting, mainly going over who was in trouble. The plus or minus five group. We worked very closely with the party on that. As far as Joe Crainbull of Buffalo or the party chairman in Missouri, I didn't get into that, but again we had fits and starts. It started off badly in the White House. It gradually got better toward the end and I think we had a real good operation.

Mosher

Did the party ever try to help you get legislation through?

Moore

Yes. We used them. I don't know how effective they were. It depended on the effectiveness of the local party. I'd say there aren't over four good Democratic Party organizations out of the 50 states. Four or five.

Cable

I would guess party organizations were nearly irrelevant to the legislative process.

Mosher

Only on the Democratic side or both sides?

Cable

We tend to attribute success in others to things we don't do well, so I don't how to judge that. I don't know enough about it to judge the strength of the Republicans other than that their successes are attributed to all kinds of things. There are few to none in terms of places where the Democratic Party organization or apparatus locally affects in any significant way the legislative process.

Moore

It's important in Iowa.

Cable

It's important in Chicago. The party in Chicago was an important entity and some of New York.

Moore

Some parts of New York.

McCleskey

But normally in trying to build support in the House among Democrats, you would not have gone back to the county and local party leaders?

Cable

I wouldn't go to George Dunn in Chicago, I'd go to Dan. There isn't any point in going, for me.

Moore

But we went through the motions of doing that. We had a mechanism where somebody called George Dunn and said, The President wants this. They were cut into the loop. They probably asked to be allowed to help. But usually the only time you saw those guys was when you had a fundraiser in Washington. They'd all come and put on tuxedos and parade around, the President would make a speech, and they'd be gone for another six months.

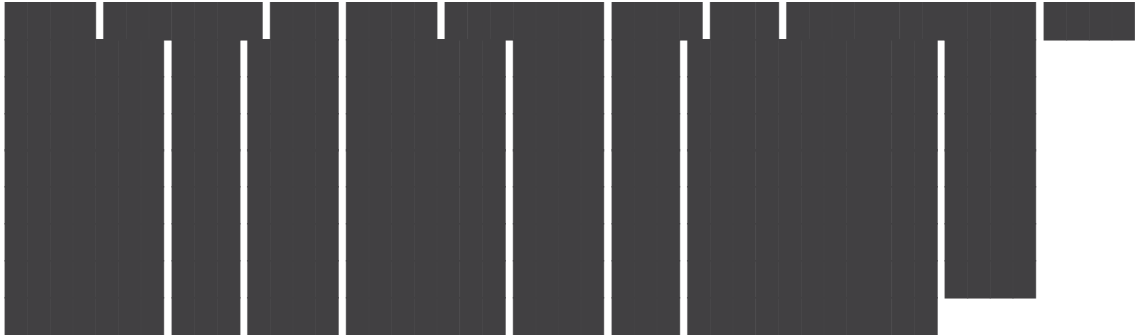
Thomson



Cable

Like George Dunn?

Thomson



Cable

We got screamed at by the dairy guys for wanting to go from 80 in twice a year for the price support thing to 75% twice a year. I think the thing they passed in the Senate yesterday was less than 70 and no annual cost of living adjustments at all.

Thomson



Mosher

Even on individual issues, Bob, where a few votes carefully selected could put you over, could you go to a local party or a local party leader, who might not be a hospital administrator, and get him to work on his representative? Or is the party as a policy agency a dead duck?

Thomson



McCleskey

It sounds to me as if you're saying it wasn't a point at all.

Thomson

[REDACTED]

Cable

It's not because of the party usually. Let me not attribute that to Bob, but I'll say that. I feel that.

Moore

Then there was J. C. Kennedy in Oklahoma—he was party chairman there. He had a lot of influence on the Oklahoma delegation, but was it because he was party chairman or because he was also state highway commissioner? Also, he was a fantastic fundraiser.

McCleskey

But you'd go to him sometimes for help?

Moore

Yes, you'd go to them. You'd never leave out anything, never any button unpushed.

McCleskey

You'd go to the ones that you thought could help?

Moore

Yes, we'd go to those. And sometimes it was good for feedback. Sometimes a Congressman would tell you that his party chairman was against a piece of legislation, and then you'd go to the party chairman and he'd give you a different story. He'd say, Look, I can't help you with him. His finance chairman is a dairy farmer, or His finance chairman is an automobile dealer, or His finance chairman is a whatever, and he's never going to vote for you on that—you're wasting your time. It's good to know that. Congressmen aren't going to tell you, My finance chairman doesn't want me to vote for that.

Thomson

[REDACTED]



Mosher

Could you pursue this point? Is the idea of a party platform or the idea of a mid-term conference like the Democrats plan for Philadelphia next year, is this dead? I mean does this have any influence at all on the Congressman?

Cable

Usually negative.

Moore

Better off if you didn't have to have them. If we had a choice, we wouldn't have had one.

Thomson



Cable

I think what it does worse is that it does what a guy told me in a bar in Chicago, the week before the election. We were talking about the Democratic Party and he said to me, The Democratic Party doesn't care about me anymore. Here's a twenty-nine or thirty-year-old steel worker who clearly had the safety standards in his factory and the wages he's paid, the fact that there's a collective bargaining agreement that he is benefiting from. In other words, he has been a recipient of a lot of the policies of the Democratic Party. He says the Democratic Party doesn't represent him or care about him anymore. He said the only thing the Democrats care about are fags and blacks and hairy-legged women.

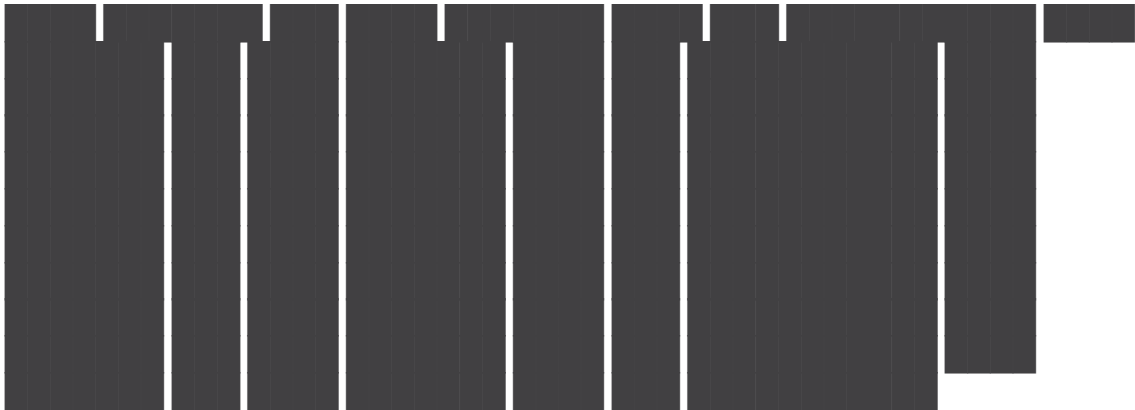
Moore

And he got that impression by watching the mid-term conference on TV.

Cable

That's right. Or by reading the damn platform fights. I will never apologize for the fact that the Democratic Party has had a policy of caring about minorities or caring about clean air or clean water. But you've got to somehow or another come back to basics and that's the schizophrenia of the whole process.

Thomson



Cable

You know something, I wonder who makes up that national party. I mean the Republican Party is made up of the hardware store owner and the small shopkeepers around the country. And the Democratic Party is made up of, as Bob said, basically the liberal activists. I think that both extremes are unrepresentative of where the policies of this government ought to go.

Jones

The fact is, the Republicans are meeting in mid-term and mid-mid-term meetings and coming back saying, Gee, that was a wonderful experience.

Cable

I think we ought to have a mid-term. It's the hundred and fiftieth anniversary of the Democratic Party, and we ought to have the biggest God-blessed celebration in the world. You know, with bands and parades and everybody patting everybody else on the back.

Jones

But no issues.

Cable

And then go home. Go home very happily. Let's not have Teddy Kennedy and Joe Califano debate the national health insurance.

Fenno

I don't want to stop this party but I want to go back to Bob's comments about looking for pressure points on the Senator, about the party not being the first place he looked—or the

second, said somebody else. But I assume one pressure point that you might look for would be the constituency of the Senator. So my question is, how would you work the constituency, or your knowledge of the constituency, as a pressure point on a Senator or a House member? Would you talk a little bit about the use in the constituency? And I guess I'd also like to know if you got on the road much to learn about the constituencies of the people you were dealing with, so that you could use the constituency as a pressure point. Or how did you get information on that?

Thomson

[REDACTED]

Moore

[Louis] Susman from St. Louis.

Thomson

[REDACTED]

Moore

There's another good example involving a constituency, and that was on the Natural Gas Policy Act. We got a printout of all the members by state, where we needed the votes, did a vote count, took some swing votes and we had tracked it down. So that in North Dakota—I mean people were surprised. They said, Gee, those guys have really got an

operation. One of the Senators told me, I got a call from a guy the other day I hadn't heard from in about three or four years. He gives me a thousand dollars every year and always buys a table at my fundraising thing, but he never asked me for anything. But he asked me to vote for this bill and explained to me why it was important to him and important to our state that we should do that. Well, that's the pressure point. It's not a constituency. We passed that bill. That's one of the ways we passed it.

Cable

You look at the Chrysler loan guarantee. Talking about constituencies, the UAW [United Auto Workers], Chrysler, the Auto Dealers Association, and the administration got together and looked at pressure points and constituencies. I mean I think that guy is a constituency. It doesn't have to necessarily be a company with seven or eight thousand employees or a civil rights group or whatever. The local Chrysler dealer who has 15 employees and goes in and says, Hey look, guys, everybody else is getting theirs and I want mine. We did that all the time. I mean we did it with the UAW and we did it in the Chrysler thing and the loan guarantee issue.

That never would have been done without some very creative work in the House by Jimmy Blanchard and Blanchard was in the right place at the right time. I mean he really was very much responsible for that. Howard Paster from the UAW and Jim Blanchard really worked hard on that thing, along with Treasury and along with everybody else. But the parts dealers were called in. I mean you have eight thousand parts dealers around the country who'd say hey, call them, talk to them.

Moore

I remember on one vote we got, it was a Monroe shock absorber plant. It employed about 150-200 people. It was organized with UAW. They didn't get the plant manager but they got all the employees. Each one of them was asked to write their Congressman or call him. They made shocks for Chrysler. We found that Chrysler had parts suppliers in 39 states.

Cable

It's the opposite on the carrier and Rockwell. I mean Rockwell had that airplane subbed to 350 Congressional districts.

Thomson



Cable

You're exactly right, it's no accident. The veto override on the carrier is a good example of that too. We had those briefings in the White House. I remember reading a newspaper

clipping that I think Jim Wright brought up. The constituent had made some sort of component part for an airplane company for LTW. He said he didn't understand why he had been invited to the White House, but he was really pleased to have this East Room briefing with all these generals and the President. He said, You know, I really do understand why the President had to veto that bill. If we build this one carrier, we can't build five other ones and then we can't have airplanes to put on those other ones. And in the first sentence he said, I just can't understand why I was invited to the White House! I'll clip out the newspaper story and show you precisely why you were invited to the White House. That's the use of the constituency and we did it more effectively and less effectively in various cases. That was just a beautiful example. We all worked on that and we had time on that one. We made a decision early enough, we had time to create a plan and execute it and it worked real well.

Moore

That's the one thing a President can control in the legislative calendar to an extent—the veto. You can determine when to veto it and send it back.

Thomson

[REDACTED]

Young

Back again to this question of the party. Do you think if Carter had been reelected that all the problems you've talked about, about the Democratic Party as a source of hurt and its flying apart when it comes to policy, that some of those problems would have evaporated or would have been much less for you if he had been re-elected? If he had been able to claim a mandate for these centrist policies?

Cable

I just don't know.

Young

Having already gotten Kennedy out of the way in the primaries.

Cable

Would it have stopped Senator Kennedy from wanting national health insurance if Jimmy Carter was in the White House?

Young

You don't think a Carter victory would have helped with the Democratic Party problem?

Cable

No.

Thomson

[REDACTED]

Moore

We would have affected our constituency.

Thomson

[REDACTED]

Cable

Yes, but we wouldn't have had to pay for the tax cut either.

Thomson

[REDACTED]

Cable

Oh, we would have had deficit problems.

Mann

Nor that size of a defense increase.

Cable

But it may be almost the same as the one we proposed. By the time you get right down to the end of it, if you look at the dollars appropriated, my guess is that you're not going to find a handful of difference. We probably could never have appropriated the defense

dollars that we suggested we were going to. I don't think when it's all done you're going to come out with a whole bunch of difference between what Jimmy Carter proposed and what Ronald Reagan, who was so far outspending us, is going in fact to appropriate.

Thompson

I was just wondering on the party thing if a Dunn had headed the Carter campaign in Illinois rather than Jim Wall, would that have made any difference in your relations with the party?

Thomson

[REDACTED]

Cable

In 1976 though. Wall didn't have to campaign in 1980.

Thomson

[REDACTED]

Thompson

Yes.

Thomson

[REDACTED]

Moore

But we had to make those adjustments all over. He was Kennedy's guy.

Cable

The only delegates we lost in the primary in Illinois, as I am so painfully aware and was reminded of so often around the White House, were five that Rostenkowski elected. We had the largest single delegate slate in the country at the convention. It came out of Illinois. Danny and Dunn got five delegates—period. The first time I ever heard of the rule 11BH or whatever was when Danny came in and said, Well, that's all right I'll just tell them to do what I want at the convention and they'll do what I want at the

convention. That was in March 1980 and that was when the loyal delegate rule issue first arose in my consciousness. And Rick Hutcheson did that memo prior to the meeting with the President, before one of those leadership breakfasts.

Moore

Yes, but I think we ought to put this in context. As far as the day-to-day workings of Congressional liaison went, the national Democratic Party or local Democratic parties weren't something you woke up every morning thinking about. It was not something you talked about on the Hill when you were talking with members. They didn't talk about it. If there was an event coming up, a mid-term conference on something, some of the guys were maybe interested in it. Hell, we even had a hard time recruiting. We'd sit down and say, There's something on the Democratic convention coming up and so we'd better get some Congressmen and Senators in there. We'd make a long list of people to go. Hell, we might make a list of 20 and get five to go.

Cable

We had to beg people to go to those panels at the mid-term.

Moore

It ought to be put in context. It's not something that was important in the day-to-day operation of a Congressional liaison operation.

Young

Chuck Jones.

Jones

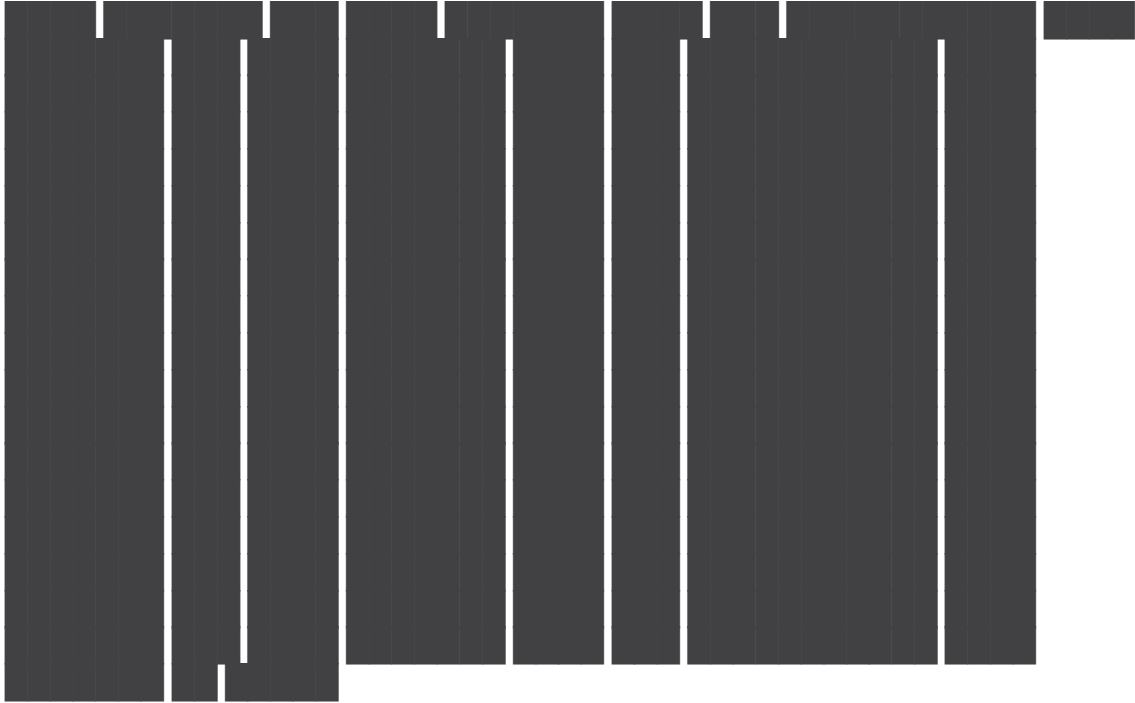
This mention of Kennedy and national health insurance reminds me of something I wanted to ask yesterday and that is, how did you handle, generally or in regard to specific issues, initiatives that were coming from the Hill? Where you had your priorities but Congress had its own, particularly these days when Congress is feeling a little sassier than they used to and everybody's a lawmaker, a program developer on the Hill, with larger staffs and so forth. How did you handle that? Did you try to get them on your side or try to get ahead of them? Can you talk a little bit about that?

Moore

There's one good example of that—Jim and his synthetic fuel program, which was a Hill initiative from the beginning. It came under the Bill Moorhead bill that Jim Wright jumped on. The thing just took off and went. Yes, we jumped on it too. But there are other things. Bob Thomson can give you a good example about trucking deregulation.

Bob, do you want to talk about that, how that bill came about? Kennedy had been trying to get trucking deregulation for years. We put our own bill up there, which he opposed.

Thomson



Moore

A guy who came to us and said, Look, I can't pass my bill without your help and you can't pass your bill without my help, so let's fold it together.

Thomson



Jones

So there was a case where Kennedy wanted some cooperation, and it was a little tense, I suppose, but still you were able to work it out. Can you give us a case where you simply were able to stop something? Something that seemed to have some possibility of passing and that was fouling up your own priorities.

Cable

One example that comes to mind is the whole tuition tax credit issue. That was something we had to face in 1978 and 1979. And we wanted to stop tax credits; we did not want tuition tax credits to be legislated. As I recall, Moynihan passed a bill in the Senate that had them for elementary and high school. Bill Ford of Michigan was the chairman of the subcommittee of jurisdiction. That committee was a pretty good committee on that issue. Ford dragged us a little further than I think we wanted to go in the process, but we created a thing that was called the Middle Income Student Assistance Act, where we took the cap off the guaranteed loan program, expanded some eligibility for basic grants and sort of tried to refocus student financial aid in the traditional college base programs and loan programs to more middle income people.

We were addressing the issue of who benefits from a tax credit. Let's go with this group and satisfy some of that need, but not do it in a policy way that was terribly offensive. We got a bill through, managed to kill the tax credit bill in the House, and passed the Middle Income Student Assistance bill. Now that's a Congressional initiative that was stopped. It's only complicated by the fact that we had to pay a price that turned out to be a little more than we wanted to stop it. I don't think it was the wrong decision at any point. It just got to be a pretty expensive price. A combination of increase in eligibility and increase in interest rates made the guarantee loan program just go through the ceiling in costs.

Jones

Was that something you worried about at the time, was that something the policy people knew of?

Cable

Sure. I remember arguing with McIntyre's people, Sue Woolsey and Jim, about that and Billy Ford sitting there saying, Hey, the choice is tax credits. You want to know how much that costs? Bam. Ford was pretty direct. And very much in the Kennedy mold in the House, very much a traditional Democrat.

Moore

We stopped some banking committee legislation too, by what was really mismanagement by the leadership. I mean you don't ever want to talk about those things, but sometimes in the Rules Committee or sometimes just scheduling, you would say, Yes, Mr. Chairman, it's going to be scheduled, or, Yes, Mr. Chairman, as soon as we get through with the President's program here. And the time just kind of runs out and the session is over. Lots of stuff, a lot of times that happens.

Cable

Counter cyclical got it. We got it done to us in the same way in a couple of places. Some with more of our concurrence than less, but those last days of the session get to be pretty

hectic. That's where if you don't have the kind of relationship we had with the Democratic leadership, you're just not in the ball game.

Moore

We were the only people in town who knew what was going on. I'd sit up in the office and I'd have Bill on one phone and Tate on the other, with Tate in Senator Byrd's office and Bill in the Speaker's office. The more confusion, the better off we were.

Cable

The more confusion, the better off we were. The more it appeared to be messed up, with everybody else running around in circles, the more we were in control.

Jones

Was your network sufficiently good on the Hill so that, either through just your contacts or through the leadership meetings, you could keep sensitive to what might be developing, rather than just all of a sudden it seeming like it was upon you?

Moore

We didn't get that out of the leadership meetings at all. This came from day-to-day business.

Cable

By the time it got to be a leadership meeting topic of discussion, it was already a problem. The feedback network we had from our own Congressional liaison staffs was a good early warning system. We'd have somebody at the Department of Energy saying, You know they're going to disapprove our whatchamacallit proposal. We had so many of those silly fights.

Thomson

[REDACTED]

Cable

Well, gas rationing. But that was never a surprise. I mean that one never took anybody to tell us it was going to be a problem.

Jones

People up and down my street in Pittsburgh really wanted it.

Cable

That's something that the more you learn about it, the more you understand people's frustration over the sort of ostrich-like behavior this government is accused of. It is difficult and painful and therefore I don't want to deal with it, that is the prevailing attitude. If the crisis ever occurred we would be in trouble. I mean you talk about people getting shot in gas lines when they occurred in 1976, if we had a real reduction in supply we'd have civil war. And you get the Congressmen saying, Well, it's not fair that my auto worker can't drive his Winnebago to Florida for the Easter recess. I mean bullshit. There isn't going to be gas to drive the trucks to deliver the food or run the farms. To get them to focus on the magnitude of the problem when a rationing plan would kick in was absolutely impossible.

That was one of the most frustrating things. The only thing that even approached that kind of frustration was hospital cost containment. In the sense of intellectually believing that what we were doing was one necessary and good policy, right and not outrageous, and trying to get them to focus on it in terms other than, well you know, cab drivers in New York ought to be exempted, they ought to get part of that special allocation. We must have allocated that extra 10% to Secretarial discretion about 40 times. We gave it to everybody, but it was only 10%.

Moore

People who hauled the grain to the market in Kansas, we gave it to them.

Cable

It even included truck farmers on the eastern shore for Paul Sarbanes. Did it include the oystermen's boats that went out and harvested the clams and oysters? Sure, they're all part of the normal chain in the process but if you've got a 20% shortfall in product, you could have a war without some sort of a plan. You're going to have people shooting at each other. But we didn't have a plan.

Fenno

I'd like to ask you to comment about another piece of legislation, one that occurred very early in the administration, one that was viewed as controversial and as reflecting an attitude toward Congress. That's the cutting of the water projects, which appeared very early. It was obviously something that the President wanted, and it was also something that generated a certain amount of hostility in Congress.

Cable

Thomson and I weren't there when that broke.

Thomson



Moore

I'll never forget room 450 of EOB and having John Stennis, Senator [James] Eastland, and Russell Long all sitting in the front row. I've forgotten who was explaining it—maybe the Secretary of the Interior.

Cable

Did Alexander do it, Cliff?

Moore

Yes, it was Cliff Alexander. Secretary of the Army. But he had Cecil up there too, Cecil Andrus. Russell Long stood up and said, My name is Russell Long and I'm a Democrat from the State of Louisiana. I'm on the Senate Finance Committee. It all went downhill from there. Then Senator Stennis said, I'm chairman of the Senate Arms Services Committee, and he was talking to the Secretary of the Army. But you know President Carter really believed in it. He thought it was a waste of public money. We predicted what the outcome would be and he said, I'm going to do it anyway.

I think we maybe underestimated it and certainly other people underestimated it. It caused a bitterness that took a long time to get over. The hit list was leaked. Of course what caused so much of a problem were the projects that were falsely listed. Some imaginary lists had dams on them that we had no intention of cutting, either because of completion or because they served some useful purpose—flood control, power generation or something. I guess every dam in the United States was on some of those lists that were floating around.

Fenno

Why did you do it so early in the game?

Moore

It was a matter of rescission, wasn't it? It was a rescission process and it was time to do it. The budget was going to be done.

Cable

You know when it was done? It was done in the resubmission of the Carter budget after the Ford budget and that occurs in the first 90 days. I mean that's mechanically why it was done there and that's the place to get it done, so you have the committees to consider it as the President's request.

Jones

That's going to help next year?

Cable

Well, we did it the next year too. We did it until the fourth year. We tried to get a couple of those things.

Thompson

Did the President decide on timing questions of this kind across the board? For instance, on Panama ahead of SALT [Strategic Arms Limitations Talks] and on other things of this sort?

Moore

Yes. That again was a function of the treaty. They had been negotiating it for six years, the Panama Canal treaty, and it was almost near completion.

Moore

The thing was signed. Once it was signed, then you had to get on with it in a hurry to get it ratified.

Cable

And then there were some self-enforcing timetables in it, weren't there? Didn't you have to have the legislation within a certain number of months after creating the commission?

Moore

That was enabling. We made a decision to split that. We put it in the next year, which was a wise decision. I remember going over talking to Jim Wright out in Texas. The House agreed to let the Senate do this and we'll do ours next, enabling legislation. I underestimated the residual effect of that.

Cable

What?

Moore

The Panama Canal. I just think everybody did. I thought it would be over within about a year. But people still are bothered by it. You know [Dennis] DeConcini is up for

reelection this time in Arizona and one of the issues in his election is going to be his vote on the Panama Canal.

Thompson

Bunker was here recently and he told about visiting a place and seeing a big sign, Archie Bunker is smarter than Ellsworth Bunker.

Moore

For the Senator from Oklahoma, [Henry] Bellmon, there were still signs up there when he retired: Benedict Bellmon. But with the water projects there was a residual effect that carried on. There was kind of a lack of trust. Again the problem was a lack of notification and consultation. I remember Bizz [Harold] Johnson calling me. He said, I just got up and I've never been so upset in my whole life. I just read it in the paper.

Cable

His dam was the one where the guy chained himself to the rock to keep the floodgates from opening and closing, or something. New Melones dam.

Moore

The people just never got over that.

Thomson

These issues.

Moore

The shock of it. How can you do it without talking with us?

Cable

And from the Congressional side, most of these guys had put up with some personal agony in their own Congressional districts in order to start those projects. I mean it wasn't a unanimous decision in their own districts to do some of these things. They had to pay some political price to get some of these projects going. And I remember Carl Perkins telling that it was a personal thing that Yatesville Lake was stopped. He said, You know, they're going to drive by there and blame me for that hole in the ground forever. I mean it, forever. How could he do this to me? I mean there was that personal kind of thing.

Fenno

Had it been done differently would it have succeeded?

Cable

I think the only way you could do it differently would be to impose a new standard prospectively. That means you waste everything that's been approved to this point.

Moore

That's what we did. We changed the standards on that and won. We said that from now on you have to do this.

Thomson



Cable

Sure, some of the projects.

Young

Do you want to have a very short break for five minutes or so and have a stretch? Then we'll try and wind up.

[BREAK]

Young

We're in the home stretch here and I'd like to shift gears a little bit and talk about the Carter Presidency and Carter as a President. The more time goes on, the more your administration is going to be studied. It's going to be a long time before all those archives are opened up, and even longer before we get the full picture of the Carter Presidency. I think it's important to talk a little about this because the Carter administration has been so mystifying as seen from the outside. If we could try to get some help from you people in our thinking about that 39th Presidency, about this very unusual person in the White House, we might get a little jump on the historians.

He got into the Presidency in a new kind of era. He came from a place where we don't usually recruit Presidents, not since the Civil War, at least. Frank, you were close to him and I'm going to ask you at some point if there are some things you want to get off your chest about how people ought to look at the Carter Presidency, because that's what we're here to learn about. But first, I'd like to talk about one of the things that was said about the Carter Presidency during about the last year and a half of the administration, certainly

as people began to think about the primary campaigns and the re-election coming up. What was said about Carter was that his every move in the White House served as part of an electoral, political strategy. What should people reading that and educated to that point of view by the press think about that? I have the feeling it's way off base. My personal feeling, my personal assessment is that it was anything but that. Maybe that's the way to start off.

Moore

Well, it was damaging because Kennedy started running and forced us to get out there early in the primaries. The President's greatest strength perceived by the people, and you may want to talk with [Patrick] Caddell about this, was that he was not an ordinary politician. He was a good man, he was trying to do a good job, even if he had troubles with Congress and things. But when people started making those charges and they began to stick, one of his basic strengths disappeared, and he was considered just another politician, making decisions not for the good of the country.

All you had to do was look at what those decisions were and decide whether they were political or not. Imposing a grain embargo against Russia a couple of days before the Iowa primary is not a good political decision, if it was political. I was out traveling in Oklahoma that week, meeting with wheat farmers. It was horrible. I'm trying to think of some kind of decisions that they said were political.

Cable

The Wisconsin primary announcement.

Moore

Yes, and there was a good reason for that, given the time difference between Tehran and here. We were sending messages back and forth. There is another reason, but you really ought to get Hamilton to talk about it. We sat up all night waiting, and after getting a very direct message we announced that we had every confidence in the world that the hostage thing was going to break. I'm not sure about this, but I think the way it was set up, we had to give a reply back by a certain time. We were communicating then by television. In any normal diplomatic relations you could have sent a cable to your embassy. I've forgotten what some of the other accusations were.

Jones

The release of grant money. The _____ relationships with the mayor. She was being penalized and that kind of thing.

Moore

Well, so be it.

Jones

I'm just giving you an example.

Moore

I can't think of some of the other things but there were three or four instances where they clearly weren't in our best political interest to do what had been done. It hurt, it really did hurt.

Young

Reacting to this, someone has said, if you look at Carter's program, it was the program of a second term President because of all the difficult things in it. If motivated by political considerations, no President in his right mind would have tried some of the things he tried.

Moore

Yes. You talked about how we're going to look at this in terms of history. I'm not prepared to do that. I've been sorting through my own mind and doing a lot of thinking, but I'm not prepared right now to talk on the record about what I'm thinking about the Carter Presidency. It's still too painful to think about. It's going to take me a longer time than six months to sort it out. I've got some strong feelings, but I haven't pulled them together yet, I haven't sorted the whole thing out in my mind. It just takes time. I don't know how long it takes you to depressurize and adjust, but it's longer than six months. It has been for me. And I've been out of Washington. I think it's easier if you're out. I went up to Harvard for three months and since then I've been in Texas. Jody and I sat up and talked the other night until late in the morning about it. I'm just not ready to talk about it yet. I'm not objective enough.

Young

There are two things here. One is we're learning an awful lot about the Carter White House, its various components and how it evolved over time. And that's the whole purpose of this. I think with every meeting we get a somewhat clearer idea about Carter, and this meeting has been very helpful for that. I think on our interest in identifying where this administration was in terms of the historical development of the Presidency, we're getting very good information. But speaking for myself here, what is so hard to get a handle on is what is central in all of this: a President with some philosophy of the office and some philosophy about his role and his purpose there in Washington. That's very hard to get hold of as we try to think about where he fits.

Moore

He had a definite philosophy, but I don't think anybody other than the President ought to talk about it. I don't think anybody else ought to try to interpret that for him. All these stories about who is the real Jimmy Carter? and Jimmy Carter's not understood, even after four years have always baffled me. I can't see that. I understand exactly who he is and where he's been and where he's going. And he was the same person in private as he was in public. If you have to explain it to somebody, then you can't explain it. That's the way I have always felt about it.

Thomson

[REDACTED]

Moore

No you shouldn't.

Thomson

[REDACTED]

Moore

He introduced some legislation.

Thomson



Young

All kinds of people play games with rating Presidents in history and a lot of it is hogwash. The criteria are often rigged for certain types of Presidents. But what I'm thinking about is, when one looks back at the Carter Presidency, should one, in trying to figure out his main concerns and approach, should one pay a great deal of attention to his farewell speech? I think those three things that you mentioned—environment, nuclear non-proliferation, and human rights—that he singled out those things. Should one pay a great deal of attention to that?

Moore

I remember a great debate raging in the White House on whether to give that speech or not. The point was made that there'd only been two good ones given; one was George Washington's, and the other was Eisenhower's. We discussed whether to deliver it to the Congress, the joint session and what the form would be. To answer your question, yes, I think it should be given attention, because he wanted to say those things.

Young

Was that his speech?

Moore

Yes, it was his speech. Stu worked on it and Jody worked on it some. But the President went up to Camp David and wrote out on a yellow pad what he wanted to say, and it was his speech. It was honed a little bit. But I think you should pay attention. I've got some stuff I want to say here but I think I'm going to hold it until I get it better sorted out.

I was first associated with Jimmy Carter in planning functions. Planning for local and regional governments and later for state government. A lot of things he needed to do as Governor of Georgia involved planning. Just like the legislative program here, it's only now that Governors following him in Georgia are beginning to enjoy the results of the programs he put through and the reforms he made. And this is his basic approach to things. He is looking as a long-range planner. A lot of people do long-range planning just in one subject. Transportation, health planning or housing planning, this or that. He understood and understands today, I think better than anyone I've ever read or talked with, how to look at the world ten or fifteen years from now and to see where it's going to be in terms of domestic policy, foreign policy, and the interrelationships between countries. He could see how other countries viewed us and our policies and how that contrasted with how Americans viewed themselves.

If you look at the things that we did, all the deregulation stuff and our energy policy, we attempted to change the way that government actually functioned in terms of the people it served. The Panama Canal treaties changed the way a whole part of the world viewed us. There was a change in the structure of the way they viewed us. The African policy I think is a great success that some people recognized at the time, and I think it's really wrong-headed the way these people are going about it. The Mideast—again, the way a whole part of the world looked at us changed.

We were evolving a way of dealing with that part of the world. I don't see these people trying to do that. Essentially what Reagan did on this last visit with [Menachem] Begin was just duck, in order to buy a successful visit. Carter wouldn't have done that. Carter would have taken the issue head on. And I think that they're going to pay for it. When you do things like that, when you duck and put it off, then when you do have to deal with the consequences of it, it's much more difficult than if you had gone ahead and met it head on and done it then. If people had been sitting around in a room discussing what Carter was going to do, the so-called smart, sharp political people would never have advised him to do any of those things. But he had the courage to say, Well, I'm going to do it because it's right. I didn't get elected President to be a smart politician. I got elected President because people felt like I was going to do some of those things that I talked about during the campaign. That's enough.

Young

From you?

Moore

Yes, from me.

Young

Do you have any outside perspectives or are you decompressed sufficiently? I'm not asking you to talk necessarily about Carter as a person, but the person is inevitably a part of the Presidency.

Moore

I can't separate the two.

Cable

I have a hard time knowing where to go with that. I mean I believe most of the things that Frank and Bob said about the President and his willingness to take politically unpopular positions for good reasons. I think even in the short run, as I said earlier, he's been proved to have exhibited some vision that, had it been followed, would have made the process, I think, much less painful now than it was for the Democrats and for Democratic goals and values. I feel bad that he was so maligned by liberal Democrats, by people from my background. I think they're reacting in a knee-jerk manner rather than with a careful analysis.

If you took the time to go behind the questions, he was not the antithesis of the Democratic Party platform and program I think he got labeled for being in a certain community in this political process. I think that perspectives are going to be better over time. I don't think that's very much solace right now; I really don't like the perception that we were incompetent. It offends me, it offends me personally, and yet I find it's such a contradiction because for me perception is reality. I mean I'm very fond of using that old saw like everybody else. I find myself in a kind of schizophrenic state that can't deal with those two things well.

Young

You have a lot of company in history, you know. It has taken us 20 years to find out that a lot of the things that we believed about the Eisenhower Presidency really weren't that way at all. Eisenhower was something else besides what we thought he was. That's the spirit in which I'm trying to ask the question. Why do we have to wait 20 years until all the archives are opened up to get some glimmer, some better notion than we as mere consumers of news and columnists have gotten, about this Presidency?

Cable

In this day and a half, I know I have been, and I think Frank has been, pretty candid and open in most everything about the way we perceived things. I don't know how you square that with the perception from the outside.

Moore

It's just such a big gap. It's hard to go across that chasm. You think of all the people who said Carter has no sense of humor. He has a great sense of humor. He's always joking and laughing about the comments he made, and it's a very keen and sophisticated sense of humor. I remember, and I guess Bob and Bill do too, when a member would be at the White House and he would say, Mr. President, I got up early today. Then the President would say, Oh, you changed your habits? or something like that. It would take them aback, and after the meeting they'd say, You know, he has got a sense of humor. They were surprised because they had read in the press that he didn't have one. That's just one example, but there are many, many examples like that.

Young

Cliff.

McCleskey

I'm troubled by your reluctance to offer judgment on some of these things. It seems to me that if the people who were closest to the President and to this staff do not, while the impressions are still fairly fresh, show a willingness to make evaluations, then it's going to be left either to people who weren't close enough to have an accurate picture or to the passage of time, which is going to dim a lot of things. So I'd like to pose specifically the question to the three of you. Let's assume for purposes of discussion that we can credit Carter with being a good person, having foresight about what the country needs, things of that sort.

Young

May I interrupt a minute? I'm sorry about this, but if it would help not to have this part on the record, we can turn off the mike. If it would help you at all, because we're not—

Moore

It's not my reluctance. I intend to go on the record sometime. My problem is separating the President from the Presidency. I'm working on it. This is the first of these things that I've done since we went out of the White House, and I wouldn't have been able to do it before now. I couldn't have done this in February or March. And I wish I were prepared to talk about it now. I'm just not.

Young

OK, we understand that. Why don't you proceed.

McCleskey

Well, I'm just going to say that there are several dimensions that one could use for an evaluation of a President's performance. Three that probably would be on that list would

be, first, a man's skill as a political leader, his capacity to get other people to follow him and to do what he wants them to do; second, his eye for personnel, the selection of top officials and top staff, and third, his administrative capacity, the ability to keep track of things, to keep them moving and so on. Could you comment, any of you or all of you, on Carter's performance with respect to those three dimensions?

Moore

Political skill, administrative capacity and what was the other one?

McCleskey

Selection of personnel, top staff and officials.

Moore

Well, I'll try. Of the three of those, the one he may have been the weakest in was the selection of personnel, if you wanted to compare one to the other. I knew him when he was Governor of Georgia, and sometimes he makes mistakes on people. And like any of us, he hates to admit it. But he's always a very forgiving person. I know that he's very close to Mike Blumenthal now. They exchange letters and they talk, and he was one of the Cabinet officers who left whom he feels very close to. And I know of some other instances in Georgia where people let him down or left him, or there was a break politically, but he still feels very close to them and he won't discuss their differences. After Camp David and the Cabinet changes, we had a senior staff meeting and he said, If I ever hear anybody here speaking ill of Joe Califano or Mike Blumenthal, you'll be fired. And he was serious, he meant it.

On his administrative ability, he was able to keep things moving. He conducted an enormous amount of work. Whether he should have been doing that much work or not I don't know. That's another question. But he did do an enormous amount of work from early in the morning until late at night, all during the campaign. I think he probably knew as much about the workings of the government as any President ever has because he became a student of it. We had a hundred hours of going through the budget. I don't know how many other hours he spent, but he knew the budget, and that's the way to learn the government. You learn the budget because you know where firefighters fit in as part of the Commerce Department, for instance. But after studying it once, he didn't do it again. He did it once so that the next year he could whiz through the stuff. But he was a good administrator in terms of taking that stuff, of making decisions, of not delaying on it.

He was skilled at making the right decisions, I think, if the right information was presented to him. And he could recognize when the wrong information was presented to him. He'd send it back and say, This doesn't make sense or, Why haven't you examined this? His style was to do a lot of it himself. I don't think he liked a lot of us working with

an administrative assistant. His administrative assistant was Susan Clough, a personal secretary.

His political skill was in moving people; it was just magic to watch in the early primaries of 1976 as you traveled with him. Not only in living rooms with small groups, but with large groups of three or four hundred people as well. He was good in some situations and in some situations he wasn't good. The ones that he wasn't good in were usually formal Democratic Party functions. Still, all of us here and all of the members of the Congressional liaison can remember those dinners at the White House when he would stand up and without notes talk about different issues, sometimes with an absolutely amazing grasp of both the situation and its details. A lot of Congressmen would sit there as we would, just awed by it, almost mesmerized. That's one measure of a political skill. We changed some votes just by his talking to 40, 50, or 60 Congressmen at one time. And that's the political skill. We didn't get credit for it, but it showed up in the votes. We didn't invite people who were for us; we'd invite people who were against us, and he would actually persuade enough of those just by talking. Usually it was on a foreign aid type situation, for Africa, for this or that. I don't know how many of those things we had through the years, but he was as effective as anybody I've ever seen in those situations.

Young

I didn't hear.

Moore

B and B's.

Cable

Buffet and briefings.

Moore

I'll stop there and let somebody else comment.

Young

With certain of the modern Presidents, you find a philosophy of staff. And all Presidents have used different kinds of staff arrangements, each choosing that which will fit them. What was Carter's philosophy on this? What was his approach to staff and the whole arrangement that you get around you in the White House? You know we have models, there are spokes of the wheel, and there are Sherman Adams hierarchies. Those are just symbols for different ways that Presidents arranged staffs to suit their own style and their own purposes. Would you say that he had some approach or philosophy about the staff or his concept of the Presidency?

Moore

I never worked on anybody else's staff except Jimmy Carter's. I never worked for a Congressional staff or a Senate staff. It was organized in a predictable way. You assigned authority or responsibility, but he occasionally would just dip down into the chain of command, and he wasn't constrained by saying, Frank, you tell Bill, and Bill tells so and so. He would bump into Bill or bump into me, or he'd call my secretary if I wasn't there and tell her to do something. And we all had worked together long enough, so that when we left the room, we'd swap. But it was a case of what needs to be done and who's there in the room to do it that determined the assignments.

I think he was very comfortable with the Chief of Staff operation, with Jack and the way that operated. He would also keep people off balance a little bit. To get a little creative tension he'd have one person do this, and by private call to another person he'd have them checking on the same thing so he got different pieces of information from different levels. He was criticized for some of this. You know he had this conflict between Vance and Brzezinski. Well, that wasn't all bad. A good manager sometimes gets different pieces of information and puts them together. It may have looked uncoordinated, but it wasn't nearly as uncoordinated as it seemed even with the lower staff taking shots at each other in the *New York Times*.

Thompson

Even the Annapolis speech?

Moore

Well, I don't know about that, but he read a lot of history and studied a lot of Presidents and I know he was an admirer of Roosevelt and of the way Roosevelt put somebody working on this and somebody else working on the same thing and that way Roosevelt controlled it, as I think the President controlled a lot of things.

Young

You wanted to say something, Bob?

Thomson



[REDACTED]

Jones

Did the concern that people had about the Nixon operation influence this, or did he ever talk about that?

Thomson

[REDACTED]

Young

That's exactly what's being discovered about the Eisenhower White House, 20 years after the fact.

Thomson

[REDACTED]

Young

We're not interested in pronouncing judgment. We're interested in what should go into a serious evaluation, and this is very helpful for that.

Moore

I'd agree with Bob on the value of organization. Carter felt comfortable with the organization, but it sure wasn't sacred to him, the chain of command. He would skip down, and sometimes had to be reminded not to ignore completely that organization.

Thomson



Moore

The senior staff went to the President and asked him to appoint a Chief of Staff and that it be Jack. But I think you just talked about reality and perceptions; I remember when he brought in Headly Donovan and Lloyd Cutler, and they came to work one week, and the next week you'd go around town and people would say, Boy, things are better in the White House, it really has made a difference. And Cutler had not even moved over from his law office yet. But people felt better about it, and would say, Those guys have finally gotten smart, now we've got somebody in there we can talk to. I think Bob's right. I think if you have a staff, you know that if you put an organizational chart on page 1D of the *Washington Post* for people to look at, and say this person's here and this person's here, everybody feels a lot better about it. But it still would have worked the same way because that was his style.

Young

It strikes me from everything you've said that he took a great deal on himself both in terms of work and in terms of study. Others also have mentioned his study of the government through the budget. And he took an enormous amount of heat himself. You think of other Presidents and the great contrast. There's a story that illustrates the contrast. Eisenhower wanted to do something once that was very difficult and called in some of his staff and said I want you to go out and say so and so to the press. And the press secretary said, Mr. President, if I go out there they will absolutely eat me alive. Eisenhower turned to him and said, Yes, better you my boy than me. You had the feeling, at least I have this feeling, that Carter would never use his staff in that way, that

he would not use them to protect himself in that way. That's part of what I'm trying to say.

Moore

He would have a staff around him who would volunteer to do that and do it without his asking.

Young

He wouldn't ask.

Moore

He wouldn't ask them. But I would like to think that the staff would include the kind who would say, I'm going out to face the press because I want to spare you of this. He was very generous. People would call on him to do an inordinate amount of things I don't think in my opinion he should have been doing. You know, a summary page is all right, but to read the twenty or thirty pages that backed it up, that's not. But that got better and better as the Presidency went on. The last couple of years he had a lot of foreign policy on his desk, which I didn't see and didn't know where it came from. I know it was a constant battle for Phil and Susan to keep it cut down. But we got the domestic stuff pretty well worked down and organized so he could get it in there and make a decision and get it out.

One of his pet peeves was stuff being delivered on Friday afternoon that had to have a decision made on it by Monday. I mean people caused folks to wait until the deadline, when they knew that he'd stay up all night reading it to make a decision. And Monday he would complain about it at the staff meetings. He would ask, Why do they send stuff from the Defense Department over on Friday afternoon that has to have a decision made by ten o'clock on Monday? And the answer was because they knew that he would do it. If they knew it was going to take two weeks to get it in the White House and out, they'd get it in two weeks earlier. We were guilty of that ourselves, of taking things to him in the family quarters at night, or of calling him up at ten o'clock at night and saying he had to make five phone calls before eight in the morning. He'd always do it.

Young

Did you want to go on, Bill? Dick, did you have a question?

Fenno

One criterion that scholars sometimes use to judge a President is general relations with Congress. Should we include that as one of ours?

Moore

I don't think so, and I'll tell you why. Even if Jimmy Carter had been elected to three terms, relations were never going to be good with Congress. He was an activist President, and most Congressmen don't want to vote on something controversial. He was pushing tough, hard legislation, things that had been left behind for years. Things that a guy knew that if he voted on it he was going to make 51% of the people in his district mad at him, or 49%, or 40%. They'd rather not vote on it at all. The way to have good Congressional relations is not to send any controversial legislation to the Hill.

Cable

To avoid comprehensive solutions to problems.

Moore

Yes. So I think people confused Congressional relations with Congressional results. I think when you study the Carter Presidency you'll see that we had a high percentage of the legislation we proposed passed. People remember the 15% we lost rather than the 85% we passed. I think we had a damn good record of getting our legislation passed. But in passing legislation you had bad Congressional relations, as measured by how well the people get along with the White House and how happy they were. You would ask them and the guy would say, Hell no, I'd like to be going home to my district and campaigning. I've got an opponent for the first time in several years coming up, but here I am having to vote on this bill, and half the people in my district, no matter which way I vote, are going to be upset about it. So I don't think it should be used as a criterion. I think if you want to look and say, was he effective in dealing with Congress, did he get his legislation passed? then yes.

Cable

It was the nature of the issues, too.

Young

That and bad Congressional relations go together.

Moore

In many cases they do. You know we could have had a great Congressional liaison if all we wanted to do was take people on the Sequoia and ride them up and down on the Potomac, or go to the Kennedy Center, or just go to fundraisers. You can get good Congressional relations, but you don't get any legislation passed.

Young

Bill.

Cable

I also think that was contributed to by the lack of consensus on some major issues that were out there in the atmosphere, especially ones that were only indirectly related to the President, be that busing or abortion or school prayer or any of those kinds of things. Those kinds of things help create a kind of Congressional tension.

Moore

New young members challenging grizzled veterans, sometimes people who had been there two terms.

Young

Carter did refer to the pernicious effect of single interest pressure groups.

Cable

In one sense they have become more shrill rather than more powerful. I don't think single issue groups are a new thing. I think they have been around for a long time, whether they were environmentalists in the 60's or anti-war people, or whatever. But I think they have become better organized, more shrill and more painful. I remember Les and I were talking one day after he had come back from a series of meetings. One was on ERA extension, and one was on something else, so it was three in a row, and they were just really shrill. I mean they were counter productive. We were walking across to his office in the basement of the West wing, and Les said something negative about the tone of those meetings, and how our friends were hurting themselves, and I said, You know, I think maybe the single issue groups are the hemorrhoid of the body politic. That contributes to the hostility in a relationship between any President and the Congress. You've got all those things, you have Vietnam and Watergate, and you've also got the fact that it has been twelve or fourteen years since there was a good relationship between the Congress and President. You've got to go to late 1966 or early 1967 to find a nice kind of partisan politics, a good working relationship with the Congress. It started to fall apart for Johnson, then the Democrats were dumping all over Johnson in late 1967. And then Nixon, Vietnam and Watergate and all that. That's fourteen years worth. I mean that's all the time I've been on the Hill. It's all I've ever known, bad Presidential relations.

Moore

You might say one other thing too. When they have bad relations with Congress, it's traditional to blame it on the Congressional liaison. We understood that. We accepted it.

Mann

Do you all feel somewhat more sympathetic towards your predecessor Gerald Ford? Do you have some sense of his having been treated badly by the administration that succeeded him and the press commentary at the time? Do you have any sense that Gerald Ford got a bad deal from the press in his years in the White House?

Moore

We treated him with every kind of kindness and courtesy we could. We gave him daily briefings; we gave Kissinger daily briefings, which Reagan hasn't done for Carter yet. Ford had a different legislative strategy than we did. They only had to get 142 votes in the House; they never did have a full Senate really. They had to get 32 or 33 of those present voting. Most of the time it was 32 because they could have some absentees. But that was their strategy. They vetoed a bill and said can't we make it stick? We had to get 212, 214, 216 in the House and 47 or 49 in the Senate.

Cable

And many times 60 in the Senate.

Moore

Yes, many times 60 in the Senate. That's right. So I don't think he was treated that badly. They had a pretty easy time of it. If you don't propose any legislation, you just sit there and veto it and then have a strategy to present an override.

Jones

It's possible that the nicest thing that happened to Ford for his place in history is that he got defeated in 1976. If you could imagine the Ford Presidency, had he been elected but working with the Democratic Congress, then it might not have gone so well.

Thompson

Frank, when you do start to complete your own thinking, one thing that would help a lot of us in our assessments would be the evaluation and weighing of two absolutely contradictory judgments that are made of President Carter. One of them is this: you've referred to some people, including one or two that we've known, came out of the briefings saying, If he'd only had an assistant secretary give us the details, and he himself had given us the vision, the broad picture, the inspiration, then we would have gone away with a different attitude. If he'd raised our spirits the way Churchill or Roosevelt or somebody had done, even Adlai Stevenson, that would have made him a great political leader. The absolutely opposing view and you refer to it in the farewell address, I can summarize in the one sentence statement of one of the most respected political scientists in the country. He said, there'd never been an American President whose goals and objectives I agreed with more, but there had been very few of whose capacity to achieve those goals I've had more skepticism and doubt.

Many left Jimmy Carter along the way on the very three issues he talked about. For instance, on nuclear proliferation not enough time and attention was paid to what it would cost, the tradeoffs, to convince nations that we have this capacity and they shouldn't have it. On human rights on June 14th and 15th we had Pat Darian and Joe Nye and a great many other people down here for an eight on eight conference. Eight academicians and eight practitioners. Pat Darian came a day late and said she was terribly happy that she hadn't had to sit through all this historical guff about the problems of implementing a kind of human rights policy, as well as the values of it. And that image of somebody who really didn't care about the means of achieving it I think stuck.

Moore

Yes, she was the first full-time person working on human rights.

Thompson

I know, but there was a self righteousness about it and a disdain of history and the realities of international politics which remained in the minds of people, fairly or unfairly. Somehow these two judgments are absolutely contradictory, with some viewing him as a Wilson who really didn't care about territorial arrangements at the Paris peace conference but had a great vision, and others saying that he gives us too many details, that he doesn't give us the vision. If you could put that together for us.

Moore

You would have come out of those same briefings, though, and said, gee if he could just talk to the American people like he talked to us tonight, he'd have no problem. He'd carry my district by 90% if he could just capture that and put it on TV. We even went so far as to try to tape one of them, to get some ads out of them. We taped two or three of them. And we used some in the campaign ads and they were some of the best ads, best media, we had. I've been wrestling with it myself. I don't know how to put it down. If I'm going to write an article or write a couple of articles and try to get them published, do you take some specific examples, one or two like that, and draw the comparisons or do you try to do it in a comprehensive way?

Young

Well, when you get ready, get in touch with us.