

Leonard Mayo Oral History Interview – JFK#1, 04/30/1968
Administrative Information

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Biographical Note

Leonard Mayo (1899-1992) was the chairman of the President's Panel on Mental Retardation from 1961 to 1962 and the executive director of the Association for the Aid of Crippled Children from 1949 to 1965. This interview focuses on the inner workings of the President's Panel on Mental Retardation and the drafting of the panel's report, among other topics.

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Oral History Interview

with

LEONARD MAYO

April 30, 1968
Waterville, Maine

By John F. Stewart

For the John F. Kennedy Library

STEWART: What I'd like to do is start out with a little background of your activities before the Kennedy Administration by asking had you been involved in the field of mental retardation specifically before the Kennedy Administration began?

MAYO: Yes, somewhat. I was director of the Association for the Aid of Crippled Children, which is a national organization, actually international. In spite of the title--which is its original name, of course, given to the Association sixty years ago when it was founded--it became a research organization. We were interested in the causes of handicapping conditions and diseases and in the consequences to the person who had to live with a handicap. And so in this connection we were interested, of course, in mental subnormality and mental retardation, and we began to support research in this field.

When I was informed by people involved in interesting the President in appointing a panel that I was being considered as a member of the Panel [President's Panel on Mental Retardation], I was asked if I would be willing to serve if asked, and I said by all means I would. I think this was in the spring of 1961. And then in August, of 1961, I received a phone call from [Myer] Mike Feldman, who was, of course, one of the President's aides working closely with [Theodore C.] Ted Sorensen. And he told me that the President would

like to have me serve as chairman of the Panel, which was a real surprise because I had no idea that I would be asked to do this.

STEWART: You say you were first approached in May?

MAYO: Yes. In April or May by [Robert E.] Bob Cooke. You know, Bob Cooke is head of Pediatrics at Johns Hopkins. He said that he had been asked to ascertain whether or not I'd be interested in joining the Panel. And I said of course I would. When I said to Mike Feldman that I was not an expert in mental retardation and that he should know that, he said he did know it. In fact, they knew a lot about me. He said that the President was particularly anxious to find a person who had had experience in working with people in different professions and disciplines, and that he understood that there were differences of opinion as to a proper approach to mental retardation among the psychologists, the educational people, the social and physical scientists, and others, and that he felt someone who'd had experience in dealing with people from different professions in a committee setting would be the best choice for chairman. So it was on this basis that the President was asking me to do this. I had had experience in dealing with people in different professions because in the Association for the Aid of Crippled Children, we were providing funds for research in the social and natural sciences in several different countries. So I had a certain awareness of the problem of mental retardation and the beginnings, at least, of some sophistication about it. But during the next few months, of course, I learned a great deal by working with the experts in the field.

STEWART: I think one of the things that should be done as much as possible in these interviews is to give a picture of the situation in January 1961. Now this, of course, involves asking people if they recall any specific criticisms of the role of the federal government in this whole area in the period before that. Is there anything from your work that you recall that stands out in your mind as far as criticisms of what the federal government was doing? Was it simply a matter of not doing enough or did you

feel their efforts were being channeled in the wrong direction?

MAYO: Well, I simply felt the federal government was not doing enough in this field. I welcomed the entrance of the White House, as it were, into this whole area. And I heard no criticisms after the President entered this field at all, in fact, nothing but commendation. This is a very interesting question because I think before the President designated this problem as one of great importance to the American people, it was not so much that people were critical of the government for not going into this field, it was that people in general were not sufficiently conscious of the problem. It was a big arid area in federal attention and, to a large extent, still is insofar as the attention of a large number of voluntary agencies are concerned. Now the American Association for Mental Deficiency had been in the field for some twenty-five years, and the National Association for Retarded Children for about ten--the latter being a parent organization, as you know, an organization made up largely of parents, though not exclusively. There was a void, or a lack, of federal leadership here.

I remember when the president appeared after our first meeting, I said to him, "It's interesting to us that whereas Mr. [Dwight D.] Eisenhower became very much interested in heart and cancer and did a lot for those areas, and of course before him President Franklin Roosevelt was deeply interested in polio, you apparently are thinking that mental retardation can be your contribution to the fields of education and health and social welfare, et cetera." And he said, "Exactly, exactly." Then I said to him, also, "You believe, I think, Mr. President, in the power of an idea whose time has arrived." He just looked at me with that infectious grin as if to say, "That's right." That was in the Rose Garden in October 17, 1961, when we were commissioned.

STEWART: When do you recall you found out that there was to be this big study?

MAYO: I think it was early in the spring of 1961.

STEWART: Were you at all involved in the decision to set it up?

MAYO: I was not involved in the decision to set it up, nor was I involved at all in the selection of people to serve on it. The only recommendation I made to the President, through his sister Mrs. [Eunice Kennedy] Shriver, who of course was a prime mover in this whole program, was to suggest that it would be desirable, from every point of view, if we had more than one or two competent and knowledgeable people of the Catholic faith. Perhaps the President was hesitant to move on this because of criticism that might be leveled at him from the point of view of appointing someone from his own faith. We did suggest the name of an outstanding educator, Father Elmer Behrmann from St. Louis, who was invited then to join the Panel. The President was pleased to appoint him, and he accepted and made an outstanding contribution. The President, though, was adamant when it came to adding people when the announcement had finally been made of the membership of the Panel. And I'm telling you, no one who has not worked in a public job of this kind or carried an assignment like this, no one who has not had that experience can possibly appreciate what it meant to have the President adamant on that, because pressures came from all sides.

STEWART: There were, for example, no labor people or representatives of the trade unions or the union movement. Was this a question, or a problem?

MAYO: That's right. We pointed this out. I pointed it out, and I'm sure others did, to the President, too. And I think he took the view that he was not going to bend over backwards to see that necessarily every segment of the American people was represented. Now one way that we devised to show people in the country that, while we thoroughly supported the President's position and his right to appoint a Panel according to his decision and his own ideas, we did make it clear to the American people, particularly those interested in mental retardation, that we wanted the advice and consultation of other people. And so

when we set up our task forces, we added to the task forces people who were not on the panel. This was with the full knowledge of the President, and he approved it. We did not ask him to approve the people we added, and he didn't want that.

I was asked to handle a great deal of the correspondence that came to the White House on matters concerning the Panel. I'm sure I didn't handle all of it, but I handled a great deal of it. And I received letters from political friends of the President, people of his faith, people who had known his family, people who referred in their correspondence to long associations with the, quote, Kennedy family, unquote, asking to have someone put on the Panel. Many of these letters came to me, and I was not asked to send a copy of my reply to the White House. The President said, in effect, I want this Panel to do an outstanding job on a tough question, and I'm not going to be swayed by political considerations or even considerations of friendship.

But in addition to adding people to the task forces, on at least two occasions during the life of the Panel, we brought in as many as thirty or fifty people from the field to spend two days going over problems that we were wrestling with and getting their advice. Mostly these were veterans in the field who felt a real involvement and identification, and in recommending this to Mrs. Shriver, I said, "The President has made many friends by the appointment of this Panel, and properly so, because it's in a good and sound cause; but I don't want a number of people in the country who are knowledgeable in this field to feel left out and I don't want them to feel that they are not being consulted."

Well, at first Mrs. Shriver, who always felt that we had a major mission to perform and that nothing should deter us from this task, took the view that perhaps this was not necessary. I believe that at first she regarded it as a gesture and hence a waste of time. But when she saw the idea in its full implications, she went for it a hundred per cent.

At the end of the first day, she said to me, "I think we ought to take these people over to the White House to meet the President." Of course, I was delighted because that made the trip and it cemented everything I had in mind. So we took them over to tour the White House under Mrs. Shriver's tutelage, and presently when we came to the Green Room, she whispered to me, "I'm going up and see if I can get the President to come down, and when he does, you must be prepared to introduce these fifty people." [Laughter] It wasn't the first time I'd done this either. So I said, "Very well, that would be fine if you can get him." So in a few moments she came back bringing him literally by the hand. There was a very close relationship between Mrs. Shriver and her brother. She came down and said to the President, "This is Mr. Mayo, whom you've met before, and I've asked him to introduce these people." Of course, I didn't know the fifty people by name, but I enlisted George Tarjan, a colleague, who is knowledgeable in this field, a "pro" and who was, I'm glad to say, vice chairman of the Panel and a very great help to me, he stood behind me and whispered the names and I called them off, which caused the President to say, "I don't know what you'd do without George Tarjan and my sister." [Laughter] And I said, "I know what I would do. I would go back to my farm in Connecticut." Well, in addition to that, Mr. and Mrs. Shriver invited the whole crowd out to their place for a buffet supper that night. This indicates the way the Panel reached out--and I'm sure the President was very conscious of this and glad to have us do it--to get advice and also to make friends because when the recommendations went out, we wanted as many receptive people in the country as possible.

STEWART: Yes, people who had been involved in some way.

MAYO: Right. And we encouraged them to write us. Frequently we sent out a part of a chapter that we were writing to a number of key people in the field. Frequently we brought people in on assignment, with compensation, to spend two or three days going over a chapter we'd written, criticizing it, helping us to document it, etc. So in this way, we involved many people.

STEWART: Did you have any reservations or did you attach any kind of conditions to your taking the job initially?

MAYO: I think you might say that I did. I felt when Mr. Feldman called me that, I think it was August morning, that when one had that kind of direct request from the President, one did not say, "I will think this over and let you know." One should say, "Yes." I did say yes, but I said, "Mr. Feldman, I must say, in all candor, that I must have assurance from you that we'll have the help, the manpower, and the budget that we really need to do the job." And I said, "I'm saying this because sometimes, I know, in a government assignment these things are meant to be furnished but aren't." And he said, "Anything that is in the power of the United States government to give, you can have." There were some problems on getting off the ground, which didn't surprise me because I'd been through this kind of thing before. In fact, I remarked to Mr. Feldman at the end of my second week, that it seemed quite simple, when the President made a public statement, to understand why he would receive five thousand letters, most of which we were supposed to answer. But I said, "It is easier for the President to receive five thousand letters than it is for us, at this point, to get secretaries to answer them." And we did have to go through a period of some difficulty in getting the office set up and equipped. It's a big government. It took us a little time to find the quarters within the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare that were possible for us. They weren't at all luxurious, but we wanted them reasonably convenient, and we did need secretarial and clerical help. These were a little time in coming, but we worked it out.

STEWART: What did you envision at the start of this thing, when you took the appointment, to be the major difficulty of the Panel, of the whole effort? Let me go back even a little more. When you took the job, were you completely aware of what was expected, of what the Panel was supposed to be doing?

MAYO: No. I was not, and I didn't expect to have that all clarified. I assumed, as I have assumed all my professional life, that if this job had been easy, it would have been done long ago. No, I wasn't sure, and there is one important factor here that I should bring out. I was trying to divest myself temporarily of my responsibilities at the Association for the Aid of Crippled Children and to take on the Panel. Mr. Feldman was impatient because, as one of the best staffmen the President had, he never let up, he never let up, he pressed all the time to get reports in and jobs done, and I respected him for it. He was never nasty about it; he was never unfair about it. But you knew when he called you on the phone that he was speaking for the President of the United States; he didn't overemphasize it, but it was there.

So one thing I found out in the first week was that I could not merely act as chairman and appoint a full-time executive. I came to the conclusion that I had to be both chairman and executive. This decision didn't come easily because I knew that if I did handle both assignments, it would be a full-time job. There was a great deal of a pressure and a sense of urgency, not so much on the part of the President himself, but on the part of his aides and of Mrs. Shriver. And this made it important to have someone on the job every day to work with members of the President's staff and Mrs. Shriver, who was appointed consultant to the Panel, and to have someone to keep things moving and to get things organized.

Now here's what happened really. We had the first meeting of the panel on the morning of October 17, 1961. We met all morning in the Fish Room, and we then went to the Rose Garden at noontime to meet the President where he asked me to summarize what went on in the morning. Here I was standing before TV cameras and radio summarizing the morning meeting for the President of the United States. I swallowed twice and went at it. I introduced members of the panel to him, at Mrs. Shriver's request, and then he asked a number of very pertinent questions about what we proposed to do. Because I had a board meeting of my own that day, I had to leave before the afternoon session was over. But the afternoon session was followed by a tea in the White House, and at that tea Mrs. Shriver and some members of the Panel were asking right then and there, "But what is the next step as

of tomorrow?"

Therefore, when I came on full time a little less than a month later, about the tenth of November or so, I flew out to California to talk to Dr. George Tarjan, the vice chairman, who is a veteran in this field. When I walked in his office that Friday morning, I said to him, "George, the first job we have to do, and we must do it at once, is to appoint an executive or director and get him on the job full time." And George looked at me and said, "He's already appointed." And I said, "What do you mean?" And he said, "You've got to do it." Well, it took George Tarjan almost the entire morning to convince me of it. I knew it would mean a leave of absence from my own organization (The Association for the Aid of Crippled Children--research foundation with New York City headquarters). That didn't disturb me, but I was not prepared to give a whole year, full time, at that time. When I got home, I learned that Mrs. Shriver, feeling the urgency equally, had talked with some people in different parts of the country about the possibility of their coming on full time, so I just sat down at the telephone when I got back from California and called Mrs. Shriver and said, "Mrs. Shriver, I think that I have to act as executive as well as director." And she said, "Excellent." She said, "Let Mike Feldman know, and if he agrees, why that's that." I said, "Well, I think the panel ought also to agree but I can be acting director until the Panel meets next time." And when I called Mike, he was equally favorable and said, "By all means do it."

Well, I want to say for my board, that while there were one or two members perhaps a little reluctant at the outset to my being away a year on such short notice, they came through handsomely. They paid my salary throughout my entire stay. They gave me a drawing account that I could use when government funds were not available or were difficult to get. They went the whole way, and that, I think, is a fine example of the voluntary agency and the government agency working hand in hand. There couldn't have been a better cooperation. The board gave me a full year and offered to give me more if I was needed, but I didn't need more than that. So that that was one of the first things I learned; that this was going to be a full-time job.

I didn't foresee precisely how it would shape up, but I had some ideas with regard to the breakdown of the committee into subcommittees or task forces. And George Tarjan and I out in California, on the visit I've just described, outlined three different ways to cut the pie in terms of major problems or areas and so on. What we came down to was a number of task forces: one on research in the natural or physical sciences, and another on research in the social sciences. The fact that we saw the necessity of having two panels rather than one on research is indicative of where the field stood at that time, because not all of the natural scientists interested in mental retardation were talking to the social scientists and vice versa. This shaped up to be one of the real problems we had to deal with right up till the time we delivered the report to the President. (I'll comment on this further). We recognized nine major divisions and we had task forces dealing with each of them; i.e., research and manpower; prevention (including biomedical and environmental phases), clinical and social services, education, vocational rehabilitation and training; residential care, the law and the mentally retarded; public awareness; and organization of services, including planning and coordination. Finally, we had an informal steering committee made up of the chairmen of the various task forces. Those were the groupings.

STEWART: Well, that was the final breakdown, At first the whole Panel was divided into two groups for a period, one on service and one on research.

MAYO: That's right, for a period until we determined how we wanted to operate.

STEWART: It was between research and services.

MAYO: That's right. You are correct. And then we decided on the final breakdown. There was a very interesting contrast between the first meeting of this Panel and the second. I think it's worth repeating because this is so typically American that it's amusing and heartwarming, really. The first meeting, as I said before, was in the White House on October 17th, and the red carpet was out. There was no question about it. We

were guests of the President; we were met by the President. We were treated as honored guests rather than the servants of the people and everything was red carpet and plush. The second meeting of the Panel, which took place in December, was in the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, and instead of coming into the White House with announcements and with radio and television personnel around and so on, the chairman and director, Leonard Mayo, came to the meeting at 8 o'clock, took off his coat, rolled up his sleeves, and moved chairs and tables to get ready for the committee members. And I said to the Panel, "If that isn't typically American, I don't know what is." You get the red carpet one week and the next week you're wielding a broom. This is exactly the way it should be, but it was really amusing.

STEWART: Do you recall after that first meeting whether your feeling was one of optimism or pessimism or . . .

MAYO: After the first meeting?

STEWART: Yes.

MAYO: Oh, I was very optimistic after the first meeting for two reasons. First because I had had a chance for the first time to meet the people whom the President had appointed. I knew some of them previously, but about a third of them I did not know previously. And I found them people of such distinction and competence that I knew at once that the President meant business when he appointed them. And the absolute absence of anything remotely resembling a political consideration in the appointment of these people was very reassuring. My second basis for optimism was in the suggestions made as to procedure and content that first morning. And third, meeting the President, which, I must say, was the greatest experience for all of us, of course.

By the way, I don't know any member of this panel who doesn't say today that serving on that Panel was the greatest experience in his life, both professionally and personally. Because this man had charisma; he had charm. When I saw him coming out of his office into the Rose Garden, tall and handsome and sunburned from Cape Cod. . . . He was a handsome man and you think, "Well here's a man I want to work for." You just naturally felt that way. I was very much impressed by his personal interest. When he said to me, for example, just before we left for lunch and returned to his office, "What do we have to learn from other countries," I said, "A lot." And he said, "What countries, for example?" And I said, "The Scandinavian countries, England, Holland." He said, "What about Russia?" And I said, "Yes, I think a lot to learn from Russia, in research and also in education." And he said, "Don't you think we ought to send missions to some of these countries?" And I said, "I think it would be great." He said, "Do it." And, I said to myself here is a man of no small vision, who really sees mental retardation in its global context and who really wants to reach out and do something that is going to be substantial and far reaching. So I came away very much thrilled.

The combination of the President and Mrs. Shriver was really great for several reasons, because the President had no knowledge of the particulars or specifics in this field, but he had the vision, and Mrs. Shriver had some of the acquaintance with the nitty gritty, and she had some sense of how difficult it is to get from here to there and how difficult it is to get from Monday to Tuesday, let alone to Sunday. And so she kept us with our noses to the grindstone in good shape. Before we had our first meeting, I went over some ideas I had with Mrs. Shriver as to how we might proceed, and she agreed, but she said to me, as she did on many occasions, "Would you just as soon clear that with Sarge?" And I said, "I'd be delighted to talk to your husband about it." She had great confidence in his judgment, and properly so.

I remember one morning, traveling from New York to Philadelphia on business by car, I stopped early in the morning and said, "Maybe this is the time to get Mr. Shriver." And I put through a call from a phone booth at a gas station, and I got him at home at about quarter to 8. And I said, "Your wife wished me to clear the following things with you," and I told him about our ideas about the task force breakdown and one or two other things. And he said, "Sounds fine to me and I hope to talk to you in more detail about it later." And I said, "Well, Mr. Shriver, I want you to know one thing. I know the President has a lot of commissions and a lot of people under his jurisdiction, directly responsible to him." And I said, "The thing that I think that makes this Panel unique is that Mrs. Shriver is not only interested in it, but is certainly one of the instigators of it for she must have influenced her brother to appoint it. So she may be a consultant on paper, but," I said, "as far as I'm concerned, she's the chairman of my board." And he said, "Well, I see I don't have to draw any pictures for you." He said, "She is very close to her brother and knows how he thinks and how he reacts, and she can be invaluable." Of course, she was--absolutely invaluable. Made all the difference; it made all the difference. And I've told her so more than once. So there are some interesting observations, I think, relative to the start of the program.

STEWART: What about the whole matter of getting the whole job done in a year? This, as I understand, caused some raised eyebrows among people who said a study of this depth just couldn't be done in this period of time.

MAYO: Oh yes. Many people . . .

STEWART: Did this concern you in the beginning to any great extent?

MAYO: Well, it concerned me, but I knew something at this point that some of the people didn't know, namely--well, two things that not everybody knew. One is that a group of people who are knowledgeable and who are acting under a Presidential mandate can accomplish more in a short time than they sometimes

realize. But they have to be held to the task, and they have to be carefully scheduled, and they have to get good service so that they are not spending their time doing things beneath their skills; they have to use their time well, in other words.

The other thing I knew was that a tremendous amount of work had been done in this field but hadn't really been pulled together and looked at objectively, and that we needed, from the basis of starting from this vantage point, a lot of imagination and creative ability that I felt--and I kept telling the Panel this, that they would personally be happier if I put the pressure on for a year rather than working at a slower pace for two years. Now, of course, the way this came out, with the President's death occurring when it did, it was nothing short of miraculous that we had the report done so that the President had an opportunity to sign the bills.

STEWART: Allowing the year for the legislation.

MAYO: Yes. The President signed these two bills just a month before his death. So, you know, we had no time to spare. The President asked me the first day the Panel met how long we thought it would take. He said, "I don't want to press you, but," he said, "if you are going to have things for legislative action, then we ought to have it in time for the Congress when it meets at the beginning of '63." And I said, "I think we can do it in a year." Well, some of the Panel heard me say that, and even members of the Panel were a little doubtful here. You see, when you're in a situation as we were and have everything going for you, ride it. That's the technique.

A little later I will have some very interesting things to say about how Mrs. Shriver called me in Turkey and asked me to come back and try to solve some problems that had arisen. If I had not come back on the day that I did, we would have never gotten to the President the day we did. So it was that close.

STEWART: Did, in fact, this time have an influence on the type of report that you eventually came out with? I'm thinking, for example, if there had been two years or three years, could a more detailed, a more definitive report have been accomplished?

MAYO: Yes, I think so. I think anything of this kind improves, deepens as a result of more time, well spent, of course. I felt that whereas we had things at a pretty white heat for a year, that they would have cooled at the end one. This was my judgment and also I had more or less given our word to the President that we would do it. Now I had a feeling, as the year went on, that the President was not pressing at all. But Mike Feldman was and Mrs. Shriver was, and I was. And the fact that I had said to the Panel in its presence to the President that I thought we could do this in a year, you know, placed us all on record, as it were.

STEWART: But this was primarily because of the legislation involved.

MAYO: Because of the legislation involved, that was one very good reason. The other thing we all had in mind, I'm sure, is that a problem of this nature, of this substance, does not get not wrapped up and polished off in five years. I felt that a short, intensive, concentrated, well-focused, hard-hitting report done in a year would accomplish something that a longer term thing would not. And I think it did, because after this report, of course, came President Johnson's Committee on Mental Retardation which is still operating and was going on from where President Kennedy's Panel left off, as it were. So I think that the year served a dramatic purpose, a purpose that was accomplished in terms of bringing out something within a short period of time that was not in all respects profound but, I think, well focused and well conceived. We didn't cover everything, but we covered the major things and let it be known that we knew there were things we had not gone into thoroughly.

STEWART: Was it assumed from the start that your role and perhaps the Panel's in general would be more than just producing a report, that you would, in effect, be at least looking at ongoing government programs and making some decisions along the way as far as the programs of the federal government were concerned?

MAYO: I think that the Panel felt that it had a mandate, which was to produce this report, and that beyond that point we were not asked to do anything else, as a Panel.

STEWART: I was thinking, for example, were you at all involved in any decision surrounding the funding for mental retardation programs that went into the budget that was sent up in January '62, which would have been for fiscal '63?

MAYO: We took no direct part in either budgeting or legislation while the Panel was in operation. I say, advisedly, no direct part. But there were times when I spoke confidentially to Wilbur Cohen, who was then Assistant Secretary of HEW. And I'm sure that at points, Mrs. Shriver spoke confidentially to others, saying that while the Panel could not take official action in these things, that the way the report was developing, our opinion would be thus and so with regard to a pending bill or budget item.

Now I remember we had a press conference just before we gave the report to the President at which members of the Budget Bureau were present. I had seen statements in the paper to the effect that the Bureau of the Budget was favorably disposed to the report and were ready to appropriate a figure of, I think it was, two to two and a half million the first year to certain aspects of our proposed program. I was asked at the press conference how much the Panel hoped would be appropriated the first year and how much I thought that the Bureau of the Budget would appropriate. Well, I said, "I don't know what the hopes and aspirations of the Panel are because we haven't discussed dollars in any detail." I said, "We have a big dollar sign on this whole report which is bigger than I think any of us know at this point." But then I named a figure which I personally hoped the Bureau of

the Budget would appropriate for the first year, and it was under the amount that I'd seen in the paper. And a member of the Bureau of the Budget, fairly high placed, called me that night at my hotel and said, "I heard your statement and thank you very much, because it doesn't put us on the spot. And I think we can do better than we had promised." But my good sense and political sense told me that if I publicly went above the figure that the Bureau of the Budget was thinking about, it would not move the Bureau one inch. But if I but presented the total need as effectively as I could that it might be moved the other way. We had problems with the Bureau of the Budget later on, which we worked through.

STEWART: I was thinking, for example, there were certain problems surrounding the establishment of the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development. Were you at all involved in this?

MAYO: Very peripherally, very peripherally. I knew about it, and I knew what was going on. I knew the interests, for example, of Dr. Cooke and Mrs. Shriver, and I knew that the President was being made aware of the need for this institute and so forth. But being so completely engrossed in both the content and the machinery and process of the panel, I just didn't involve myself in it. I knew about it also from the point of view of another hat that I was wearing at least on one side of my head while I was in Washington. And that was my position as executive director of the Association for the Aid of Crippled Children because we had made recommendations to the National Institutes of Health for some such setup as this. So I'd had a small hand in it maybe a year or two years previously. But as it really came down to the point of actually setting this up, I was not involved.

STEWART: There was a certain amount of coolness or possibly outright opposition by the AMA [American Medical Association] to the setting up of the President's Panel. I've seen the New York Times accounts which are not too clear because there was some opposition, and then it was later toned down.

MAYO: That's right. We had better support from the Wall Street Journal than we had from the AMA, strangely enough. Well, that's a long story, that AMA attitude, and it also goes back to the assumption of many people, both professional and lay people, a mistaken notion, that mental retardation is largely or exclusively a medical problem, or largely or exclusively a psychiatric problem, which, of course, it's not. It is greatly involved with education as well as with medical care, medical problems. But it has all kinds of implications other than medical--psychological and, of course, psychiatric, too. But the complex nature of mental retardation, a matter on which the American Association on Mental Deficiency had been working for some years and which the NARC took up, was also helpfully clarified by the President's Panel.

The complex nature of it and its possible origins and causes which, of course, are many--I think the AMA felt perhaps it should have been, I'm not sure of this, but I thought maybe they felt they should have been, you know, designated to do this job. The fact that it's not just a medical problem, I think, is one reason the AMA was not asked. The AMA has not always been noted for its frontier activities; I think I'm guilty of an understatement. But they did cooperate as the program developed. And we had a good number of members of the AMA on our task force, supplementary people on our task force. And about two years after the Panel presented its report, through the efforts of such people as George Tarjan, who is an M.D. and a psychiatrist, and Dr. Cooke, who is a pediatrician, and Dr. Julius Richmond, who was not on the Panel but was very active as a consultant to us, through their efforts, the AMA set up a three day conference in Chicago on the role of the physician in the treatment of mental retardation. And I felt they came a long way, a long way. They did a booklet on the role of the physician who first sees a retarded child and his role in helping to diagnose the condition and helping to serve the retarded child in his medical needs as any child is

served by a pediatrician. So I never felt any overt opposition from them at all. I think the word you use, "coolness," was probably a better term. But they came through, I thought, very well. I think they could probably do more now than they are doing, especially when it comes to involving medical students and using their influence to see to it that medical students have an opportunity to see mentally retarded people and have an opportunity to learn something about mental retardation, along with pediatrics and internal medicine, as they study community medicine and other phases. So there is a lot more to be done.

STEWART: Were there any other groups whose cooperation wasn't as good as you might have expected?

MAYO: No, I can't think of any. We had excellent, almost daily, cooperation from the AAMD, American Association of Mental Deficiency, and the National Association for Retarded Children. They were constant resources for us, both in terms of their data and their people, their members and their officers and staff. Gunner Dyleward, who was then executive director of the National Association for Retarded Children, was a constant consultant both officially and unofficially, and was very close to us throughout, very close and extremely helpful.

STEWART: You mentioned a little while ago that there were no significant problems as far as budget and office space and so forth were concerned. What about the organization of the staff of the Panel. Did, in fact, the staff contribute more or less than you had originally anticipated as far as putting together the final report was concerned?

MAYO: Oh, I think they contributed a great deal. And I think that their role was about as I had envisaged it. We had very able people, not many, but very good people. The man I appointed as my assistant was Rick Heber, who was then on loan from the University of Wisconsin and who is back at Wisconsin University now. He was a very young man. I think he was a full professor when he was in his very early thirties in special education at the University of Wisconsin. He had done some research in this field, and he has done a great deal since. He was able

and brilliant and very helpful in every possible way, very helpful. There were other staff who were, in their own capacity, equally helpful. We didn't change staff. We added one or two. We had the full-time assistance at the start of Bertram Brown, who is now with the National Institutes of Health in a high post there.

STEWART: He was there the full time?

MAYO: He was there full time before I came. In fact, he and Rick Heber were really the two main staff members on the job when I came. And it was a question at one time as to whether one or the other would be appointed director. And I said to Mrs. Shriver when we first met I wasn't ready to make a choice between the two. I thought that each in his own way was extraordinarily competent, and I thought whereas they were both about the same ages that I was not able to determine or make a choice. And what happened was that I became director, as I have explained, and Rick Heber became the assistant, and Bertram Brown felt-- there was no difficulty about this at all--he made a choice and had an opportunity to go back to the National Institutes of Health, from which organization he was on loan. But again, he kept very close to us, and we saw a great deal of him throughout the work of the Panel. He was very helpful.

STEWART: You mentioned a little while ago the international program. I'd like to follow this right through. You said, I believe, that the initial impetus for this came directly from the President. Was what eventually took place commensurate with what you had originally planned? Did most of your anticipations as far as the international program come to fruition?

MAYO: Yes, yes. It took a little longer than I had expected. Particularly, negotiations with Russia were very long and drawn out, and I think that our mission to Russia was probably not as successful, in some ways, as the missions to other countries because of their lack of receptivity there. I think they were a little miffed at something, some slight, I guess, or something they felt, I'm sure erroneously, had come from us. I don't mean from the President's Panel, but from our government. The President

originally suggested at our first meeting that we send a mission to Russia, and I immediately acquiesced to that. And in the afternoon session of the Panel, I stated that this was a suggestion of the President which I hoped we would support, of course, and so forth. And a member of the Panel made the suggestion that she thought the President would be very pleased and, indeed, find it highly advantageous if we sent missions to some countries in addition to Russia, both for political and scientific reasons. And I responded that Mrs. Shriver did, that she was sure that was the case. So very early in the life of the Panel, we drew up the general outline of the missions: one to Russia, one to Denmark and Sweden, and one to Holland and England. And again we selected people who were not on the Panel but who were experts in various aspects of the field and included them in these missions. So the missions were made up 50 per cent or less of members of the Panel. I think the panel that went to Holland and England got a lot of help and came back with a great deal of substance. We did special reports on these. And the panel that went to the Scandinavian countries had a very profitable time.

In Russia they were not able to see all that they wanted to see. And my remark to the President months earlier that I felt that Russia had something to offer us, to teach us, in the matter of research and so on turned out really not to be an accurate estimation of the real situation. They had something to teach us in terms of sensory training, educating the profoundly retarded child. But, interestingly enough, in research they were not ahead of us and really behind us in most aspects. One of the people who went on the mission, in fact the man in charge of the Russian mission, was Dr. Seymour Kety, head of the Department of Psychiatry at Johns Hopkins. He was on our Panel and later went back to NIH where he had been previously. Well, Dr. Kety did some distinguished research some years ago, and he's still doing it, but he made a great contribution years ago in problems relating to circulation of blood in the brain. And when our people visited some of the research laboratories in Russia, the scientists explained very proudly that they were doing some work "According to Kety." Here Kety stood, and they realized at first he was the same man.

In space research and in other aspects of the technical life of the country, they had the "go" sign, and they were putting all their money and their personnel there. But in psychological or behavioral research, they were behind. And some of the really great men in Russia knew it and said so to our men privately. See, our mission was invited, for example, to dinner at our embassy, and the heads of some of the well known research institutes of Russia and some of the best known research men were invited. None of them came, which was a great disappointment. And it was a disappointment to the Russians themselves who were involved. They were ordered, obviously, not to come, and why, we don't know to this day.

I remember, I was in the White House on November 15th or 16th, just about the time I came on the job full time, when the President received the poster girls for the NARC financial campaign. And when he saw me in the Cabinet Room where the television and the radio were set up, he said, "What about our missions to other countries?" That was the thing he said to me last when I had seen him for the first time. And I said, "Well, we're getting things underway. We've appointed most of the people to go, but we are having problems in getting clearance with Russia." And he said, "What can I do about it?" And I said, "Well, your office and the State Department are working on it." He said, "Let me know if there's anything I can do." We finally got squared away with Russia, but in a very small way it's reminiscent of what's going on now with Hanoi in picking a place to meet, etc. Selecting a place is not the real problem, of course; it's their method and their delaying technique, extending and extenuating and making things difficult. We had that kind of problem in working with Russia, but the scientists whom our people met personally were very cordial and helpful. It's just that our people couldn't get to see all they wanted to see. But I think that in education, as I said, in sensory training, rehabilitation or habilitation work with the profoundly retarded, they did have and do have a lot to teach us.

STEWART: There was also discussion, I believe, of long range programs, international programs, for the exchange of people and the exchange of information. Did these materialize as much as . . .

HAZO: On the exchange of personnel, they did not materialize to any extent. It was a matter of time as well as of money. He did bring over Dr. [Osamu] Tan from Japan. And he landed at Friendship Airport on a famous day in our historic relation with Japan, namely December 7. And this fact was not lost on him, a gentleman of some years, of great experience and wisdom, and a fine sense of humor. And he indicated to us that he realized what day it was.

I've seen him since, by the way. I saw him two years ago this month in his own institution in Japan. And he entertained me with some of the people in Japan who are interested in mental retardation, some of the professional people. A man of great stature, of really great stature, and his work with education of the profoundly retarded is really outstanding in the world.

Now he came over and spent time with us. It was a matter of--we were just beginning to roll and language difficulty was the problem because he could not speak English well, and of course we had trouble with getting good Japanese interpretation. We got a number of very good ideas from him, particularly with regard to the seriously retarded. Then we did something for him in Japan. We arranged--Rick Heber arranged it personally--a trip for him around the country to some of the leading cities and universities where mental retardation programs were being and where there were good programs. And this is something he has never forgotten.

This relationship has continued, Mr. Stewart, because when I was there two years ago, I asked him if he had any papers on his research or on his experiments in sensory training or on his program in the institution which we could translate for this country. He said that he did have some material and would send it to me. I was just about to retire from the Association for the Aid of Crippled Children. But I knew their publication program well enough to know that we probably could get it published; translated and published. Well, I did not receive material from him until about a year ago. But at that time I was able to work through President Johnson's Committee on Mental Retardation and some other departments of our government. And we received this material and got it translated and published. And it's very good. So that this is a contribution which is continuing really. There's a tremendous amount of

goodwill value in this kind of thing because getting a paper published in another language for Dr. Kan was a matter of very great importance, and it didn't cost us all that much. This is a very cheap way to get good public relations and international relations and accomplish some scientific work at the same time.

There's a very interesting little sidelight on the selection of people to go on these missions, two sidelights of interest. When we were picking the people to go and deciding how the whole mission program should be set up, Mrs. Shriver suggested that we might have lunch with Mr. Shriver and get his opinions and ideas and go over these plans with him, which we did. And with his creative mind--understand, I am a great admirer of Mr. Shriver's--he said, "You know, I think I see a way we can capitalize on this." He said, "Now we have a lot of people on these missions who are not members of the Panel." "How about asking the governors of the states if they will officially designate our selections as their appointees. Then the governor will, to that extent, obligate himself at least to listen to these people when they come back. And in this way we have the support of the governors and their involvement of the governors."

It was an excellent idea. So I personally called the offices of the governors. Mrs. Shriver authorized me to say that the White House was interested in this and hoped that they would cooperate. Well, I made out very well with it really, except in New York State; Mr. [Nelson A.] Rockefeller indicated to me that he thought he ought to appoint his own delegate. I know Mr. Rockefeller, too, and I'm sure he was sympathetic to the general idea. I have to say that the person from New York State who was a member of the Panel, and was going on the trip, was a fine person and thoroughly competent but was hardly one whom the Governor would select as a delegate. So I understood that. But this was a delicate matter because we really couldn't say to the Governor, "If you don't like the delegate, appoint someone else," because these people had already been appointed. But in 95 per cent of the cases it worked very well.

The other sidelight is this. When we lined up these three missions and the people to go, I said to Mrs. Shriver, "I'm not sure how the President feels, whether he thinks this is too much, too many, not enough, whether we have too many people involved." I said, "I'd hate to have some Congressman see this in the paper and say, 'Who authorized these forty people to go to other countries at our expense?' etc." So I said, "I'd surely like to have the President know exactly what we've done." So Mrs. Shriver said, "I agree. I think we should." That was on a Friday night. Mrs. Shriver came in the office Tuesday morning and said, "Well, I had a swim with the President last night. It's okay, you can go right ahead." I thought to myself, that's about as quick a way of getting to the top as I've ever known. So the missions went in April, and at the same time, when they were away, I was conducting public hearings in several key cities in the country. So we used April for the missions and for the hearings.

STEWART: There was no criticism of the trips were there?

MAYO: No. None that I heard. I received little tips every once in awhile from some of my friends who knew Senators and Congressmen on the Hill that it might be a good time for me to pick up the telephone and call some of them and say, "Can I have breakfast or lunch with you some day and tell you what the President's Panel is doing?" I appreciated those tips, and I religiously followed them up and always with good results.

I remember the morning, it was probably in February, I had breakfast with John Fogarty, who, of course, is a great champion of the mentally retarded. I said, "I'd like to tell you what's going on." He said, "Yes, I'd like to know." As a matter of fact, he thought I should have come to him earlier. I think he was probably right. But anyway, I said, "Well, here's what we're doing." And I outlined some of the major findings in each of the panels. This is just an example of how I learned something about politics that year. I'd learned a great deal. So I told him what some of our major recommendations were and asked for his criticisms and suggestions. He said, "Well, thanks for reporting to me. I appreciate it." He said, "I'm not about

to comment now. You know, I have to wait and see how these things come out." He said, "If I have any suggestions to make to you, I'll feel free to make them. But," he said, "I'm not about to give or withhold approval at this point." This was a cue to me. I shouldn't have asked him, or I could have put it somewhat differently.

But anyway, he took me to task twice, and vigorously. The first time, when I was talking about how much money I thought our program would require, he said, "For heavens sake, will you forget about money. Let me worry about money. You come up with the recommendations, the things this country should do. That's all you have to do. And stop worrying about money." And the other time was when, as we got to the end of the Panel's work, he thought it was going to be incomplete and that we needed another year. He really did, before he saw the whole report. He took me to task very vigorously on that. But I said to him--I was a little surprised, but I said to him, "Well now, John, wait till you see the whole report and what provisions we made or suggested for an ongoing activity for follow up." And he said, "I will, I will." The next time I saw him was at a hearing where he was presiding at a subcommittee on appropriations in the House where I appeared for the National--the new Institute of Child Health and Human Development. And there before the subcommittee, he gave me a wonderful buildup. It was really terrific, because he could do that as well as he could criticize you, you know. Which was by way of saying, you know, "I do consider it a godd job" and so forth.

STEWART: You mentioned the matter of money. I'm a little confused in talking to different people as to just how much discussion there had been as to whether to include some dollar figures on any of the programs that would be recommended.

MAYO: As a result of the recommendations?

STEWART: Yes.

MAYO: We had some private estimates, yes. And really because they weren't formalized, because I didn't do a great deal of the arithmetic, I can't cite the figures now. They probably are in my files at home. They may be. But we did some rough arithmetic in regard to, for example, such a recommendation as providing every state with some planning funds, which, of course, appeared in the first bill. We did, of course, some rough arithmetic on that to determine whether we were talking about something possible and operable or not. But we really did not have a dollar sign on these programs officially, at all. Not at all. And there were various estimates of what they would cost, and the Budget Bureau did some of that. I handed in the report around the 9th of September, and then I had to go to Turkey to preside at meetings there. And during the time I was away, I took a short vacation in Greece before I went to Turkey. While I was away, the Bureau of the Budget received a copy of the report and started to go over it from the point of view of other things that they knew were on the President's drawing board and from the point of view of dollars. And so they made some suggestions, of course, of changes.

STEWART: Of changes that should be made in the final report.

MAYO: Right. And some we felt they should not have made. So I came back from. . . . In fact, while I was in Turkey, I got a letter from a member of the staff who said that the Bureau of the Budget had called him in to get his comments on some of our recommendations. He felt that they were going to change some of them, and he felt they didn't have the right to and that I should know about it. Well, I couldn't come home at that time, but I wrote to George Tarjan about it. And he already knew.

Then when I was still in Turkey--this was in September-- Mrs. Shriver got through to me on the phone and said that disagreement had again broken out between the research panel on biological sciences and that on the behavioral or social sciences; and that she felt that whereas I had known so well the background, that if possible I should come home and see if I could work it out; that she and George Tarjan, while they were aware of the problem, felt they didn't want to walk into it if I could possibly see my way clear to return within a reasonable time. This was at a banquet of the organization of which I was president. And I was called out and found a phone in the bar, and there I got Mrs. Shriver, who had been trying to get me for two days. She told me these things, and she said, "I also understand that the Bureau of the Budget has some suggestions too. I said, "I know that through correspondence." Now she said, "I don't want you to feel pressed to return. But I think if you can't come now, we'll postpone our appointment with the President to give him the report." This gave me cold chills even though I didn't know what was coming, but I knew that to postpone an appointment with the President was not desirable. And she said, "I'll leave it to you because we can postpone it. If you can come home now, fine, and we can go ahead with the appointment. It would be great. But if not, it's all right. What do you think?" I said, "I think I'll come home." And she said, "When?" And I said, "Tomorrow." One of those flashes of intuition that a person gets when one knows instantly what one ought to do.

I was supposed to preside at a plenary session of this international organization the next morning, but I quickly made plane reservations. My wife was with me. We flew straight to New York, hired a car, and drove home to Connecticut. I got three hours sleep, changed my clothes, and flew to Washington. And there I worked for the next three days in calling together the people who were in the disagreement on the two panels, and we worked out the differences. That wasn't too much of a task because by that time they were thoroughly imbued with the necessity for doing it themselves. And I didn't have to do very much.

STEWART: What essentially was the problem? I know I can get a lot of this from people who were involved in it, but I'd like to see how you saw the problem from your perspective?

MAYO: Essentially this, without going into the actual nitty gritty details. Some of the people in the biological sciences panel felt that some of the recommendations of the social sciences were ill-founded scientifically and had not been thoroughly documented. And they did not want to be a party to recommendations under the rubric of science which they felt would not measure up. Now, in reverse, some of the people in the social science panel felt that some of the people in the panel on biological sciences had less than adequate appreciation of the social aspects of mental retardation and were a little rigid and did not understand the importance of some of the social science recommendations and their content.

So we had to work out some compromises. In this process Lloyd Dunn of Peabody College in Nashville, who was on the Panel, and George Tarjan and Seymour Kety, who was, of course, a psychiatrist and a biological scientist--their help was extraordinarily good. And some of the social scientists on the Panel, too, came through at the end in very good fashion, compromising, admitting each other's strengths and weaknesses, and trying to come to a basic conclusion that would be helpful. I said, at one point, "You know, there's nothing wrong with a minority report." Of course, I think when you're giving a report to the President, it's highly desirable to have a unanimous report, but there's no sin about having a minority report, and particularly in a scientific area. Anyway we worked out the differences.

Later in the month, and in fact, only about a week before we were scheduled to meet with the President, Mike Feldman called me and Mrs. Shriver to the White House on a warm September afternoon which I shall never forget. And we sat down over in the Executive Offices in a little meeting room next to Mike Feldman's office. We sat down with two representatives of the Bureau of the Budget and with a man from NIH--it was Bertram Brown, as a matter of fact, whom they had called in to confer with them when I was away. I felt quite strongly that the Bureau of the Budget should

not have proceeded to make its recommendations and its recommended changes without conferring with me and other members of the Panel. Even though I was abroad, I mean, they could have written me and said, "Will you return when you can? We want to talk to you."

STEWART: Let me interrupt you. Would that have been normal procedure for them to make recommendations on a study of this type?

MAYO: Or to change recommendations, which is what they did. They changed some of ours, some of the Panel's recommendations. They also made some excellent suggestions on the positive side that strengthened our recommendations. But I could not be a party to acquiescing to changes which the Panel hadn't officially approved. I could not be a party to that and said so. And finally Mr. Feldman said, "All right, as we go through this report, where the Bureau of the Budget has made suggested changes, (he said to Mrs. Shriver and me) tell us what you think the Panel can accept. And anything that you cannot accept, we'll either have to hold in abeyance or change back." So we went ahead, and we made our pitch wherever we felt it was necessary.

It finally came to the point where I said to Mr. Feldman, "I don't think we can do it this way." And Mrs. Shriver agreed. I said, "I think Mrs. Shriver and I have to spend an hour or so together going over this alone and be sure that she and I see eye to eye on what we ought to do and how we can proceed from here and what the panel will think." And Mike, being very precise, said, "Very good, an hour or an hour and a half. Just as you say." Incidentally, we started about 2 o'clock in the afternoon, and when we got through this session, it was 9 o'clock at night. We hadn't had as much as a cup of coffee or a sandwich. So we really put in some time. And the pressure was on.

So Mrs. Shriver and I went into session together, and I finally said, "Well now, you know, some of these recommendations really are strengthening our hand." And we approved them. But I said, "Others, I cannot approve. And therefore I said, "I think we've got to call our panel chairmen in just before we meet with the President and see whether they can approve these. And if so, fine. If not, why, then we will just have to say, 'Sorry, we can't go along with these. If Mike wants us to take these back to the Panel for formal discussion, we can do it.'" She agreed to that.

So Mr. Feldman called us back in again in about an hour and a half. We went over those recommendations that we felt we could approve, and there was one--this was a little bit like a play, and you had a feeling that you were playing a role in a play, you know. And at one point Mr. Feldman said, "Now what do you think of this change?" And I would say, or Mrs. Shriver would say, "We can accept it." "Fine. What do you think of this?" I said, "We cannot accept it for the following reasons." Mike would say, "Change it." And the Budget men would say, "But Mr. Feldman." He'd say, "Change it." And they changed it. Mike was in command. Somebody had to be. So we finished that afternoon, and Mrs. Shriver said to me at the end of the afternoon, or the evening, "Well, you ought to be happy. You know, you've been part of a historic study and something that I think is going to make a great impact in the nation." And I said, "Well, I'm not content for we're not out of the woods yet, but I think we will be."

Well, anyway to make this long story short--and the end of it I think is intensely interesting--we did get the panel chairmen in the day before we were to meet with the President. This was on the 15th. We gave him the report on the 16th, which was one day under a year of the time he had commissioned us. I put each chairman in a separate room together--with the recommendations pertaining to his Panel and any suggestions that the Budget Bureau had to make before him--with a member of our staff. This was the middle of the afternoon. And I supplied them with appropriate refreshments for the afternoon. And I said, "We have to meet for dinner, and there we have to make decisions." They were splendid. They came through like soldiers. They came up

with some things they could not accept but most of the changes they could accept. We met for dinner with Mr. Feldman. After we had dinner, discussion opened up, and I asked each panel chairman to respond to the changes noted in his report. And they did, very honestly and openly: "There's some of these we simply can't accept."

Well, it was now about 10 o'clock, and Mr. Feldman had had a long day and had to leave for another appointment, and he said, "Well, we can always postpone the appointment with the President if you can't get agreement tonight." Whereupon George Tarjan spoke up and said, "For heaven's sake, let's not put off the appointment with the President." Then George and I and another member of the Panel, Mrs. [Elizabeth] Boggs, I believe, put our heads together briefly. We came up with a plan which we presented to Mike, and he approved it, namely that we would meet the next morning in the White House, early, that I would place every task force in a different corner with the chairmen who had been through the process this afternoon and evening. If they could get the approval, even the conditional approval, of the Panel members, of the task force members, we could go ahead. Then I said to Mike, "The next move is up to you. If you are willing to give me the responsibility of working out any differences that then exist with the Bureau of the Budget and we can get general approval of the report with that understanding, we can present the report to the President with virtual approval." Mike saw it like that, and he said, "I approve it." And he said, "Of course, I have to ask these people if they are willing to give you that authority." And they were.

The next morning when we met, I explained to the assembled Panel precisely what had happened, pulling no punches, told them of the plan to meet with their panel chairman, etc. They each met for about twenty minutes. During that time I asked Judge Bazelon to frame a resolution approving the report with the conditions I had mentioned, so that we could present it to the President. I called the Panel back out of their task force meetings around the table at twenty-five minutes after 10. The President was due at 10:30. The resolution was presented and approved and the President walked in at 10:35. [Laughter]

STEWART: Did he ever know what had gone on?

MAYO: I don't know that he ever did. I don't know, but the first question he asked when he came in, after greeting us was, "Mr. Mayo, what have we learned from other countries?" He had never forgotten that. And it was a wonderful cue because it gave me an opportunity, instead of stiffly presenting the report myself, of saying to the chairman of each mission, "Can you tell the President in a few words what you learned in your mission?" That opened up the whole thing. And we had an informal discussion for the next half hour. The President asked such questions as, "What really is the hope of prevention? Where should the greatest effort be put?" Of course, we talked then about the ghetto, about the culturally deprived and what could be done if our slums are really cleaned up and the whole level of education lifted and so on. And he was intensely interested and asked very specific questions.

Of course, this was a memorable morning, particularly when we learned later that this was the day of the Cuban confrontation. You can see what would have happened if I had put my return from Turkey off for another week. We never would have made it in the world. And he was very appreciative that morning. He gave me the pen. He signed my copy of the report and gave me the pen which, of course, I prize. We had a very good discussion. After he left, we formally closed, and we were formally discharged at that point. Then, of course, he did appoint, as you know, Dr. Stafford Warren of California to head a follow-up program.

BEGIN SIDE II TAPE I

STEWART: Let me ask you, do you have working papers that you kept that would indicate the specific proposals that were under dispute between you people and the Bureau of the Budget?

MAYO: That's a good question. Gee, I wish I knew. The copies that they worked on during the summer which they brought? Gee, I hope they weren't destroyed.

STEWART: Possibly they would have something.

MAYO: They might have. They might have.

STEWART: The Kennedy Library has some of the files of the President's Panel. The Kennedy Library has a microfilm which I've seen, but I'm sure it's not complete, and there certainly was nothing about the specific areas that were under dispute at this time.

MAYO: I bet Mike Feldman would know whether those copies were retained because he gave the copy to the Bureau of the Budget, and they gave their copies with their own notations and marginal notes back to him. And whether they are in the White House today or in the files of the Bureau of the Budget, I wouldn't know. He would know, I think, the names of the people in the Bureau of the Budget who worked on this. I know I don't remember their last names now.

STEWART: Mike March?

MAYO: Yes. As a matter of fact, I should round out this part of the recitation or record by saying that my experience with the Bureau of the Budget in the summer in working out the differences that still existed between them and the Panel was very pleasant and productive with no tension and no real problems at all.

STEWART: You mean after this . . .

MAYO: After we presented the report to the President, it was up to me then to work out the small differences, some of them not too small, but the differences in opinion or point of view and in substantive material--the differences that still existed between the Bureau and the Panel. I had two or three sessions with them during the summer and we reached agreement very readily, very readily. We had no problem there. We were all a little tense earlier coming up to the deadline of giving the report to the President.

STEWART: What types of things were in dispute? Can you generalize about that?

MAYO: Yes, I can to some degree. I remember they disputed some of our recommendations in the area of vocational rehabilitation, things that they thought might not be productive or might conceivably be more expensive than they were--too expensive, let us say--that would not, they felt, accomplish the purpose we had in mind. And we felt, of course, that we had to take the advice of people who knew vocational rehabilitation rather than people whose main competence was in the area of finance. They were sincere about this, very sincere about it. They weren't trying to dynamite or undermine us. On the contrary. Also, of course, the thing that was a little confusing was that they got advice during the summer from some people from the National Institutes of Health not all of whom were necessarily on all fours philosophically with members of the Panel. So that to a slight degree, at least, they were seeking advice from some people with whom we had had many discussions and conferences and with whom we had some disagreements. It was a little disturbing to me to come home from Europe and find that they had not only sought the advice of these people, but even taken it, in some cases, contrary to the decisions of the Panel. My personal opinion wasn't at stake, but rather the opinion of the Panel as a whole, you see, really was at stake. But as I say, it all worked out. And I think that there was no question but what, fundamentally, we really had the backing of the Bureau of the Budget in terms of the basic purposes of the programs. You see, a lot of people don't realize--I notice when I talk about this thing, for example, to students, they'll say, "Well, what in the world does the Bureau of the Budget have to do with a report on mental retardation?" People forget that the Bureau of the Budget is an arm of the Executive branch.

STEWART: Even more so during the Kennedy Administration.

MAYO: Quite so. They have to do not only with dollars but with programs. They really do. I didn't recognize it at first myself, but I learned that there are some very good men there. There's Mike, whom you mentioned, Mike March. I think he went on a trip for the government about two years after we'd passed in our report in which he examined the welfare budgets of various countries and came back with the conviction--I remember I had lunch with him when he came back--that more money spent on the early years of childhood and on protection of pregnant women and on health, nutrition and medical care would go a long way towards saving the outpouring of money at the other end of life. I thought for a member of the Bureau of the Budget to really get that message so clearly was great. And he was a great help to us in our follow-through of our program. He was very helpful.

STEWART: Did anyone in HEW, namely in Wilbur Cohen's office, review the report before it was . . .

MAYO: Oh yes. Oh yes. Wilbur Cohen and members of his staff worked on it; the Children's Bureau people worked on it. As a matter of fact, I was just explaining this to my class this morning where we are studying the process of social change. I was explaining to them this morning, I guess with this interview with you in mind, that when the report reached the President's desk, every major federal official whose program or department had anything to do with mental retardation had a copy on his desk and had had a part in the writing of the recommendations that concerned his department. Now this took a lot of doing, but this, as I explained to the students, is process. We got a process underway which involved the appropriate people. And though what we came out with might have been at a slightly lower level at some points than we might have developed had we consulted only theoretic experts, as it was we had the support and the involvement of the people who had to carry out these recommendations.

So after the President received the report, Secretary [Anthony J.] Celebrezze sent a note out to all his department or division heads saying, "Please review this report and comment to me on your reactions to any part of it that refers to you and what you can do to implement it." Well, that was fine, but they already had it. They'd already had a part in shaping these recommendations so that we had their support. And Mr. Celebrezze was very supportive and so was Mr. [Abraham A.] Ribicoff before him. And all the way through, Wilbur Cohen supported us and helped us in every possible way.

STEWART: Can you think of any examples of areas that either of the Secretaries, other than the one you mentioned, became personally involved?

MAYO: Well, I don't know that I can say the Secretaries did, but people in the Department of Labor whom we called upon for advice and consultation. You see, the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare is involved through many of its divisions: in Social Security and maintenance, in the Children's Bureau, in Vocational Rehabilitation, of course. We talked to some people, too, in the Department of Defense. Of course, we had a lot of cooperation with people out at the National Institutes of Health. That's really a part of HEW. But let me see if there are any others. We didn't have HUD [Department of Housing and Urban Development] at that time. It seems there were others. I don't think of any now. Those were the principal ones. Yes. Oh yes, we did have some--did I mention the Department of Defense? Yes, we did have some people from both the Army, the Navy, and the Air Force. Particularly, we talked with them about families of servicemen who have retarded children. We worked on that under Dr. Staff Warren after we had finished the President's report.

STEWART: I think we are jumping around a bit, but it doesn't matter. There was one other question on the international aspects that I wanted to ask you. I'm not exactly sure what took place or what happened, but there was something relating to Senator [Hubert H.] Humphrey in the Senate international health study that he was involved in. Do you recall this?

MAYO: Well, I recall going to see the Senator during the time we were working on the report to see what he felt were important areas for us to talk about, think about, work with, etc. And he was very much interested, and said he was, in the international aspects, that is to say in exchange between us and other countries, among other countries. He also told me with great feeling about his little granddaughter, a little mongoloid granddaughter who was then quite young, for whom he has great affection. And he told me about the interest he and Mrs. Humphrey had, and of course they still have very much, in this area. My recollection of that talk was that it was partly related to our recommendations in the field of health, medical care, etc., but with special emphasis which he put on the international aspects of what we could do and what we could learn. Now previous to this, you know, Mr. Humphrey had been on a very extended world tour. And Julius Kahn of his office, whom I've known for many years, asked me for the names of some people whom he might see. So I did give some names of people in other countries whom I thought could be helpful. And he mentioned that, and he said that he had found these people helpful. This was in Sweden, in Switzerland, in Denmark, I believe Holland--people I knew who could really give some help. Of course, as a Senator, he was very active in the health field, very active. But that's all I recall. We had great support from him. He supported us in the Senate and elsewhere.

STEWART: Were there any other people in Congress? You mentioned that you had talked to John Fogarty about the proposals. Were there any other members of Congress that you talked to before the report came out?

MAYO: Yes. I remember that Mrs. Shriver talked with Congresswoman Edith Green. She's very much interested in education, as you know, was then and still is. Some of our Panel members, as I recall it, talked to Senator [Lister] Hill. Every now and then I would have a phone call from a Congressman or Senator saying he had heard about the report from some of his constituents and would I please let him know how things stood. Oh, Senator [J. Caleb] Boggs, Senator [John] Stennis, several others. I remember I heard two or three times from Lyndon Johnson's office, people whom he wanted to send to us, to find out what was going on. I remember that. We had a lot of discussion back and forth.

STEWART: In your relations with these people on the Hill, did [Lawrence F.] Larry O'Brien and his crew offer any kind of advice or get involved at all? Were there ever any political problems?

MAYO: Really, no. Not that I dealt with. And I don't know of any real political problems that came up. I remember asking some of our people-- I'm not sure of who it was, whether it was Mrs. Shriver or someone--talking now and again to people in the White House, I presume including Larry O'Brien, to ask how the situation stood with regard to legislation in which we were interested, although we could not take any official action. But we wanted to keep informed of course. And they were always very cooperative and helpful. I had more contact, at least indirectly, with Larry O'Brien's office after the Panel was discharged and when the follow-up program began when, as individuals, we could become more interested in legislation. It was then, I think, that I was able to work with him more. He always knew what was. . . . I remember one day I had a meeting with him in Staff Warren's office on some of the legislation pending.

STEWART: There are a few questions I'd like to ask on the public relations aspects. Is it getting late?

MAYO: It's 3:30. It's okay. I'll go to 4 o'clock.

STEWART: All right. On the public relations aspects of the Panel, I assume a good part or at least a large part of the success of the Panel could be measured in terms of the impact that it had in educating the public and making the public aware of this whole problem. In general, do you think enough was accomplished here or as much was accomplished in this area as you had originally hoped?

MAYO: I guess that my aspirations with regard to public relations as we proceeded were not too high. I guess I didn't have my sights set high enough because I was so absorbed in the content and what we would come up with that would be really meaningful and substantial that I sort of took the view that public relations, while it would be fine to have it concomitant with our work, nevertheless would probably mostly have to come later.

Now, I did retain the services of Victor Weingarten Co., Inc. of New York to advise us and to work with the White House correspondents. And Victor Weingarten himself, whom I've known for many years and in whom I had a great deal of confidence, he went ahead of me and made arrangements for the public hearings that we held in several parts of the country. This was one of the best, if not the best, public relations moves we made throughout the whole year. Because when we went in, let us say, to Denver, Colorado, at 4 o'clock in the afternoon, by 7 o'clock that night I'd done three radio shows and two television shows. And the next morning started at 8:30 in the federal court building with a public hearing which we had taped and the results of which guided us in our *serial* recommendations. Now one reason this was a very good public relations move was because it gave Dr. X, a pediatrician, deeply interested in mental retardation, the superintendent of the state school for the retarded, and Miss So-and-so, who was a teacher in charge of special education for the city a chance to say to the President's Panel on Mental Retardation what she or he

felt the local area, state or city should be doing. It gave them a platform, and an excellent platform, in which to help to press for the local program. So this turned out to be a very good device.

STEWART: The idea of public hearings originated with Mr. Weingarten?

MAYO: I think, actually, it originated with two or three of us. I remember presenting this idea to a meeting of the chairmen of the task forces, and two or three of them had very grave doubts as to its value. But as we examined it further, we agreed that it could have great value.

STEWART: There was some concern that possibly this would backfire in the sense that . . .

MAYO: That it might be regarded as a strictly political move, that it might result in no really good suggestions. The suggestions that came, by and large, were more germane to the locality, perhaps, than the nation. But again it was part of a process of getting people involved. And the idea that the President's Panel was willing to move out of Washington and go and sit down in Seattle, and San Francisco, Los Angeles, Denver, and St. Louis and Providence and really listen all day to what people wanted to say, that in itself had a great effect. And then, of course, newspaper stories followed this, naturally, the appearance of the President's Panel representatives.

STEWART: Well, did you or the Panel as an organization make any kind of an effort, for example, to get some TV documentaries or any greater attention on television?

MAYO: We had some success in this not only during the Panel but afterwards. For example, we, three of us, I think, reported on the Today Show. We had some films. I don't know that the President's Panel actually did a film. I don't think we did. But we sparked, induced, stimulated others. The National Association for Retarded Children wanted to do one anyway. The fact that the President's Panel had made some stir about mental retardation gave them a basis to go ahead. And so I think we sparked off quite a bit of this. I don't think we did anything ourselves in the way of a documentary at all. In that year's time that was a little difficult.

We did a major project which Dr. Heber headed up. And that was to do a world bibliography. That was published, and every two years now, I think, supplements are being published. This was paid for by National Institute of Mental Health. I'm not sure--I think it was National Institutes of Health; one institute or the other gave the money. It did not come out of the basic budget of the President's Panel. But it was a very good project, excellent--scholarly project.

STEWART: From a press relations point of view, were there ever any problems as far as any members of the Panel giving speeches at various occasions and anticipating what the Panel was going to recommend?

MAYO: No. No such problem came to my attention at all. A lot of them were called upon for speeches, and I encouraged them, of course, to talk about what was going on and what we were thinking about. And I don't think I ever cautioned any of them not to give something away. I think that just their good sense probably prompted them not to. And the idea really was to get an audience to respond and say, "What ideas do you have?" I remember I made several speeches in which I said, "Well, we're considering this kind of recommendation." But it was startling to them because it was something they had been working on. The attitude they took in most cases was not that this was something brand new, but rather this is something we're interested in and have been working on ourselves,

and we're very glad the President's committee has taken it up. We'll push it: That kind of reaction.

STEWART: There was a fact book (Published when? After the report came out?) which summarized the report.

MAYO: Yes, it came out before we were through. Again the Bureau of the Budget saw some opportunities to get some better interpretation in than we had and some refinements, and so we held it up and did it over. We really did it over again. I think we did. And so it really came out then after the President's Panel had been discharged. That's right.

STEWART: But this was to be the popular . . .

MAYO: This was to be the popular interpretation of it, yes. I think it had quite a circulation. I know we had large numbers of copies printed. Did you see one?

STEWART: I think I saw one. I don't have one.

MAYO: I thought it was a very good job. Mr. Weingarten did it.

STEWART: Let's see now. I think we got sort of out of sequence here. There was something you mentioned at the beginning that you wanted to come back to. That was the dispute among the research people which I guess you pretty well covered.

MAYO: I think I covered the essential aspects of that.

STEWART: Is there anything you can think of while I'm going over this? There are a few other things about the organization of the Panel. Now from this original breakdown into research and service, and the idea of this was that these people would come up with the final breakdown of the panel into the various task forces and then in turn come up with . . .

MAYO: Each task force was responsible for coming up with recommendations in its own area. And then each task force presented its recommendations to the panel as a whole.

STEWART: But as far as the final organization, were there any real problems or any real differences as to the precise breakdown other than the problem among the research people?

MAYO: No, no great problem. I remember getting a little nervous as the summer wore on that we did not have every task force report at the same level of completion. But you know that's par for the course. But nevertheless you could have ulcers about it. And I was a little concerned that one or two task forces seemed to be lagging. We asked them to come to Washington again and hold a meeting--or at least a meeting of some of their task force members--and see whether they could come to a final conclusion and make their report. And of course they did it in time.

I did employ two or three people part time toward the end as the time approached for our report to be in, Mrs. Elizabeth Boggs being one of them, who was a member of the Panel. And I brought her in for about six weeks. She was tireless, highly knowledgeable, an excellent worker. She helped to pull us through at the end substantially. We were working, of course, evenings, toward the end, to get the report completed, and she was a star. She did one of the hard things, and that is checking some of our final statements with people in the federal government who were involved and being sure that we had said what they understood we were saying, asking whether they had any suggestions for improvement, not to change it, but for improving, saying more adequately what we were trying to say.

Speaking of editing, I have to tell you this. One memorable Sunday during the early part of the summer, Mrs. Shriver called me from Hyannisport. She said, "I just read the draft of the chapter on vocational rehabilitation to the President this morning." My heart sank because I knew it wasn't ready for that. I guess she did, too. "Well," I said, "what did he say?" She said, "He said he couldn't understand it." I said, "Well, if the President can't understand it, there must be something wrong with us and the way we're presenting the content of that chapter." And she said, "That's what I think. How can we go to work on this?" Well, the staff went to work on it with Mrs. Shriver, and we improved it. But later on she--well, in the same conversation she told me that the President told her that some of us should see the memoranda that [Robert S.] McNamara prepared. He said that on one page or a page and a half he would state the problem, what somekey people thought about it, what he (McNamara) thought about it, his suggested solution and how much it would cost. So he said, "Maybe you people can do a little better in saying what you mean in a smaller space." So I said, "You know, I got a lesson in writing from the President. How high can you go?" But we knew that we had a lot of work to do on sharpening things. That's what we did during the summer. During the last part of the summer we worked intensively on editing.

STEWART: Was there ever any grumbling by any members of the Panel that perhaps you and your staff were giving them guidelines that were much too detailed, in other words, in telling them the areas they should cover in their reports and in telling them the size of their reports and in going over them. Was there ever any criticism, do you know?

MAYO: I'm sure there was some criticism that didn't reach my ears. Not necessarily on that. I didn't sense that there was criticism on that. I sensed that there was some criticism that I was driving them too hard and too fast. And one member, I remember, sent me a wire in which he said that I had discouraged him--and I think he used a word stronger than that--that I had insisted on a deadline so that he felt strongly that what came from him would be superficial and, therefore, he'd like to wash his hands of the whole thing. Well, he repented that or recanted part of that. I took into consideration the fact that he was on another commission, and he was pressed, very hard from many sides. I wasn't happy about the wire, but I had to admit there was some modicum of truth in it, that I was pressing very hard, although I didn't agree that what was coming out was superficial, I thought the contrary.

There was a point about midwinter when both Mrs. Shriver and I wondered whether this device, whether this Panel was really going to come up with a sound and exciting report. We had just seen the first draft of recommendations. I'd seen them. And some of them didn't hit me a midships at all. And Mrs. Shriver came in one morning--I shall never forget it--looking very down hearted and said, "I just don't think we have what we ought to have." Well, we talked it over that morning, and before the morning was over, we had talked ourselves into a more hopeful and optimistic frame of mind. And I think the conclusion we reached was that, you know, there are only a few new things under the sun; that we could not expect these people to pull things out of the blue that had never been thought of or heard of before; that perhaps our major problem was that we had to devise new ways or at least effective ways, of doing things we had known for a long time ought to be done; that we had to think about ways to present these things in a meaningful, attractive, fresh and clear way; and that what we really had, even in the drafts, was better than pedestrian, maybe not genius, certainly not genius, but something better than pedestrian, and if we could find ways to present it effectively and suggest ways of implementing it, we would have something of substance. And this is really what came. Of course, from that point on, they improved in terms of ideas and suggestions and creativity. But, you know, we had our low points.

And then sometimes both Mrs. Shriver and I would get a little anxious and call in some outside experts who weren't on the Panel at all and get their views as to how we were doing. And on one occasion, or two occasions, at least, members of the Panel learned of this and wondered whether or not I was engineering a sort of a shadow cabinet looking over their shoulders or working behind their backs. And what I did was to put my cards on the table with them, just as I have with you in this interview, and I said, "Look, I know you get anxious that you wonder." It is true that at times Mrs. Shriver and I have met with others, to look over the work we're all doing and to get their views." And I said, "This is not to check you. It is not to counteract, heavens knows. It is not to gainsay you. It is to give us assurance that we are on the right track and to get new ideas." And I said, "Certainly the purpose is not to undo recommendations that you've made because, if we have anything new to offer, we will bring it to you. But," I said, "you have to remember the spot I am in, that I have pressures from all around." And Mrs. Shriver did, too.

STEWART: Where were her pressures coming from?

MAYO: Well . . .

STEWART: Excuse me. This may be naive, but I assume the pressures on you came from her primarily. And . . .

MAYO: Yes. And from Mike Feldman. And also what I'd built up inside of myself. And I think Mrs. Shriver had the same problem. I think, she never told me because she would not discuss such a thing with anyone outside the family, but I just had a feeling that after a family affair, a family dinner, her brothers would ask her, "Now what are you doing?" that she couldn't help but feel a pressure, both of urgency and pride, and I mean pride in the right sense, that she had to deliver. And this was communicated. Why not? And I had to learn to ride with this at times?

At times, I'm sure Mrs. Shriver felt that I didn't know what I was doing. And at times I didn't. I mean, at times I had to feel my way. And I knew there were times when she was feeling anxious and not quite sure. And I had the same feelings. This was a big undertaking and a big project and when the President was waiting for something substantial. What can you do in a year to get this kind of wisdom and to get it in effective form and so on. But I could, every once in awhile, relax. And Mrs. Shriver had a great number of people in whom she had great confidence in this field and would call them--and I was very glad she could and did--and check her ideas with them and ask them how they thought we were coming and so forth. And so it worked out this way in the end, very well, really. I believe thoroughly that tension has a very important role in productivity. You talk about being relaxed, well sure, but how many of us do a job at peak of productivity when we are completely relaxed? You know you're not. Now there's such a thing as too much pressure, but there's also such a thing as almost no pressure. And I think most of us produce best when we're in a slight tension between the realities of the present and what we want to produce for the future. And these things keep pulling and pushing on you, and you come through, unless you break.

STEWART: Maybe this should be my concluding question. In terms of exactly what happened in the year or two years after the Panel, do you think the work of the Panel was justified? Do you think all that took place could have been done easier through some other means, for example, though a small, internal HEW study or some such thing as that?

MAYO: No, I don't. I do not. There's a constellation and combination of factors here that made this a unique situation. It was not only that the President of the United States appointed the Panel and gave it a mandate, it was also that there was a member of the President's family who was mentally retarded. And the President was not ashamed to say so. And Mrs. Shriver was willing to write an article for a magazine on this subject and how the family reacted and how the family felt.

Now, when you're working under a presidential mandate on a problem of this nature, with all the factors present and more than I have described, you have a combination of psychological factors that really creates a unique situation. And I think every member of the panel felt that he had something more than a mandate from the President of the United States, that he had a mandate from John Kennedy who has a sister, a retarded person, a retarded woman, and that somehow the President was looking to him to help the country find a way to face and to tackle this problem. Now Mrs. Shriver and I have talked about this many times, and she has told me that her brothers, the two Senators, find it quite difficult to get movement on a problem which they feel is important. And she said, "I think, as I look back on it, that perhaps the President's Panel on Mental Retardation was more successful than we know when I see how difficult it is for my brothers to get something organized and moving." Well, I said, and I've said to other people, too, "We had, to use the cliché, a lot going for us."

Mrs. Shriver always, always underestimates her own contribution to this. I don't. Because it could have been a President's Panel, but without her presence and her continuing identification with it, it would have been a far different situation. See, she was really a member, to all intents and purposes, a member of the Panel. She worked and came into the office every day. And she gave up, many social engagements and meetings at the White House and so forth, in deference to the task at hand. And everyone knew this, and everyone respected it. These were a very unusual set of circumstances. So I don't know of any other way in which this could have been done.

Of course, you could have had different people on the Panel and all that and perhaps had better results. But I feel that the people actually appointed, working as they did, under the conditions and the mandate that I mentioned, really did very well. As far as I'm concerned, I played over my head. I don't know whether I could do it again. But I think all of us played over our heads, under this mandate and under this auspice and in this setting.

STEWART: Well, did you stay on after . . .

MAYO: No, I did not. The president appointed Dr. Staff Warren almost immediately only a few months after we'd passed in the report. And there were problems with that follow-up program--and I think almost inevitable that there should be. We'd had a honeymoon. Compiling a report on what the nation should do is one thing, but getting down to the brass tacks of how to do it is something else. And we're still struggling with that in the President's Committee on Mental Retardation. It's a vastly different situation. I think far harder, far harder. And then, of course, after the president was killed, it was impossible then for Staff Warren to go on. He withdrew and there was some interim before President Johnson appointed his own committee. But anyway it's going on now, and I feel we are making some progress. It's difficult, but Mr. [John W.] Gardner was very much interested in the program. He was chairman of the President's Committee. And now Wilbur Cohen has succeeded to that post. He met with our committee last week and restated his interest and support. And I think that no matter who follows Mr. Johnson in the White House, we'll have a continuing committee.