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Biographical Note
Victor M. Longstreet (1907-2000) was the Assistant Secretary to the Navy for Financial Management from 1962 to 1965. This interview focuses on the inner workings of the Department of the Navy and the Department of Defense and the Department of Defense's relationship with the military, among other topics.

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Victor M. Longstreet– JFK #1

Table of Contents

Oral History Interview

with

VICTOR M. LONGSTREET

May 31, 1972
Boston, Massachusetts

By William W. Moss

For the Oral History Program
of the John F. Kennedy Library

MOSS: Let me begin, Mr. Longstreet, by asking you how it came to be that you were appointed assistant secretary of the Navy [Department of the Navy] for financial management. You were not chosen until July 1962, if my record is correct, and the post had been vacant for about one and a half years since the beginning of the Kennedy administration.

LONGSTREET: Yes.

MOSS: So I'd like you to talk about the appointment. What it meant to fill a vacancy that had been vacant for some time. What were the reasons you were chosen? All the circumstances surrounding it.

LONGSTREET: Of course, I was not there and wasn't really closely associated with any of the Connally [John B. Connally, Jr.] administration, but piecing things together after I got in the Pentagon, apparently Secretary Connally had recommended an appointment that was turned down. Not officially, but I think he couldn't get it as far as he wanted to, to the point where he could actually make a deficit proposal.

MOSS: Was this John Dillon?

LONGSTREET: I'm not sure this was John Dillon; Dillon was a highly capable and experienced man. But, anyway, he became discouraged. By this time he was probably thinking about the governorship of Texas. And so he really dragged his feet on this appointment since he was going to leave anyway. Well, I think Mr Korth, Fred Korth, got in touch with me, I believe, in April. I have retained the notes that I took on my notepad of that conversation. I don't have them with me. They're in my safe deposit box in Truro [Truro, Massachusetts]. But I was sitting at my desk one day in the Schering Corporation in Bloomfield, New Jersey, and answered the phone myself and the other end of the line introduced himself as Fred Korth, secretary of the Navy, whom I had never met, did not know. I knew, of course, that he was the secretary. But he said that he was calling me to ask me to take the job as assistant secretary of financial management. This was completely out of the blue, so I didn't know whether he was talking to the right party or not.

MOSS: Now you'd had background of this sort. You'd been in the State Department [Department of State] in financial management. You'd been with ECA [Economic Cooperation Administration].

LONGSTREET: Well, my first job out of Harvard College in 1930 was in the controller's office of the American Telephone Company at 195 Broadway in New York City. I was a statistician there and an economist. I was there for only one year before I went to the Federal Reserve Board in Washington D.C., also as an economist. And I had been an official in uniform in the control office of the chief of air staff in the Pentagon during the war. McNamara [Robert S. McNamara] was their top, though. I knew him by reputation only. So I was a bit familiar with the military. Then Korth said, "Well, you know, when you ask a man to do a favor for you, you should go to see him. But," he said, "I just can't get away now, and I'm wondering if you're going to be in Washington soon, because I would like very much for you to consider this job." Now he wasn't asking to interview me to see whether or not I was the man he wanted. He seemed so definite that I was the man he wanted. Well I, of course, did a lot of inquiring around Washington about the staff in this Department of the Navy and so forth.

MOSS: Who do you, when you inquire that way, who do you inquire of?

LONGSTREET: Well, I had been in Washington government, in and out over the years, particularly the financial side. I knew people in Treasury [Department of the Treasury], I knew people in the Budget Bureau [Bureau of the Budget] and around. It was easy enough for me to ask these people to see if they couldn't get a line on certain individuals. I got their names, Lot Ensey, for example, and several others.

MOSS: What kind of impressions did you come up with in this sort. . . .

LONGSTREET: Oh, I came up with a very, very high appraisal of the quality of the staff,

the people, the work they were doing on the financial side in the Navy and, of course, this gave me great heart. I didn't know what kind of problem I would be up against and, with a job like this, whether I was going to have to reorganize the staff and throw people out or what have you. But apparently this was an able, going concern.

Now, it took me several months really to get this information and also to think through this problem because it turned out that it was going to have to be at a considerable sacrifice monetarily and otherwise with my job at Schering. And in the end, picking this job has cost me, I suppose, pretty much in the neighborhood of a half a million dollars. This was because I had to give up stock options I held in Schering. So it took me quite a while to make up my mind. Although this thing started in April it wasn't until July that I said yes.

MOSS: Let me come back to the implied context on this thing here. Was the initiative from the department on this giving up your stocks . . .

LONGSTREET: No, this was from the . . .

MOSS: . . . or completely voluntary on your part?

LONGSTREET: . . . no, no, this was forced on me by the Armed Services Committee [Senate Armed Services Committee] of the Senate.

MOSS: Okay, okay. In a minute or two I'd like to get into that interview with the committee.

LONGSTREET: And I was in a sense misled when I went into this.

MOSS: Okay, well, let's talk about it a little later.

LONGSTREET: But on the appointment side it was in July that I went down to see Korth, I suppose, for about the third time. By this time I had met some of the other people, John Dillon and Ensey and so forth. I was still on the fence. And Fred Korth said, "Look, I want to take you over to talk to the White House staff." So we got in his car, and he took me over to see Dan Fenn [Dan H. Fenn, Jr.], and it was the first time I had met Dan Fenn. I had talked to Dan on the telephone a number of times, and I knew him by reputation because we had mutual interests at the Harvard Business School where we knew the same people quite intimately. So I felt as if I knew him though I had never actually met him. And then he took me over to see O'Donnell [Kenneth P. O'Donnell] and O'Brien [Lawrence F. O'Brien] and Dungan [Ralph A. Dungan], and each one of them in turn put pressure on me and said, "Look, we have gone over this and gone over this a number of times with you and a number of other names and every time we go over this you come out on top, and we like you. You're the one we want." And those White House interviews were what decided me to take it. Then, nor at any time did anyone ever ask me my political affiliation or who I voted for. This was completely nonpolitical.

MOSS: Did you ever learn anything of the selection process? What they'd gone through in order to dig up your name and how they got to choose you?

LONGSTREET: I'm only guessing and probably Dan, since he was in there and had a part in this, knows much more about this than I do. But I know that Dan had on several occasions some names that he was trying to get information on for possible appointments--I recall two occasions specifically--and both of these men had been associated in one way or another with the pharmaceutical industry. I think it was Ray Bauer [Raymond R. Bauer], professor at the Harvard Business School, who had done a lot of work for me at Schering. I retained him as a consultant. I don't know whether you know Ray Bauer or not.

MOSS: I don't know him.

LONGSTREET: He's a top group-behaviorist psychologist, probably the best in the country. Ray, I think, suggested to Dan that he get in touch with me about these names, and I think in both cases was able to gather a fairly complete dossier on them, I think, the same day he called me or certainly the first thing the following morning. Though I didn't know these gentlemen, I knew enough people in the industry, knowing what companies they had been with I could trace them down easily. And I think this might have impressed Dan. I don't know. And he might have said to Ray, "Who is this fellow Longstreet?" This is just a guess on my part. And so then he began to try to find out something about me. And I had been in quite a variety of things in and out of the government. And perhaps this record meant something to Dan, I don't know, because he had not yet met me personally.

MOSS: Okay. In your conversations with Korth, how did the shape and content of the job begin to appear? What were the things that he wanted you to do? What were the things that were already given by the nature of the job and that sort of thing?

LONGSTREET: Well, the main thing that he talked about, the only thing that he talked about is that he had a twelve-billion-dollar budget coming up that he had to present to Congress. It was going to have to be shaped up by, I think, September. It was already due to the Bureau of the Budget, and you have to start long about the spring or early summer to get the wheels going in the department to shape up this budget, and he didn't have anybody to help him, he felt. This was a big factor with him, was trying to move this budget thing along. And it turned out, of course, that I was of very little help on this because, as you may know, it wasn't until late in the year that I was actually able to get on the job. Admiral Lot Ensey, deputy controller, and extremely able man did that budget for Korth with the help of Admiral Morrie Hirsch [Morris A. Hirsch] and his staff.

I had an unfortunate series of problems with my eyes, which began the morning after my wife and I attended a reception Korth gave us on August 10, 1962 in Washington, D.C., the day I first reported for duty. The next afternoon I was out of commission and really did not get back on the job to amount to anything for another, well, it was toward the end of the year, almost

Christmas.

MOSS: I was wondering this--the fact that you were out may spoil the question--but I was wondering how much you were taking into consideration at that point with the budget the kinds of things that Hitch [Charles J. Hitch] was doing with the department, with the financial management of the department?

LONGSTREET: Oh, I wasn't neglected while recovering from my series of eye operations. I was briefed and consulted frequently in the hospital and at home by some of my staff--Admiral Lot Ensey, Morrie Hirsch, Captain, later Admiral, John Layden, mostly. And I had a pretty good idea of what Hitch's objectives were, of what he was trying to do and his system, because I had read his book, *Economics of Defense in a Nuclear Age*, and the whole Hitch-McNamara approach is, the substance of it, is laid out in that book. And I think, it's my understanding that Paul Nitze had read this book, and he knew Hitch and it was--this may be completely wrong because you know how stories go around--but my understanding is that it was Nitze who introduced Hitch to McNamara and suggested him for consideration as controller of the Defense Department [Department of Defense]. So I was fairly familiar with his approaches, theories, etc.

MOSS: Well, let me again come back to that chronologically. Let me ask you about your appearance before the congressional committee on your appointment. How did that go? What stumbling blocks did you run up against and that sort of thing?

LONGSTREET: Well, they asked me the same question probably in your mind. This job has been vacant for a year and a half and why do you have to be appointed now to fill it? I mean what's been going on all this time? Are you really needed? And I said, "Well, you'd better ask this of Mr. Korth because he's the one that selected me and appointed me, and apparently he feels there's some kind of need. And I think he's the appropriate one to ask the question of." The only other stumbling block, that wasn't really a stumbling block but just a question, was possible conflict of interest. This was really a red herring. I wasn't bright enough. I didn't have enough knowledge; I wasn't quick enough. And I didn't have enough support in the legal side of the Defense Department on this. They should have come to my assistance, I feel. Cy Vance [Cyrus R. Vance] didn't; he was then the legal counsel. A wonderful man, but Cy just failed to cover this point, and he and I suffered because of it. But the question was that the navy will be buying a lot of drugs, won't they? Won't they be buying drugs from Schering and other companies, and isn't this a conflict of interest? Well, in fact it was not a conflict of interest, because . . .

MOSS: You were not in procurement.

LONGSTREET: . . . exactly. I was not in procurement. I didn't know the job well enough at this time to know this, but I would not be in such procurement decisions.

And another thing is that all drugs of this sort are on a bid basis.

MOSS: Yeah.

LONGSTREET: And there wasn't any possible way that I or my company could profit from my being appointed. But because of this they said that I would have to give up my stock options and my holdings of Schering stock. Another thing, they wouldn't even let me participate in profit-sharing for the current calendar year 1962, because I would be on the job during a part of that period. And it was silly, really, to think that I could influence any profits of Schering in this period.

MOSS: It's a very curious situation, even the later problems that both Korth and Gilpatric [Roswell L. Gilpatric] had with the Congress on it.

LONGSTREET: Yeah, and one of the things that surprised me about this was the attitude of Senator Case [Clifford P. Case] of New Jersey, my own state, whom I had gone to see and who knew me and who knew the company. And he was the one who pressed this kind of thing. He--and then Margaret Chase Smith--they ganged up on me. These two put the pressure on me to the point where, if I hadn't gone this far, I probably would have backed out.

MOSS: Do you know what their motivation was in this?

LONGSTREET: I don't know.

MOSS: Was it simply something they had in their craw, or were they setting somebody else up or what?

LONGSTREET: I don't know. No, I don't think they were setting anybody else up. And Case and Smith were Republicans, I think. My guess is that they like to appear to be hard nosed, investigative and really hew the strict line and strict constructionists, that kind of thing. I don't really know.

MOSS: All right. Let me ask you to talk a little bit about. . . .

LONGSTREET: You know what's happened to Schering stock?

MOSS: No, I don't.

LONGSTREET: I could have bought it for twenty dollars a share way back then under my company option. It's been split four or five times. I bought some Schering stock just three years ago for fifty-five dollars a share, and it's been split once and it hit a hundred and fourteen the other day.

MOSS: Yeah, yeah. Let me ask you about the people who were on the job with you. Who were the people with whom you had the most frequent contact and that sort of thing? Of course, Ensey was your deputy. . . .

LONGSTREET: Well, it depends on what level you have in mind.

MOSS: I'm looking for the people who were critical to helping you do your job.

LONGSTREET: Well, of course, Lot Ensey was invaluable, and he had as an assistant deputy an Admiral Hirsch, who is also extremely able. And then we had captains down the line who have since become admirals and done wonderful jobs as well as civilians. The capability of an officer selected for captain in the navy is very, very high. And by capability I mean intelligent, diligent, applies himself, ability to learn fast, good memory. By intelligent I mean he can take a complex of things and relate them to each other rapidly, sort them out. He's got a computer kind of mind, extremely dependable. You can bank on what they say. I didn't know much about the navy before this job, but on the job I learned to respect naval officers when they reached captain level and certainly admiral. Financial management, financial controls, budgetary procedures, doing the job right, doing it carefully does not require any Leonardo da Vinci or some great imagination, you know. It just requires these qualities I'm talking about. And you can take most navy captains and put them on one of these jobs and in no time at all he's picking up the stuff, he clicks and he knows. He's dependable, he's alive. So these people have a lot of knowledge and resourcefulness. And I really admire their ability to continue to do a job enthusiastically despite all of the criticism, the negative elements present. And, as Lot Ensey used to put it, always answering exactly the same questions.

And don't overlook the major role of navy wives. They had the go-go spirit too. Mrs. Longstreet was invaluable to me on the job. One year she was chairman of the Navy Relief Ball, an honor that usually goes to the wife of the secretary, a high honor, but much more than that. My wife was a working chairman, working hand-in-hand with the navy wives on the various committees and when I resigned--I should say we resigned--the top officers presented to her at a surprise ceremony in my office a handsome ship clock and barometer engraved with their appreciation. I'm not aware of anything similar ever having been given to any other retiring secretariat member and wife. These men and their wives were really grateful for what Mrs. Longstreet did. If it hadn't been for her there would have been no presentation.

MOSS: Let me ask about the negative elements. I guess the place to begin is the conventional wisdom on the thing. You see a great deal written in the more popular analytic literature about the conflict between the McNamara-Hitch operation and the traditional military. Now does this show . . .

LONGSTREET: Now that's an interesting. . . .

MOSS: . . . up in strategic thinking or does it show up in budget and financial matters?

LONGSTREET: I would say that the traditional navy officer, particularly when he gets up to be an admiral, like many people who are successful in their line of work, they have so much experience behind them and are themselves so knowledgeable about certain things that they feel that you should just ask them the question and then they give you the answer. And this is an authoritative, well thought-out answer with a lot of experience and knowledge behind it. They are not in the habit of backing up that answer with a lot of factual data and. . . .

MOSS: Going back to first principles again and rebuilding it?

LONGSTREET: Yeah, I mean I just listened to Henry Ford [Henry Ford II] on the "Today" show this morning, the first time apparently he'd ever been interviewed on TV. And here's one of the world's great industrialists and he was, you know, giving his views about the Ford Motor Company and business in general and so forth. Now he speaks very authoritatively about this sort of thing, but if you try to get this man really to substantiate his opinions and decisions with factual information and analysis and research, probably he couldn't do it. He would be insulted if you asked him.

MOSS: Okay now, is it reasonable to ask such a person?

LONGSTREET: It sure is reasonable. It's reasonable and McNamara and Hitch made a lot of headway with this. And what Hitch and McNamara were trying to do was not what most people think they were trying to do. Most people think that Hitch and McNamara were trying to formulate the budget and do the job and present it and make the decisions. This isn't really what they were trying to do. What they were trying to do was to get the services to do this. They were trying to build up within the services a capability, for example the navy, to perform its own analysis that would set up alternatives for meeting certain kinds of scenario situations in the future, combat an attack from this quarter or attack from that quarter and really to make an analysis of, for example, of how effective a nuclear carrier is compared with the regular fossil fuel type. Of course, the navy would always say, 'Well, of course, these nuclear carriers are the thing." And McNamara would say, "How do you know they're the thing?" "Well, you're insulting me asking me how I know. Why, gee, I mean why I'm an admiral and I've been" etc. McNamara was answering, "Yes, but why don't you actually go through the analysis of what you can get out of a nuclear carrier as against a regular flattop, quantify how superior and in what respects, what are the implications of the cost and how is this going to affect other things that go with it, the destroyer package and what have you. And you say a nuclear carrier is more effective. Well, maybe it is, but how much more effective is it, say, than a regular flattop or maybe two flattops. Until all aspects are quantified, maybe you are arguing for a weaker force that's going to cost you more money. So come to me with your analysis and show me."

You see, he wasn't going to them to show them where they were making a mistake as a lot of people think they were and saying, "Okay, here's my analysis and we're going to scratch off this nuclear carrier and we're going to go for flattops." This was not his approach. He was trying

always, and Charlie Hitch was trying, to get them to set up their own analysis. Well, the air force you see had a basis for this. The air force had done such analyses with the Rand Corporation, and Hitch was director of research for Rand before he came to the Pentagon. So Hitch had a bigger job with the navy and with the army than he did with the air force because the air force was already building in this kind of capability. But we made great progress, and this was one of my big jobs in the navy, to try to help in the communications between Hitch and his quiz kids on the one hand and the navy, various parts of the navy, including the chief of naval operations on down, on the other.

MOSS: Okay, How did you go about this? Could you describe some meetings or conversations?

LONGSTREET: Well, I was very much surprised at first. I found that these people really weren't talking to each other. They really weren't talking to each other, and I think this is. . . . Korth never explained this to me as one of his big lacks, but he didn't have anybody in there to break through this barrier. This is something that Ensey couldn't do because Ensey was in uniform. But what I did I just observed how Enthoven [Alain C. Enthoven] and his people were communicating with the secretary of the navy, the chief of naval operations, my office, other offices of the Department and how we were communicating with them. It was ridiculous. They were in. . . .

MOSS: Let me ask you what do you do. Let's see, Burke [Arleigh A. Burke] was gone by the time you were in, right?

LONGSTREET: Yes.

MOSS: And . . .

LONGSTREET: George Anderson.

MOSS: . . . George Anderson was in and was soon succeeded by McDonald [David L. McDonald].

LONGSTREET: Yes. Well, Anderson was somewhat of a problem, but McDonald wasn't.

MOSS: How do you approach a man like Anderson on something like this?

LONGSTREET: Oh, well, this wasn't hard. I mean, George Anderson was a very, you know, wonderful guy in many ways. He hated the guts of that whole crowd and quite rightly so in some ways. Because what you found out, and this was not just my appraisal, but this was obvious to everybody and not just the ones who--the George Andersons--but others who were very much in a sense pro-Enthoven as I was. I was very pro-Enthoven. But these people had an arrogance. They had a, I mean, it was so obvious in what

they wrote and how they conducted themselves and how they talked at meetings. They had an arrogance about them that talked down to and belittled and didn't show any respect. They had inflated ideas really of their own significance and importance. This was very bad. . . .

MOSS: Yeah. This obviously didn't square with what Hitch and McNamara were trying to do.

LONGSTREET: And it doesn't square with Hitch or McNamara's personality. Hitch was an entirely different kind of person. I'd known Charlie Hitch before. And Hitch is soft-spoken, polite, he listens, he doesn't talk a lot, and he's considerate, you know. But these qualities were not with Enthoven and most of his group.

MOSS: Okay. Do you recall a particular situation in which you saw Enthoven in action? Can you think of a particular case to describe?

LONGSTREET: Oh, yes, I could get this in the atmosphere, and I could see this from memos and I could see it in my own dealings with them; you sense it. They made a big mistake, I think, in trying to handle a lot of these situations with memos. They should have gone in to see people. It's like a husband and wife who don't get along and then they start passing notes across the breakfast table. That is not a conducive environment. So with memoranda. They would come down, they would get to me, many of these, and I would stop them. I wouldn't send them on. I would go up and see Alain Enthoven or I'd see Charlie Hitch and start talking to them about the problem. And I remember, I forget exactly what the problem was, but I remember on one occasion. I finally got Alain Enthoven and several of his people down into my office and invited a couple of the admirals in and a captain, I remember. And we sat down and we started talking about this problem. And I would try to cool off Enthoven and his people and try to get each side to listen and speak to each other and so forth. And it was by this kind of gradual eating into the problem that I think we finally established some better communications within the organization.

MOSS: Of course, that's difficult to do when you have a short-time to make decisions. You can do it on a long-range kind of thing or when you see a problem well ahead, but how would Enthoven respond and how would the navy respond when you had real pressure on to get a decision out, and you still weren't together on the facts or on the conclusions.

LONGSTREET: Well, the basic problem, you see, was that the kind of information that the navy was sending forward to support their programs wasn't complete or adequate enough. So this was really not a question of getting better or more complete information because a lot of times the navy had the information but didn't put it in the forwarding papers.

MOSS: All right. How did this get by you?

LONGSTREET: Well, then as these papers would come through in support of certain programs, I would look at them; they would make certain statements without sufficient backup. I would go back to the person that it came from and say, "Why do you say this? And how can you prove this?" Or, "Where does this figure come from? Isn't there a gap here?" Or, "You've got to make this more complete and stand on its own feet better."

MOSS: Did you find any resistance to your asking. . . .

LONGSTREET: No, no. And they'd say, "Oh, you want that? Sure, we can put that in." I mean, they had it, they just didn't put it in. Then I got in the habit, instead of sending such a paper to Enthoven or up to Hitch, of walking it up with the officer who was chiefly responsible for it. He might not be in my outfit, some other part of the navy because it was his program. So we would go up together. I was trying to further encourage face-to-face discussion and asking the questions in the form in which they would be clearly understood before somebody got riled and said, "Well, why does that stupid guy answer the question this way?" Maybe he didn't understand the question. So I think this was, if I made any contribution at all to the navy, this was my chief contribution.

I got to the point, for example, where George Anderson invited in eight or ten of his assistant chiefs of staff, the chiefs of staff, and we got Enthoven and several of his people down and in Anderson's office, around the table. They discussed the program, what they were trying to do and the progress they had made in dealing with the navy and some of the things they had still to work on and try to improve and so forth and so on. This had never been done before. And I think this really helped a great deal. At that time they had in Enthoven's staff, I think, probably not more than twenty people including clerks. They had about eight professionals. Very small staff considering the magnitude of the job.

MOSS: Let me ask you about that. . . .

LONGSTREET: And from the size of their staff it was quite obvious that these people could not do very much work on their own, and all they could do was to try to get the services to build up their staffs and do the analysis work and get the information together.

MOSS: Okay, now there's a sort of . . .

LONGSTREET: And this was their approach.

MOSS: . . . there's a sort of feeling, I guess, more than anything else, almost intuitive, and President Kennedy tried to do this in breaking up the OCB [Operations Coordinating Board] in the White House and so on, that a smaller staff could perhaps grasp the essentials better that a big staff.

LONGSTREET: Yes. This is true, and this is what Charlie Hitch felt, McNamara felt this. They had, in my opinion, a bare-bones staff, the Quiz Kids, in those days when I was in the navy. It wasn't until later, and as I said, a lot of progress had been made within the navy due almost entirely, I would say, to the stimulus of Hitch and his people and McNamara and also, to some extent, large extent, to the progress in the other services such as with Rand and so forth. The navy had made great progress in improving its own analytical group for preparation of programs. And it wasn't until I left that I learned later when Enthoven was appointed an assistant secretary and his job became a more important status, his staff began to be increased and was built up to the point where they were doing more of the job and taking some of it away from the services. And this happened, I think, after McNamara a Hitch left. It was contrary to their concept of the job.

MOSS: All right. Well, this is another aspect of it too, you've . . . .

LONGSTREET: I don't know this later period, just from hearsay.

MOSS: You also have in the McNamara period an attempt to follow up on the Gates [Howard P. Gates] centralization of functions in the Defense Department [Department of Defense], and I see this Enthoven move as a symptom of that.

LONGSTREET: Yes, it's amazing. Have you ever read Gates' testimony before Congress?

MOSS: No. Well, bits and pieces of it, quotations.

LONGSTREET: Well, I went back after I was in the navy and read Gates' testimony before Congress, and it sounded almost like McNamara.

MOSS: Yeah. Yeah.

LONGSTREET: He had the same concept as McNamara of the unification of the services, but he just didn't have the ability to put it into effect. He just didn't know how to do it. He didn't have a Charlie Hitch. And I know, I was told, that when Hitch came in Bob McNamara asked him to draw up a plan for their combined budgetary and force programs of all the four services as how these could all be integrated and priced and stretched out to the future so you could know what the implications were for five and ten years ahead as a basis for making certain current commitments with long-term implications. And it was as a result of this request, I understand, that Hitch developed the Five Year Force Structure and Financial Program--or FYFSFP, which we all pronounced as FISSIP--and that he took this into McNamara and said, "This is what I think we ought eventually to do, and we ought to phase it, begin with a part of it this year. It's a big job to put into effect in all of the services all at once. We can begin this year and then next year we can go into another phase." And McNamara says, "It's fine, I think it's a wonderful program, but let's do it all right now." So this was a big shock to not

only Hitch but to the services, because here they had so much to do in such a short time something that was quite unfamiliar them. And McNamara was new and Hitch was new and, you know, it's a big thing to come in and install such a vast program of this sort immediately. But this is what they tried to do, and I think they did it fairly successfully.

MOSS: Let me take that down to a little more philosophical plane. One of the other criticisms of McNamara and Hitch is that they imposed economic analysis on the system, and this may have been a very good thing and opened people's eyes to new ways of doing things, but they did this to the neglect of other ways of looking at things perhaps from a military point of view, from a political point of view, from a social or psychological point of view. That there were other factors they tended to have blinders about. Is that fair? Are there these other views? Are they valid? This worries me in other aspects too, I mean, in city planning economic analysis is all the rage now, but are there other things that we're ignoring?

LONGSTREET: Maybe so. I don't see where the McNamara-Hitch approach cost us or, put it this way, where the McNamara-Hitch approach neglected or set aside or threw out certain social and political, important social and political factors --that up to that point were taken into consideration and effectively so. I thing that most any system is open to this kind of a charge, but I don't think the McNamara-Hitch system is open to it any more than the so-called, if you want to call it a system, that was in operation before they came. I don't see where we lost socially or politically by the McNamara-Hitch approach.

MOSS: Okay. You talked about the five-year force. . . .

LONGSTREET: No. A lot of people misunderstand the McNamara-Hitch approach. They think that when you get all this data together that that's the answer. McNamara never felt this. McNamara and Hitch always said, "Well, look, before we make a decision let's know that the implications are from a cost-effectiveness standpoint, particularly of certain alternatives. And once we have this information then we will have at least, we can have some agreement on what the quantitative facts are.

MOSS: Okay. McNamara and Hitch and Enthoven have made this point again and again and again and again in their speeches and writings and so on. Why are people not listening to them?

LONGSTREET: Oh, well. You know, we all have our value screens. We see and hear what we want to see and hear in large part, and the rest we close off.

MOSS: Okay. You talked about the five-year force projections and another innovation, of course, was the. . . .

LONGSTREET: Well, the, it's a five-year . . .

MOSS: Five years.

LONGSTREET: . . . it was, I think, an eight-year force projection . . .

MOSS: Okay.

LONGSTREET: . . . but a five-year pricing.

MOSS: Okay. And the next step, of course, is when the program budgeting, program planning and budgeting system . . .

LONGSTREET: Yes.

MOSS: . . . came in. How did this begin to develop? Where was it, where did it first impact on you and on the navy and so on? And how did it develop?

LONGSTREET: Well, of course, it was in before I . . .

MOSS: Right.

LONGSTREET: . . . they had started it before I arrived. And I'm not sure I fully understand the nature of your question, but . . .

MOSS: Well, I see that. . . .

LONGSTREET: . . . we were asked to prepare our material in certain ways to send forward on the budget. Now, this was according to the formula, the system, the kind of reporting forms that Hitch had developed for his integrated system. Now the complication here, and maybe this is what you have in mind, is that in addition to that we had to manage our funds and our budgets and prepare them according to the congressional method of identifying items and grouping items and so forth and so on. This conflict between two systems of accounting was never really resolved.

MOSS: This is interesting. Because I had always seen it as a sort of the services against McNamara, but in effect you're saying that there was a congressional requirement and a departmental requirement, both of which you were trying to answer.

LONGSTREET: And the Budget Bureau.

MOSS: And the Budget Bureau requirement. Okay.

LONGSTREET: You see, they had for years, they had traditionally requested our

application of funds in certain ways, according to certain rubrics you might say, and then they were passed this way in Congress and the money was allocated us in accordance with certain categories. Now these categories had to be cut through and resifted and so forth to match up with the way McNamara was preparing his budget. This was in a sense keeping two sets of books.

MOSS: Okay. Now do you know anything of the coordination between Hitch and Bell [David E. Bell], for instance, on making these things square?

LONGSTREET: Well, yes. I mean, it made extra work for them. They could do it, but it was a nuisance and, of course, it riled the members of Congress.

MOSS: Yeah. I can see how Congress would be upset about it.

LONGSTREET: Because when McNamara came in to present his program he presented it according to his own analysis . . .

MOSS: Right.

LONGSTREET: . . . and this isn't what their staff had done, and this isn't the way they looked at things, so then they had to shift gears. Well, this was good, and I think in the end the people in the Congress began to see that, well, this makes sense and gives us a better analysis and understanding of the problem.

MOSS: It's an education problem. Did you have the same problem with the Bureau, the Bureau of the Budget?

LONGSTREET: No.

MOSS: Okay. I was wondering, Bell and Staats [Elmer B. Staats] and so on, fine, but the career service type people in the Budget must have had the same kind of difficult adjustment to make, and I wondered if there was any other.

. . .

LONGSTREET: I'm trying to remember who was. . . .

MOSS: Who was your guy at Budget?

LONGSTREET: After Bell it was Gordon [Kermit Gordon]. I had known Kermit from working together in the State Department.

TAPE ONE, SIDE TWO

LONGSTREET: There was very little, very little opposition and criticism of the Hitch-McNamara management system, in the financial management setup. Very little. Where you got it was in the other parts of the navy where the raw data we worked with had to be manufactured, that supplied us with what we needed. And I think this was in large part because the people down there just didn't understand why this was being done, the people in the financial management and controllership of the navy down the line, not just the civilians but the navy personnel, this was their job. I mean, they understood the system. They also had to contend with the arrogance and so forth of the Enthovens. But because of this communications difficulty the people down below felt that they--I mean in other parts of the navy--felt that they weren't being given consideration. Nobody was even explaining to them really just why all this was necessary and when they did try to explain they, as you said, weren't listening.

MOSS: How about the two jobs that you had? You're down for the two different titles. Did it make any difference? Did you really wear two hats with two different functions so that you had to change gears from time to time, or was it pretty much the same sort of thing?

LONGSTREET: Well, controllership. I don't think this is doubly clear in the two functions, but I think there is somewhat of a difference. I had a deputy controller, but I didn't have a deputy for financial management and controller. And I was the only one in the Defense Department, I think, with this double title. Because, traditionally, in the navy--I don't know why this is so, it probably goes back to some decisions many years ago--the controller is always a civilian and the deputy is always a military man. In the air force and the army it's just the reverse. Do you want to turn this off?

MOSS: Turn this off for a moment. [Interruption] . . . difference between the functions of financial management and controller.

LONGSTREET: This is not too different than private business because it's typical for at least large corporations to have an officer, a vice president usually, in charge of finance and then they will have a controller, a separate function usually reporting to the treasurer. Now, of course, in businesses the treasurer has a whole lot of other things to do besides what is ordinarily thought of as controllership. He issues securities, makes loans and borrows money and can make financial decisions on capitol expansions, a whole lot of things related to the finance of the company which aren't followed by the controllership.

Controllership is really a problem, in my way of thinking, of seeing that the financial records of the company, the financial aspects of the company, are maintained in order, in a useful form so that they can be analyzed to tell something about the conduct of the business, how the business is going, and as a basis for decisions about--or the financial implications, put it that way--the financial implications other decisions that might be made with respect to the expansion or the reduction in activities, on the financial side.

MOSS: In most of the other departments you have lumped together under an

administrative assistant secretary all the financial, personnel, routine administration functions, but in the Defense Department you have these broken up. You have a personnel or manpower figure. You have another person for financial management and you have supply and procurement all separated out. Does this cause any particular problems? Or is one a better way of doing it? Or why is it necessary in the Defense establishment to break these things up this way? Is it just too big?

LONGSTREET: Well, I don't know too much about the other departments. I thing that Gardner [John W. Gardner, Jr.], when he came in HEW [Department of Health, Education and Welfare], I think he appointed an assistant secretary of financial management, I believe.

MOSS: Which leads you to believe it is a function of size?

LONGSTREET: Yeah. I think that difficult, complicated programs that are hard to cost and hard to keep track of--and certainly the Defense Department seems this kind of operation--probably requires a separate function.

MOSS: Let me come back to a question I asked earlier that I don't think we've really got to. Were there any problems with that job of yours having been vacant for a year and a half? Were there tag ends that you really had to pick
up because nobody else could have done them? Now you talked a little bit about this. . . .

LONGSTREET: Not really, not really, because. . . . Well, I don't think anyone in the current setup then could have taken hold, could have fully appreciated this communications problem between the navy and the Enthoven people and worked out a plan of approach to eliminate this.

MOSS: Had there been somebody there earlier would it have been better?

LONGSTREET: It depends on the individual. I, fortunately, I feel that this is one kind of a thing that I was fairly good at and I'm not really a very good figure man, but I do know something about human relations and communications. And I know more about, let us say, the question of how to go about doing a job rather than actually doing the job, maybe. I wrote an article on this for the *Harvard Business Review* ["Management R & D," July-August 1961] once. But I depended a great deal on Ensey and the people under him to carry on as they seemed very willing and able to do. This whole question of getting our budget in shape to meet the Hitch criteria, and they weren't fighting it; they were trying to do it. And in trying to do it, I worked with them and helped them, I think, in some ways. But it wasn't anything that I had to put my shoulder to and make them really do something about. It was this other aspect where the navy and the Enthoven people didn't seem to be getting along.

MOSS: What about your opposite numbers in the other service departments? Was there a regular meeting between you?

LONGSTREET: Yes. We met. For most of my stay my counterparts in army and air force were Brewster Kopp and Edmund Pratt, both very able, We got to know each other. We met quite frequently. Hitch, on occasions, would have us together. And often just the three of us got together on our own.

MOSS: What sort of occasions were these, formal meetings, luncheons?

LONGSTREET: Well, these were luncheons or we'd, we might have a special subject that cut across all three services and felt it would be a good idea for us to put our heads together before we saw Hitch.

MOSS: What sort of subjects?

LONGSTREET: Well, let's see if I can remember any of them in particular.

MOSS: Did you discuss, for instance this communication problem with the other . . .

LONGSTREET: Oh, yes.

MOSS: . . . and were they having the same kind of. . : .

LONGSTREET: They were having the same kind of problem, but you see they had a capability, as I said, which the navy didn't seem to have.

MOSS: With Rand for instance?

LONGSTREET: Yeah. We met more frequently on tough problems I think after Anthony [Robert N. Anthony] came in, after Anthony took Hitch's place, because Anthony was trying to install a new approach toward management. I thought it had a lot of difficulties. So did the others, but I think they were supporting it more than I was. And I think his system finally went to the wayside. But we had, I had problems with the Anthony approach. This was for a short period.

MOSS: How do you compare the people who served as the various service department secretaries?

LONGSTREET: Well, the ones I actually sort of feel I know something about. I did meet Gates [Thomas S. Gates] several times. Korth had him over, and I can't remember whether Nitze had him or not. I think Korth had him for

luncheon several times, and it turned out that, well, that Gates. . . . Let me think. I can't remember the man's name now, but he used to, we used to work together in the old days in the Pentagon during the war. But he was up with Mr. McNamara and he had previously been with Mr. Gates in working personally with them in their offices. Preparation, mostly, of testimony before Congress. He worked on other things, too. But he told me a very interesting thing, a very simple little comparison. He said that Mr. Gates, whom he felt was a very, very able man, always was very nervous and sharp-tempered when it was time to appear before Congress. This was a real chore for him. But this was just the time that McNamara began to "get his wind" and be himself and with a lot of zest and gusto. You know, he was getting ready for this meeting because he was eager to explain his program. Just two different personalities. Mr. Korth was one of the best bosses I've ever had, and I've had a lot of them. Some months after I got on the job, Red Fay [Paul B. Fay, III] told me a story about Korth that showed his patience and further endeared him to me. During the months I was laid up with my eye operations, Fay said he urged Korth to stop waiting and get someone else for my position, but Korth would have none of it; he would wait. As I said he was one of the best bosses I ever had. And I've worked for some good ones. I worked quite closely with Averell Harriman for year or so, one of the best.

MOSS: Yes.

LONGSTREET: But Korth--and he was a remarkable man in other directions--but Korth, I have never worked for any person who was so appreciative of any work that you did for him. I've had some bosses, you know, you spend all night and weekend trying to get something together, and you give it to him and they said, "Well, where did you get this crap?"

MOSS: It does make a whale of a difference.

LONGSTREET: Korth knew, he just assumed, Korth just assumed that you had done your deadlevel best, that you had put out all you could, and that you had really thought about this. You'd done it carefully. When any work came to him, he just assumed that this was as good a job as you could do; he responded that way. Even though it might not, you know, fill the bill exactly or be . . .

MOSS: Yeah.

LONGSTREET: . . . and another thing about Korth was that he would go up on the Hill on tough situations to testify, such as the TFX, and he would come back and he would invite a dozen of us or so into his office. And we'd sit there having a cup of coffee and he'd give you the whole story. He really filled you in. And I've never had a boss who kept me informed about what he was thinking and his activities and how they might impinge on my operation and ways in which I could possibly help. Because every morning, every blessed morning, there'd only be maybe be one exception in a month, we would meet for breakfast promptly at seven o'clock in his dining room in the Pentagon building. Korth would

always be there. Korth and the three assistant secretaries, the under secretary, and John Dillon would come. Once in a while we would invite somebody else, chief of naval operations or commandant of the marine corps. I could talk about the marine corps forever; I think they're wonderful. And then every--I can't remember now whether it was Tuesday or Thursday, I think it was every Tuesday--we had Captain Sheppard [Tazewell T. Sheppard] over from the White House. And he. . . .

MOSS: What was his role?

LONGSTREET: He was, he was naval aide . . .

MOSS: Liaison.

LONGSTREET: . . . he was naval aide to the president.

MOSS: Right, and he filled a liaison function with the Navy Department? Just what did he do?

LONGSTREET: Well, anything that the president was interested in that affected the navy he would tell us about. The president's thinking this and he's talking about this and so forth. No real decisions were ever made. This was just merely a matter of . . .

MOSS: Information flow.

LONGSTREET: . . . communication, information flow.

MOSS: Right.

LONGSTREET: He would always tell us, of course, what the president's movements were that affected the navy, and if he was going out in the Pacific what ships he would visit. Of course, one of the things that he would talk about once in a while would be the *Honey Fitz*, the yacht that he was using. And he would keep us informed on what the president's movements were going to be and whether he was going on vacation, whether he'd be up to Cape Cod for the following week, things like this. So we felt an intimacy here with the White House and the president, particularly as it might have affected us. And then, of course, we would tell Sheppard. We'd keep Sheppard up-to-date in some of the things that we were doing and that he felt the president might be interested in. We would spend about an hour there.

MOSS: Did you have any other functional channels to the White House? You talked about Kermit Gordon. You talked about Tazewell Sheppard, and of course the secretary had his contact and CNO [Chief of Naval Operations] had his. Were there any other ways that you got to the White House? Was there anybody on the

Sorensen [Theodore C. Sorensen] side, for instance? Lee White or somebody like that?

LONGSTREET: Well, we . . .

MOSS: I think of Myer Feldman and oil, for gosh sakes.

LONGSTREET: . . . I remember Dan Fenn came over once and talked with us at breakfast about the president's interest in appointing Negroes in not just incidental but in significant positions if we had something that was really available and coming up in the way of an opening where blacks could fit in. And then he, Dan, I remember, gave us a list of some dozen or so significant blacks, outstanding people in their fields so that we could, you know, think about these and see where they might fit. This was, of course, one of the president's interests, that something like this be done. While I was there, nothing really transpired of significance on this score. But, I think, just about the time I was leaving they hired someone who was placed fairly high in personnel. And then, of course, Red Fay, Paul Fay, was, the fact that he was around made you sort of feel that you were a little closer to the White House than you actually were.

MOSS: Tell me about that, 'cause it's a very ambiguous kind of thing. He's sometimes written off as a sort of old pal who didn't do anything but sat around and. . . . Did he really have a useful functional role?

LONGSTREET: Yes. And I know there are differences of opinion on this, even among people whose opinion I respect, but I never wrote off Red Fay. I think that Red Fay is. . . . Well, to begin with, I think he was very discreet and sensible but easy about his relations and contacts with other people so far as the president was concerned. He treated this very gently and easily and never tried to make any capital out of it at all so that relationship was not obvious with Red in any kind of contacts when anyone might say, "Oh, here's this guy coming from the president's office again!" Nothing like this ever occurred to me nor, I think, to many people around us. These were two different worlds. But I think he was very close to Jack Kennedy, no question about it.

Once in a while he told some amusing things, mostly on himself, you know, in respect to the president. I remember one time he said, "Did you know Vic," he said, "I was really embarrassed at one time." He said, "I was sitting around the table with"--this is before I came--"with a lot of naval officers and so forth discussing something and somebody came in, and in a real loud whisper, said, 'The president wants you on the phone.'" He said, "I was really embarrassed." He said, "Everybody heard this, and I went out, got the phone, the president was on the phone. We'd been at a party the night before, and somebody had heard a story he'd forgot the last line and wanted to know what it was."

MOSS: [Laughter] A big decision.

LONGSTREET: I'm sure that a lot of people around the table thought, "Oh, gee, maybe he

wants to know how much the navy is going to spend this year on carriers." Red was intelligent. He was helpful. He worked hard, and I think he did a real good job in the difficult personnel field. You know he was a real navy man, having been a sailor and having been through the thick of it. And he appreciated what these sailors and marines were doing, and he appreciated their problems. And I could see what those problems were, what Red Fay did, maybe much more so than other people because when Red was away from the office for any length of time he would ask me to take care of his job for him if any critical things came up. And the flow of thing across his desk of the personnel sort that were critical involved very much the happiness of individuals and families and so forth. I mean, these were things that were very significant to the morale and welfare of the navy.

MOSS: Yeah.

LONGSTREET: This is an area of work that he did very well and spent a lot of personal attention on. And, of course, he would visit the fleet, and he would make talks on the bridge to the sailors, eat with them, and he would go around to the shore establishments and training camps. This was his main job, you see, personnel. And I think he did a first rate job. Now there are people who would disagree with me and maybe they know more about it than I do. All I can speak from is from where I sat.

MOSS: Why don't we--pushing you on your time here--why don't we finish up by your talking about the president. You said you had one meeting with him, did you?

LONGSTREET: Well, I rented a house to him--maybe you know this--at 260 N Street in Georgetown, just a block from where he later lived when elected president. I was abroad with the Marshall Plan and my real estate agents rented it to him for the whole year of 1951. Then he was a representative. Just before Kennedy I rented my house to Red Dowling [Walter Dowling], later ambassador to West Germany, a colleague in the State department, when he was chief of the south European affairs division. Kennedy was still single of course; he rented it furnished. As a matter of fact, the four-poster pineapple-top antique bed I've got in the next room is the bed he used when he was in my house.

MOSS: Oh. We'll have to grab that one day for the museum. [Laughter]

LONGSTREET: And I think I've got quite a few other things he used.

MOSS: And you can probably get a tax write-off on it, too.

LONGSTREET: And when he left there was only one item that was missing. I had a complete inventory of the place, of course, all the. . . .

MOSS: What was the item?

LONGSTREET: I had a little, I don't know, three-by-five-inch or four-by-six-inch engraving. It was called " Cape Cod Lane," signed "Warren." It was of Provincetown. That disappeared when he left, and I've never seen it anywhere. Maybe it's in your collection at the Library.

MOSS: Maybe, maybe. You'll have to ask Dave Powers [David F. Powers] about it. See if we can locate it.

LONGSTREET: But when he left, he failed to take his roasting pan with him that he always used for their turkeys. So we still have that. So I've got the Kennedy roasting pan in exchange for the engraving.

MOSS: Put a plaque on it.

LONGSTREET: Then he sent me a letter when he left saying that he liked the house, and he enjoyed staying there and so forth and hoped that someday he would meet me, and this was sent to my real estate agent who sent me a copy of it, not a Xerox, but a typed copy.

MOSS: Photostat.

LONGSTREET: A typed copy of it. And I have the typed copy somewhere and when I came back from Europe, I asked my agents for the original. And they said they didn't keep their files that long; they had destroyed it. But I met Jack Kennedy after he was president, at a medal of honor reception he had one day on the White House grounds. And I went over and shook his hand and introduced myself. And he said, "Oh, yes." He said, "I remember you quite well," and He said, "I sent you a letter, didn't I?" He remembered that. That was the only time I personally met him. I'd seen him in groups and so forth. He'd come over to the Pentagon building every once in a while and talk to groups of us.

MOSS: Yeah. We have a couple of recordings. . . .

LONGSTREET: Yes. Wonderful talks to everybody. But he had, you know, a sort of spirit and a sense of courage. Quite a combination: spirit and courage and discipline and application to problems, standards of values and all of these combined with his being so attractive physically as well as morally and spiritually. I mean these were things that seemed to pervade the atmosphere in Washington in those days.

Some few years ago Hugh Scott [Sen. Hugh D. Scott, Jr.] bought the 260 N Street house, and I saw a write-up in the *Washington Post* just by accident. I was living in Washington at the time; I don't know how I got hold of this. There was a write-up in the *Post* about the Scott's having a reception. It was during the summer, and they were showing their house to some friends and so forth. And among the things that he proudly displayed was the so-called "Kennedy

Magnolia" in the garden which he said President Kennedy had planted when he lived there. That's more appropriately know as the Longstreet magnolia. My wife and I had brought it back from a trip to South Caroline some ten years before. It shows how rumors get started, you know. I suppose people are still calling it the Kennedy magnolia.

MOSS: There's been a lot of talk of what the Kennedy administration meant. What the legacy, in Sorensen's words, has been, and, of course, he's coming under attack from the revisionist historians nowadays as being a creature of the cold war and so on. How do you see all this? What's your feeling on it?

LONGSTREET: I saw in the paper just the other day that one of his letters had been auctioned off for a very sizeable sum in New York. And the letter was on the subject of why he had not, why he wasn't present to vote on the McCarthy [Joseph R. McCarthy] censure. I can't say that I thought very much about this. I just don't see where he was a victim of the cold war. I think he kept us from being a victim of the cold war, particularly this Cuban thing. I don't know what he could have done about the missile crisis. The Bay of Pigs, I don't know what he could have done about this that he. . . .

MOSS: That might not have been worse.

LONGSTREET: Yeah. This happened just in this change from Eisenhower [Dwight D. Eisenhower] to Kennedy, and one doesn't know what would have happened if the timing had been different. Whether it's something that Kennedy would have fostered if he had come on earlier, or how Eisenhower would have handled it if he'd come on later. Well, I just don't know. I don't see. . . . I'm not acquainted with any evidence that points out that Kennedy was a great genius at any field. I think he . . .

MOSS: Let me ask about the McNamara legacy then. . . .

LONGSTREET: . . . I think he had an awful lot to contribute, I think, in terms of people's enthusiasm about the country and where we were going and we'll work out problems one way or another. It was a more hopeful attitude, less somber.

MOSS: Let me ask about the McNamara legacy. Despite his insistence on a kind of hard-headed common sense, if you will, economic analysis of things, you still have cost overruns, you still have C-5As and TFXs and a host of other things of this sort. He didn't solve the problems, right. Do you think he really put us further on the road towards coping with this kind of thing?

LONGSTREET: Well, of course, they've jettisoned the McNamara system and they've gone back to the old system, which I would think was a mistake, maybe it wasn't. You know, I think that McNamara was on the right track. Yes, you're going to have cost overruns. You're going to. . . . Cost overruns are much more of a

problem in defense than in any other area of activity and you know the reason for this.

MOSS: Because you're on the edge of the state of the art as it were . . .

LONGSTREET: That's right.

MOSS: . . . and you keep on running into development.

LONGSTREET: Right. And so you get a thing all scheduled according to one plan and then. . . . A plane is so complicated that there isn't any part of it, and this is true of ships, too, that some new development doesn't come to fruition at this point and say, Well, gee, why don't we put it in this plane or this ship now while it's being built instead of waiting for the next one.

MOSS: It's like a painting. If you change it up in this corner, you have to change the whole bloody design.

LONGSTREET: Yeah. And talk about cost overruns, I mean, okay, you plan a vacation or you build you own house, what about your own costs? Cost overruns are typical, but it's much more of a problem in the Defense department. And I think that on the TFX, there's no question but what the concept was a sound concept. And his problem, I think, was that he couldn't really get the cooperation of the services to accept this. If they had accepted the concept--I think it's a sound concept--you'd have had a darn good chance of this thing really paying off and being successful. But it was almost continuously sabotaged on the way. People were dragging their feet, so it was very difficult.

MOSS: I noticed in the paper today and yesterday that General Van Arsdale [Harry Van Arsdale, Jr.] is in trouble over the F-111 now.

LONGSTREET: Well, now McNamara is not a cold, inhuman person.

MOSS: No, we have quite different pictures of him. Completely diametrically opposed pictures of him. Before the congressional committees the dynamic, cold, sharp, unyielding, quick kind of man and the other very human, very emotional kind of guy.

LONGSTREET: Yes, McNamara's very polite, very courteous, considerate, always willing to listen to what you have to say, and he never really gouged or drove anything down the throat of any of the services. He would ask them to come up with information to support their case, come up with alternatives. And whether they did or didn't, he would, through the so-called "snowflakes" I don't know whether you heard of these or not, he would send down. . . . When it came final budget time where you tighten up these things, he would send down his decisions in this form. He would have our proposal with the very

summary of the effects and costs and so forth. He would have an alternative. And then he would have down here the one that he had accepted. The navy would take this and sit around the table and discuss it so that it wasn't poked down their throats. He was telling 'em which one he accepted, why, and what he considered as an alternative. And we wouldn't accept all these necessarily. Ones that we felt he didn't have the full information on or he had made the decision it seemed on the basis of a false premise or the alternative hadn't been explained sufficiently so that the decision was clear, then we would take these and we would redo them and send them back. So that he was considerate in this way. He wasn't dictatorial, authoritative. And he, one characteristic of McNamara is that he never, he never criticized anybody for making mistakes. I mean, what was past is past. Okay, we loused this one up, didn't we, now let's do it right. How are we going to do it, and from then on it was how are we going to do it, how are we going to improve it, and what is needed. And never criticizing a person or a thing because it was bad, it was done wrong, or it was weak, or so forth.

MOSS: I get the picture from other people however, as sort of contrast that he did not suffer fools gladly.

LONGSTREET: Well, that's right. He was like Harriman, I felt. Harriman would treat you very politely, and you could just see it happening when a fellow was making a fool out of himself and didn't quite realize it and Harriman would be very polite to him, thanked me and what have you. But that was the last he'd ever see of Harriman. And McNamara was the same way, I mean, McNamara wasn't going to keep anybody around if they were incompetent. But I don't think you'd ever hear McNamara say, "I let so and so go because he was incompetent." That was over. And, you see, McNamara has not made any statements, so far as I'm aware, of a post-mortem sort regarding the past year. And I don't think he's about to. Speaking of congressional relations the tough guy, toughest guy that I had to deal with was this fellow Laird [Melvin R. Laird].

MOSS: Oh, yeah.

LONGSTREET: He was very critical and if you went up to see him about anything--and I had to do this on several occasions--he very quickly put you in your place and began to make you feel uneasy. Because he had some very sharp, critical things he wanted to get across to you before you had your questions to ask. I don't know what your question is, but the answer is no, this was the attitude of Laird.

MOSS: How about some of the other guys, Vinson [Carl Vinson] and Philbin [Philip J. Philbin] and Rivers [L. Mendel Rivers], Hebert [F. Edward Hebert]?

LONGSTREET: Well, these gentlemen I went around to see them and made courtesy calls to them. But when it came to having direct contact in hearings or in committee meetings or even informal on business, it was fairly nil.

McNamara, of course, presented the program for the whole navy, for the whole Defense Department, as an act of courtesy, I think, more than anything else. Each secretary was invited to also make a statement. But what he could add was practically zero. Then the real nitty-gritty came at the staff level when--as far as navy budget was concerned--my staff would be over working with their congressional committee staff. Because the staff of the armed services [Senate Armed Services Committee] or the financial committee [Senate Finance Committee] had certain questions they wanted to dig into, or the members of the committee. So that their staff and my staff just lived with each other. In fact, I think the staffs of the congressional committees involved in navy affairs--and they're very able and had great experience as you perhaps know--spent more time at the navy than they spent at the Capitol. And they would go out in the field, too. So there weren't any secrets for any of these congressional committees as far as requirements and what they cost and how the budget was prepared and spent. And I just don't understand, am completely mystified by these remarks that you hear and see in the paper on the part of congressmen that says, look, Congress is no longer going to put a rubber stamp just because the military asks for something. They never did this. Now, there might be certain individuals in Congress who voted a certain way because some of their friends within the committee told them to, since they weren't informed enough about the military budgets, because they were all involved in something else--wildlife or what have you, or social programs. So, they had to leave this up to other committees. But, the committee members were thoroughly informed about why money was being asked, how it was going to be used, justification for how it was going to be used. And they changed the budget frequently. So there wasn't any rubber stamping at all, and blind acceptance of what the quote military unquote was asking for. I was right in the thick of this and I know what happened. And the Congress has always been in a position to be as thoroughly informed about military expenditures, military budgets as the military itself is. Now, there's a big complicated financial complex, this whole costing and spending and accounting for funds. And of course, I think, compared to business, the government has a very, very difficult time in financial management. We have a lot of obvious things. One thing is that everything is expense to the government, as you know. There's no capital budget; business couldn't be managed in this way.

MOSS: Right.

LONGSTREET: It's one of the reasons why it's so important to get the post office into private corporation. And every dollar has to be very carefully accounted for, you know. And it's a criminal offense to over-commit, not to just over-pay. . . .

MOSS: You take a loss on it.

LONGSTREET: Over-commit is a criminal offense.

MOSS: Yeah.

LONGSTREET: Well.

MOSS: Okay, I'm about to run out of tape. Is there anything you think has been left out that you want to get in very quickly?

LONGSTREET: No. I think that the one thing that we--or the McNamara system--he made a very strong effort to eliminate the so-called gold plating, which is a wonderful idea. And I admit it was very effective.

MOSS: Okay, well, let me turn it off now and say thank you very much indeed.

LONGSTREET: But before you do, let me mention a bit of "Kennedyana." Bobby sent me a personal letter--a brief note--shortly after the president died thanking me for my navy service under his brother. It's puzzling because I had scarcely met Bobby--once on the navy train to the army game--and checking around I didn't find any of the others at the Navy getting such a letter.