

**Myer Rashish Oral History Interview – JFK#1, 09/11/1967**  
Administrative Information

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**Interviewer:** John F. Stewart

**Date of Interview:** September 11, 1967

**Place of Interview:** Washington, D.C.

**Length:** 39 pages

**Biographical Note**

Rashish, Special Assistant to the Under Secretary of State for Economic Affairs (1952-1953); member, President-elect Kennedy's Task Force on Foreign Economic Policy (1960), discusses his own involvement with and the support of other senior government officials for the Trade Expansion Act of 1962, among other issues.

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**Suggested Citation**

Myer Rashish, recorded interview by John F. Stewart, September 11, 1967, (page number), John F. Kennedy Library Oral History Program.

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By MYER RASHISH

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## Myer Rashish – JFK #1

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Oral History Interview

with

MYER RASHISH

September 11, 1967  
Washington, D.C.

By John F. Stewart

For the John F. Kennedy Library

STEWART: You mentioned on the phone that you got involved after the Convention [Democratic National Convention] in some of the work that was going on during the campaign in the area of foreign affairs. Just how did you get involved in that, and what...

RASHISH: Well, as I mentioned to you, Adlai Stevenson [Adlai E. Stevenson] evidently had talked to the then candidate, Senator Kennedy [John F. Kennedy], and either at Senator Kennedy's initiative or at Adlai Stevenson's initiative, a study was instituted on United States foreign policy problems which would presumably be delivered to the President-elect once elected. Stevenson was awfully busy with the campaign, as I understand it. He in turn asked George Ball [George W. Ball], who had been associated with him for a long time, to take on this study. And Ball, whom I had known for several years, invited me to participate in it on the foreign economic policy side.

My judgment of the report, if I can make it, is that it wasn't very good. It was a slapdash sort of operation. A lot of people participated in it who were busy with other things. It had no particularly integrity or continuity, but it served one function, which is perhaps the function that it was designed to serve in the first instance, and that was

when it was delivered to the President-elect in Palm Beach [Palm Beach, Florida], it served as a basis for setting up a number of task forces, notably in the field of foreign economic policy—at least, George Ball's interests primarily lay in that field—which were to present reports to the President.

STEWART: Did you do anything else during the campaign?

RASHISH: Yes. During the campaign—well, I was nominally on the staff of the Ways and Means Committee [United States House of Representatives Committee on Ways and Means] running a subcommittee on foreign trade policy that Hall Boggs [Thomas Hale Boggs] was chairman of. But the season was very slow, and with his permission I went to work casually in the research operation on L Street with Mike Feldman [Myer Feldman]. So I spent some evenings and some free time working there in addition to making a very modest contribution to the Stevenson study.

STEWART: What kind of expectations did you have about Senator Kennedy, as far as his views on trade and international economics in general?

RASHISH: Do you mean expectations that I had before I got involved in any of this?

STEWART: Right. Well, either that or during the campaign as....

RASHISH: Well, generally, having been involved in the field for a number of years, my impression was that his record was somewhat mixed and reflected the normal conflict between constituent interests and the larger view. That is to say, he was generally in support of freer trade for overriding international policy considerations, but that he had constituent problems in Massachusetts which he necessarily had to give voice to.

During that period in which I worked on the campaign, I got involve in a trade policy program of any consequence only once, and that had to do with an exchange of correspondence between the then Governor Hollings [Ernest F. Hollings] of South Carolina now Senator, and the candidate over the problem of textiles. And Mike Feldman asked me to draft an

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exchange of correspondence on this point. I drafted both ends of the exchange. The response from Kennedy to Hollings was, however, modified, contrary to what I would have liked to have seen at the time. I thought it was a premature commitment to do something for the textile industry. And that letter served as a basis for a lot of dealings, comings, and goings, on textile policy which followed. That was the first commitment, so to speak, that Kennedy made in that area.

But aside from that, there wasn't anything very substantial in the trade policy field. And even there I think that it's not clear how much attention President Kennedy gave to the matter.

STEWART: Trade matters aren't a very good topic of campaign...

RASHISH: They're not a substantial question of political interest, I don't think.

STEWART: Why did he feel that he had to make this commitment to the textile people in South Carolina? You say there was some discussion as to whether he should have or should not have.

RASHISH: Yes. Well, that was a question, obviously of political judgment on his part. I think being a Catholic and with all the concerns that he may have had about the response in the South, he didn't want to add to his troubles; perhaps he even wanted to reduce them somewhat. Hollings, as you know, is one of the aggressive young breed of Southern Democratic politician—and a very attractive man I think, personally, from what I've seen of him—and presumably had enough potential leadership qualities so that it made some sense.

STEWART: As far as the task forces are concerned...

RASHISH: That was after the election.

STEWART: Right, right. Exactly how did you get involved in it and what were your primary areas of consideration?

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RASHISH: Well, as I mentioned, I got involved sort of marginally in that Stevenson exercise. We all—some of us worked on that Stevenson thing, it was a very small group here in Washington—congregated at George Ball's offices over at the Southern Building on 15<sup>th</sup> Street. And that was a natural consequence of having been involved in the prior study, besides which, you know, I had some experience and interest and, presumably, competence in the field of foreign economic policy, and it made some sense.

I might point out that there were a number of task force studies laid on as a consequence of that trip to Palm Beach in which the Stevenson report was delivered. There was one on foreign economic policy generally, and because of the interest of the President-elect in the balance of payments problems, which was then warming up considerably as a public policy question, the balance of payments part, so to speak, of the foreign economic policy was spun off and made the subject of a separate task force exercise. I was secretary of the task force on the balance of payments. I was secretary of that part of the task force on foreign economic policy that dealt with trade and related matters, and a fellow by the name

of George Springsteen [George S. Springsteen], who is now Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for European Affairs, did the foreign aid portion of that study.

But, as I say, there were other studies undertaken: one of Africa on which a very large tome emerged; one on the Foreign Service [United States Foreign Service], as I recall, and one on, I think, United States cultural activities abroad—I'm not certain about that; one or two others. These others were not central to Ball's concern. His concern was virtually confined to the foreign economic policy and balance of payments reports. His interest lay in the direction of going to State [United States Department of State] as the Under Secretary for Economic Affairs (which he, in fact, did), and so it was natural for him to confine his interests to these two task forces.

We worked through the last three weeks of November, all of December. My recollection is that the report on the balance of payments was delivered around Christmas time and

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the one of foreign economic policy about ten days later, something like that. Early January. Perhaps even two weeks later.

STEWART: These reports, of course, will be available some place in the library, but generally what was the thinking as far as trade policy was concerned? Was there a definite consideration of what became a trade expansion?

RASHISH: Well, I think, in fact, the roots of what subsequently emerged as the Trade Expansion Act of 1962 are to be found in that task force report on foreign economic policy, and it's no coincidence in view of the fact that Ball became Under Secretary for Economic Affairs, and I got directly involved with the whole Trade Expansion Act exercise. One would have assumed that. The one difference is, curiously enough, that the task force report was less adventurous than the Administration's bill. And in part, that reflected Ball's own uncertainty about what Kennedy thought about trade policy and his reluctance to get out too far on a policy position that might have characterized him as being radical or unrealistic, particularly in light of the fact that he—I think it's well known—had some ambitions about serving in the Administration. So it was curious that that happened.

STEWART: Wasn't there some discussion, or maybe this was definitely in the report, about combining the foreign aid and trade programs organizationally in the Administration?

RASHISH: Well, I wouldn't be surprised, but I don't have a clear recollection of the details of the task force recommendations on that subject. It's a perennial subject, and I'm sure it was covered. But I've always felt that what you can accomplish through organizational changes are marginal anyhow. I never paid much attention.

STEWART: You went to the State Department then with Mr. Ball.

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RASHISH: Yes. I went over in mid-January when he went over as Under Secretary for Economic Affairs as a special assistant.

STEWART: Were you primarily concerned with trade matters, or was it...

RASHISH: Well, we didn't have very many trade matters at that time. There was some preliminary work being done here in the Department at the operating levels on what the new legislation should look like and so on, which I had participated in as a consultant late in 1960. But most of my time was spent on other things, some monetary problems, some of our German problems, the effort to develop a more effective system for burden-sharing of foreign aid, which was reflected in the March meeting of the Development Assistance Committee at that time—Development Assistance Group, at that time, now the Development Assistance Committee—of the OECD [Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development]. So I didn't do very much in the trade field at that time. There was some textile problems, but there hasn't been a time in the last decade that there hasn't been.

STEWART: Were you actively involved in all the activities that resulted in the textile agreement in 1961?

RASHISH: Not actively, no. No, I did not participate in the negotiation of the agreement. There were other people who did that in the Department. I was involved to some extent at the policy level, both at the Department and at the White House.

STEWART: Before you get into the trade expansion business, what kind of relationships did you have with people at the White House? Who primarily did you deal with on what types of things?

RASHISH: What I was at State?

STEWART: Right.

RASHISH: I dealt very little, if at all, with people at

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the White House. I used to see Walt Rostow [Walt Whitman Rostow] occasionally when he would come over to State when he was still Mac

Bundy's [McGeorge Bundy] deputy. I knew Mike Feldman for some time so that I saw him from time to time. But it was part of Ball's modus operandi to handle the White House quite individually, and he very rarely took anybody over from the Department with him on the White House meetings, and this includes senior officers of the Department as well as assistants on his own staff. So that we had virtually no—I had no continuing contact with anybody at the White House.

STEWART: It's frequently been commented on that he was just totally independent as far as the State Department organization was concerned. There was very little control, so to speak, over the way he went and the areas he got into and so forth.

RASHISH: Well, he's a—I guess you'd have to describe him as a loner. I think that comment is perfectly accurate, particularly of the period that I saw him in operation, that is, the first seven months of 1961. I suspect it changed after a while. I think in part it reflected, if I may say so, a certain insecurity about his position vis-à-vis the professionals in the Department. You've got a lot of talent at the State Department, I think, and you've got a fair amount of bureaucratic in-fighting. And I think he may have felt a little uncertain about whom he could trust and whom he could not trust. He was also a fairly self-confident man, so he didn't really feel the need for outside advice. I suspect, without knowing directly from experience, that that changed as his own experience in the Department broadened and as he got more and more people in positions of responsibility in the Department, which he did, quite consciously. So he was able to rely on the line people more than he did in the beginning.

STEWART: I frankly don't have any questions or any specific topics on anything but the trade expansion. Is there anything that went on before that is of any significance?

RASHISH: Well, if I were to comment on anything else

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besides the Trade Expansion Act that I was involved in in those early months of 1961, it would be the balance of payments. I had the strong feeling at the time, having gotten involved in the subject, having been interested for some time... [Interruption] As I was saying, I thought that President Kennedy exhibited in those early months, and I'm afraid that this was true later on as well, more of a concern and worry about the U.S. balance of payments position than the problem merited, at least in my judgment and, I think, in the judgment of a lot of other people as well. Now what the explanation of this is, this was, I don't know, I don't think that he, extraordinary man that he was, that he was terribly sophisticated about a lot...

STEWART: I've heard that.

RASHISH: ...of the problems of this sort. And also, it seems to me that the Secretary of the Treasury, Mr. Dillon [C. Douglas Dillon]—are we on record?—that the Secretary of the Treasury, Mr. Dillon, found it to his advantage to make the balance of payments problem a central problem of American public policy. And he's a very skillful and adept guy, and I think this tended to underline the problem—make it larger than it, in fact, was—as an issue that continually engaged the interest of the President.

STEWART: Do you think this was because there had been so much discussion of it during the campaign? There had been a considerable amount—actually it wasn't that much, and there wasn't any real outlining of differences between he and Eisenhower [Dwight D. Eisenhower], but...

RASHISH: No, but you recall the famous Anderson [Robert B. Anderson]-Dillon "Mission to Bonn" which aborted and so on. That was something that did attract attention, perhaps not generally with the public—I don't think it's the kind of a subject that commands wide public attention—but I think enough attention in certain circles. As a matter of fact, President-elect Kennedy at this time asked Paul Nitze [Paul Henry Nitze] to serve as his sort of liaison and debriefer with Anderson and Dillon on balance of payments matters during the transition period, and for that reason we

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made him a member of that task force on the balance of payments.

That's just a general comment on some things that I had an occasion to observe. You know, there were conflicts between the Council of Economic Advisors and the Treasury Department [United States Department of the Treasury] over these issues, with State not playing as full a role as I, as many people, thought it should in this period. It was a highly contentious question in those early months, the first year or so of the Administration; one that didn't deserve the attention that it got, that didn't merit the amount of acrimony that was expended, and that, in some respects, when the President was riding high, the new Administration was riding high, we lost some opportunities to exert some influence in the world, and we had considerably more than we have currently when we just completed, or reached, a critical stage in negotiations with the international monetary reform. We had a good deal of influence in the direction, it seems to me, of international cooperation and institutional reform which we lost because of a number of difficulties that existed, differences of opinion.

STEWART: As far as the White House was concerned, you would say that this was primarily due to the Secretary of the Treasury and his influence as an advisor?

RASHISH: I think it was an important factor. Not only the Secretary but the Under Secretary for Monetary Affairs, Mr. Roosa [Robert V. Roosa]. I think it was also the fact that there was fertile ground there in the President's

own mind, whether this reflected—I suppose the conventional thing some people might say was that the President’s concern reflected his father’s conventional interest and attitudes toward the problem. What it reflected, I don’t know. I don’t have any basis for making a judgment on that.

STEWART: Okay. You were going to say something about Mr. Ball’s appointment.

RASHISH: Yes. I think one can be honest about this:

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Everybody’s ambitious, and people don’t go into public life unless they are ambitious for influence and power, even if, and I suspect that in the majority of cases it’s true, they want to exercise that power for some good end. That’s true of Ball. I’d heard in the ’52 and ’56 campaigns, for example, that if Stevenson had been elected, he would have been Secretary or Under Secretary of State. And he’d always had an interest in public policy questions, so that his interest in the Stevenson study, first off, and secondly, the task force were, I think, motivated to a great extent by his desire to be appointed to a position of some consequence in the Administration.

As I said, we used to work over at his offices seven days a week, any number of hours a day, on these task force exercises. It was a small cadre consisting of John Sharon [John H. Sharon], later Tom Finney, myself, and one or two other people spent a good deal of time over there. And it was a bit of a shock to all of us when we heard, and I don’t recall the source, when we heard that William Foster [William C. Foster] had been invited by Dean Rusk to serve as Under Secretary for Economic Affairs, which was the job that Dillon had held in the Eisenhower Administration and the one that Ball was interested in. Ball’s interest had been made known. A former associate of his, Adam Yarmolinsky, had been working with Sargent Shriver [R. Sargent Shriver, Jr.] on his talent hunt. So at least that was one channel for interest, and perhaps that was the source of the information. As a matter of fact, I think it was. Rusk invited, as a consolation prize, Ball to serve as Assistant Secretary for Economic Affairs. I think he was even offered the Ambassadorship to Paris in which he had no interest at all. But he was on the verge at one point of settling for the Assistant Secretary for Economic Affairs.

I can recall going down to Cocoa Beach [Cocoa Beach, Florida], where his family has a place and where Ball is wont to spend his Christmas holiday, to spend a couple of days just before Christmas 1960 to polish up the balance of payments report. And he was seriously considering accepting the Assistant Secretary for Economic Affairs. I think I was successful in talking him out of it. When I got back to Washington, John Sharon, who’d been a very close associate of Ball’s, was in just

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short of a catatonic state as a result of this development. So I sat down with John and said, “Well, what can we do? It hasn’t been announced yet. What can we do to reverse this?” I suggested that the thing to do was to call Adlai Stevenson, who after all was very close to

Ball and for whom John had served as a private secretary when—his name escapes me at the moment, but he was subsequently Ambassador to the Philippines; Bill something or other from Chicago.

STEWART: Blair [William McCormick Blair, Jr.]?

RASHISH: Bill Blair, yes. When Bill Blair was absent on a couple of months holiday back sometime. I think, in the fifties. So we called Stevenson up and gave him “who struck John” about another Republican being appointed to a position of prominence in the State Department and “Who the hell won the election anyhow?” and so on.

Stevenson got pretty warmed up about this. He said, well, the thing to do was to call Bill Fulbright [J. William Fulbright], who at that moment was sunning himself on the sands of Palm Beach. And, as Stevenson put it, if Bill were prepared to get his backside off of the sand, he could go back to Jack and do something about this, close quotes. This in fact happened. Stevenson called Fulbright.

I learned subsequently sometime later, from someone close to Fulbright, that Fulbright didn't know Ball from a hole in the wall, but he decided that it was about time that we had some Democrats in the State Department. He went over and saw Kennedy. Kennedy said he didn't know Foster, he was relying on Rusk's advice on this matter. But evidently he fixed it because I remember one Saturday morning wandering in about 9:30 into Ball's office—he'd arrived a few minutes earlier—and just the two of us were sitting around. The phone rang, and he put it down with a big smile on his face and said, “That was Dean Rusk asking me to serve as Under Secretary for Economic Affairs.” So we broke out the bottle a little earlier in the day than was normal.

STEWART: Did you assume or were you all fairly optimistic that Adlai Stevenson would become Secretary of State?

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RASHISH: I think most people in that particularly milieu that I'm talking about, because of their affinity and affection for Stevenson, rather hoped he would be and, I think, in some respects assumed that he would be. I don't know whether Ball had any preconceptions on that score.

STEWART: When did you first get involved, do you recall, in the whole matter of trade expansion, or what became of the Trade Expansion Act?

RASHISH: Well, there was agreement in our circles at the State Department, and elsewhere in the Administration (I used to maintain fairly good contact with the people in Commerce [United States Department of Commerce]), that the Administration would have to make up its mind as to what it wanted to do on trade policy. The legislation, as I recall, was expiring in 1961.

STEWART: '62.

RASHISH: Was it '62?

STEWART: Mid-'62, right.

RASHISH: Mid-'62, is that when it expired? Yes, it was '58—four years, wasn't it? I should know, I worked on that on the Hill [Capitol Hill]. Mid-'62. So that people began to think about what was going to happen. And I guess it was assumed that I would be working on this at State if State were assigned the responsibility for it. There was the inevitable and traditional conflict between State and Commerce over foreign trade policy which manifested itself early in the Administration. Just a natural cultural carry-over from prior administrations. And the business of whether Commerce, with its affinity and connections with the business community, could make out a more hard-nosed case.

It was a lot of nonsense, by the way, because I think the only thing—the major factor which carried the Trade Expansion Act through was not the arguments of hard commercial interests so much as overriding foreign policy. But in any event, the question came up of how to resolve

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this problem. And it was suggested that—I guess it was a suggestion that I either originated or supported—perhaps the thing to do to give it some status, as well as resolve the conflict between the two agencies, was to have somebody in the White House do all this preparatory exercise and come up with some recommendations that reflected the views of various departments and agencies concerned. This was agreed to at Commerce as well.

I was doing, at the same time, a little missionary work with my friends in Commerce. And Commerce independently and State independently drew up lists of candidates of people who could take on this assignment, and I saw to it that Howard Petersen's [Howard C. Petersen] name was on both lists. He turned out to be the only name on both lists, and he was picked. And when he came over in early July—he came to Washington in early July and saw Ball, and Ball brought him over to see the President—it was agreed that I would go with him as deputy. And I spent a day in Philadelphia [Philadelphia, Pennsylvania] just before he left on a European holiday, seeing what he wanted to do in the interim. Then the first week of August, I think it was about August 7 or 8, Petersen came to town, and we marched over to the White House, saw some of the people, got ourselves some offices in the Executive Office Building, and we were in business.

STEWART: The first, well, maybe I'm wrong, but it seems to me the first big decision was on the timing of the legislation. There were a number of alternatives, either to let the old bill die and wait 'till '63, which I guess Ball wanted, or to just renew it, which I think Petersen wanted.

RASHISH: Well, that whole story is a little complicated. It's not as simple a game of liberals and conservatives and that sort of thing. I think it's fair to say that whatever the play of forces and interests and opinions were during this formative period, we ended up with sort of a maximalist approach on trade expansion because the decision was made to go in '62 and not to wait until '63, which Ball advanced, and I think only he advanced it seriously, for reasons relating to the character of the European Economic Community and its willingness to engage in

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trade negotiations. There was that, the problem of whether you wait. And then there were any number of problems and issues that arose about the content of the legislation and its rationale and how it should be dressed up and so on.

I think we ended up just right. That is to say, I think Petersen was in favor of moving as quickly as possible. He had some initial trepidation about how broad-gauged, fair-sighted—you can use whatever adjectives you want—the legislation should be but ended up very strongly committed to that approach, that opinion. There were differences of views between, literally between everybody that participated in it, including the outside advisors and consultants.

STEWART: But as far as the timing was concerned, this wasn't a totally independent decision in the sense that.... Well, all the other considerations of the type of bill that was going to be proposers went into the timing.

RASHISH: Sure, the legislative program generally was a factor in the decision on timing, too. You know, the President had certain objectives his first year, and there were so many things you could expend energy and effort on. So that was a factor as well.

As you know, the system we rigged up was to have an inter-agency committee—representative of the sub-Cabinet at the under secretary level and then another for the working level. And we tried, I think quite effectively, to use that mechanism to work out problems and, you know, to do all the things you have to do to get agreement to present to the President.

There was one important meeting before the President in which everyone who had any interest at the senior level of the government, Cabinet officers and under secretaries, participated, at which sort of the basic question of when to proceed was argued between Ball and Petersen. And the decision was made then, I think, to proceed in '62. But a lot of the ancillary and subsidiary questions were really resolved at this working level. And surprisingly, most of the White House staff, special assistants to the President, participated very little in the exercise. We did, in our office, exercise a fair amount of independence and hegemony over all of this.

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I had the feeling that Mike Feldman, who'd been involved in some trade matters, and this was part of this portfolio, viewed the whole thing with some bemusement in the sense that he thought we were really shooting for the moon and might get a minor star in the process. And asking for all that we asked for, he thought, well, at least it gave him some room to negotiate, but I don't think he really....On the other hand, I recall that Larry O'Brien [Lawrence F. O'Brien] when asked a judgment by the President as to what the politics of the case called for, whether we should proceed with a large program or a small program, generally the two labels that were attached, and whether we should go now or wait, Larry felt, after hearing the presentations and so on, that, I think as he put it, "On an issue of this sort, we ought to go for broke." You know, if it's that important and that substantial, let's go. Sorensen [Theodore C. Sorensen], too, played, of course, a very important role. I think these three really are the only ones who did. But Ted's substantive role, of course, was drafting the message—January 25, was it?—on the legislation. I developed a great admiration for him. He showed considerable sensitivity to the issues, to the larger purposes and objectives of the legislation, which for someone who had to deal with a thousand and one different things was, I think, quite a testimony to his capacity.

STEWART: That's something I was going to ask you. Arthur Schlesinger [Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr.] in his book...

RASHISH: Schlesinger didn't understand the legislation, had no sympathy for it. Just completely removed from it, completely negative. And whether it was because he was never consulted on it, I don't know. But I read the passage in the book and, of course, heard stories about it while I was working there. Did I anticipate your question?

STEWART: That's already. He talks about the "evangelical mood" of people who were working on this and that people looked on it as the "unifying intellectual principle of the New Frontier," and this type of thing. Was this in the air, was this in the atmosphere, so to speak?

RASHISH: Yes.

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STEWART: And also things in Joseph Kraft's *Grand Design* and that type of thing.

RASHISH: Well, I thought Joe Kraft's book was a good book, in the sense that he gave an honest account, in the main, of (a) events, and (b) ideas. And the two, of course, are related. But as the "unifying intellectual principle of the New Frontier," that's a considerable overstatement. I don't know of any of the participants in the exercise who felt that way about it.

I think that it had the characteristics of the unifying intellectual principle in one aspect of foreign policy, notably our relations with the new emerging Europe. Not that the trade legislation or what could be done under it would have these effects, but the trade legislation

was virtually the only expression of that policy that was available to be used and that would test the Congress, test the temperature of public opinion, and serve as an educative device. So that there was in this sense a “grand design,” there’s no question about that—this notion of the Atlantic partnership or however you want to put it.

The trade legislation was couched in the language of metaphors, the ideology of the grand design. I think it was properly so. And I think that a number of people may have let their enthusiasm run away with them. But I think, by the same token, without that enthusiasm, without that sort of guiding principle of foreign policy and guiding objective of foreign policy, it would have been impossible to have gotten as revolutionary legislation as this was through the Congress, particularly as you compare it to the other legislative proposals which the Administration sent to the Congress and the difficulties which they encountered.

So I think that you need a little enthusiasm, fervor, a little larger picture, a guiding light to engender enthusiasm and interest, participation on the part of not only people within the government but more important people in the public at large and in the Congress. That was done, clearly. The fact that it wasn’t particularly devoted,

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addressed, rather I should say, to the problems of less developed countries may explain in part Schlesinger’s view of it.

STEWART:           What were the President’s main concerns in these early stages, say during the summer and fall of 1961 when these decisions were being made?

RASHISH:           Well, they were being made a lot earlier than that on the legislation.

STEWART:           Well, during the...

RASHISH:           Oh, the summer and fall. Oh, that’s right, ’61. Excuse me, you’re right. Well, I have to tell you that we got very few signals from the White House, from the President.

STEWART:           Oh, really?

RASHISH:           That’s my recollection. It’s clear that he began to develop increasing interest in this as it began to steam-roll and attract a lot of attention, particularly as it got in the press and so on. For example, I remember the fellow we had doing some counseling for us on the public affairs aspect of it. He called the White House once to get Mrs. Lincoln [Evelyn N. Lincoln] to get some information about something, and the President got on the wire right away and gave the man the benefit of his views on the subject. And he certainly went out of his way once the thing got going to talk to people and the press and so on, about it. But during the early period which you mentioned,

the late summer and fall of 1961, as I say, we got precious few signals from next door on the matter.

STEWART: I think he had a meeting or two during the summer up at Hyannis Port [Hyannis Port, Massachusetts] that Howard Petersen and a number of people probably went to.

RASHISH: Yes, I think those were mainly in the way of progress reports. Have you got any more on that than that?

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STEWART: No.

RASHISH: Then you ought to talk to Petersen. But I did not go to that meeting. I remember Luther Hodges [Luther H. Hodges] went, and Howard, and I think maybe Ball, somebody from State went. I don't think that these were definitive meetings, in any sense, decision making meetings. The decision making meetings came later. The one on timing, for example, was an important one on sort of the large versus the small approach. But during the early period when I think, in fact, the ideas had been hammered out, as I say, there wasn't very much—my recollection, at least, is there wasn't very much, very many signals coming from the White House.

STEWART: Okay. As far as the substance of the proposal, what would you say were the aspects of it that were most in dispute within the Administration before the final proposal was put together?

RASHISH: Well, we've already talked about the timing question, whether to go in '62 or '62. That was in dispute. Also in dispute was the nature... Well, virtually every major facet of the legislation was in dispute to some degree. You had some disagreement over this authority to reduce tariffs to zero on certain items of trade. The Commerce Department didn't much care for it, for example. We had disagreement on how far we could go in revising the escape clause and introducing the adjustment assistance provisions. There was disagreement on large questions as well as disagreement over smaller ones. That's about it.

When the proposals were finally hammered out, there was a meeting at the White House, which I guess Ted Sorensen chaired, in the conference room on the second floor in the East Wing, in the West Wing, that is, and our proposals were submitted. There reflected presumably the work of all of these inter-agency committees. It was an extremely benign performance. Ted read them out. Nobody had any questions. Everything just went....It surprised me, in fact. Can I go off the record while I tell you a story about this? [Interruption]

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Interestingly enough (let me just make one observation about the President's involvement in this), after the meeting that I just mentioned, my recollection's getting a little bit dim, but there was a memorandum done up which itemized the provisions of the bill, and there was a meeting with the President in his office with Luther Hodges, George Ball, Howard Petersen, Mike Feldman, Ted Sorensen, and myself. And the President went through the whole thing and put his finger on the one provision in the bill, the proposed bill, that we'd had some reservations about in terms of whether it made any sense and whether he would accept it. And I thought that sort of the almost unerring instinct with which he focused in on that one weak provision on a subject to which I'm sure he'd hadn't devoted too much energy, attention, just struck me as exhibiting quite a good deal of acumen.

STEWART:                Were you in on the final drafting of it, of Abe Chayes [Abram Chayes] and...

RASHISH:                Well, the drafting of the bill itself, we commissioned Abe Chayes to chair a committee to do the actual drafting of the bill. The committee consisted of lawyers from the various agencies, including Nicholas Katzenbach [Nicholas deB. Katzenbach] from Justice [United States Department of Justice]. And they spent their free moments on that one. The bill was subsequently redrafted in major part by the legislative counsel of the House Ways and Means Committee during the Ways and Means Committee executive session without, in fact, disturbing the substance of the bill very much, but this was the one thing that Wilbur Mills decided he wanted to pick on, the fact that it was a badly drafted bill, which if you have to pick a fight, that's just the right kind of fight to pick—and to concede on.

STEWART:                Speaking on concessions, I was going to ask you, were you conscious in this whole exercise of what would have to be conceded or what would probably be conceded in the proposal when it went up to the Hill?

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RASHISH:                Well, I said, I remember saying to Larry O'Brien that I thought that the lightning rod in the bill, the item that would attract the electricity, were the adjustment assistance provisions. And that, in fact, was the case as far as the House was concerned. But I didn't really think that we were going to have to make concessions. First of all, there were a number of concessions made, as you know—the textile concessions, notably.

On the whole, it was a fairly clean exercise in the sense...

[BEGIN SIDE II, TAPE I]

RASHISH:                ...in the sense that there were very few concessions made on the bill. I can remember making concessions before the Finance Committee because, on reflection, I'd thought that the language of the bill was

much too tight in certain respects. We decided to ask for the change and to let one of the senators who had some questions about that provision do it. In fact, it came out remarkably unscathed, and at little cost, little cost in other areas of policy, relative cost. It didn't cost any post offices, for example, as I recall.

STEWART: As far as the whole campaign to get public support for the measure, who would you say was primarily responsible for development this campaign, laying it out and determining just how it would be done?

RASHISH: Well, actually the same people who were responsible for the substantive formulation of the legislation, the policy, and did all the rest of it, namely Petersen and myself. We got people in to help us, but in fact they worked under our close direction. You can't really say, I don't think, that there was a well articulated plan that had been laid out for this public support program, that it was much more haphazard than that. First of all, we shouldn't have been doing it as actively as we did, if the truth were known, and secondly, I guess this has been done before, we got a public committee, called the Committee for National Trade Policy, which tends to be

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dormant between periods of legislative activity. We got that beefed up, people came in and worked with it. So we got as much done outside of the government as possible.

But we had people on our staff, some of them, in fact most of them, sort of casual people who were there on a non-payment basis, they were there for free, who got assignments. There was one fellow who got sort of the international business community, and another guy drew labor, and so on. But it was awfully mixed up and, as I say, haphazard. We used to strike at targets of opportunity, rather than by strategic plan. The notion was to provide as much information as we could to all the media, to interest them as much as possible in what this legislation was about, to get out and make as much speeches before public organizations—you know, these things snowball so that the minute you get press attention, you begin to get calls for speech making—to make sure that the various agencies, State and Commerce principally, Treasury and Agriculture [United States Department of Agriculture], so on, were doing their share with regard to their constituencies, both in the public at large and on the Hill. So it was really a—it sort of began to grow, you know, and people just began to do sort of the obvious things, I think.

STEWART: Was there ever a fear of overselling the thing, of going too far...

RASHISH: Well, we had a control on this, you know. If we ever came to a point where 95 per cent of the House was with us, we would have decided it was time to stop. The other thing we did—and this is something that Tim Finney did with a couple of assistants—we had probably, if I may say so, we had the best intelligence gathering network on the Hill so that we were in a position to keep a running tab of how various congressmen would vote, which was extremely helpful, particularly in working with Wilbur Mills who always wants to know what the temper of the

House is. And we were able to give Mills on a weekly basis running reports on the membership of the House which he in his own informal way checked out, began to find very reliable, and when the numbers began to look awfully good, he derived a great deal of confidence out of this. We, you know, knew a great many of the lobbyists in town and other people who knew members of the Hill, who for all kinds of

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reasons were able to approach them and get a feel of what their problems are. And so a good intelligence system was operated.

I have to say that my admiration for Larry O'Brien is unlimited. I think he's an extraordinary...I know you may not be interested in personal opinions here about people, but I have a great esteem and affection for him. But I feel that there was a certain amount of resentment on the part of the White House staff, special assistants to the President in the White House, towards our operation in the Executive Office Building. Not that we were not aware of the dangers that existed, and we made every effort, I think, to maintain as close liaison....I really feel that it was their responsibility rather than ours, and we were helping them.

But inevitably with all the problems they had to deal with, we tended to generate a momentum of our own to keep working. And I do have the feeling that there was a certain amount of resentment that we were able to carry this off as well as we did on the legislative side without their apparent or continuing help. And there was at one point some evidence of this directed against Howard Petersen, which did not reflect in my mind anything more than this kind of peevish resentment on the part of the White House staff—who, I think, just as a matter of philosophy worked on the principle that you husband as much power in the White House as you possibly can and you distribute as little as possible. Our experience, our situation tended to contradict that principle. That's gratuitous.

STEWART: As far as getting to groups outside, did the Administration's anti-business image, oh, I guess they didn't really...

RASHISH: No, that came later.

STEWART: That really came later.

RASHISH: This was still the honeymoon period, which is one of the reasons why we were pressing for '62 rather than for '63. There were other good reasons as well, but...I think there were a lot of segments of business that were uncertain about the President. One can be uncertain about the President's policy on wage-

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price questions, for example, antitrust policy, and a whole host of other things, and still feel, for reasons of self-interest, that a liberal trade policy makes sense.

STEWART: Did you have any direct dealings with the labor people?

RASHISH: Yes.

STEWART: Was there ever a serious doubt that you would eventually go along or at least not raise too much of a fuss?

RASHISH: No, no. I never had any doubts....You mean the AFL-CIO [American Federation of Labor-Congress of Industrial Organizations]?

STEWART: Yes.

RASHISH: Never had any doubts about the AFL-CIO. Got strong support from some unions like the machinists. I never had any doubts about the AFL-CIO. Meany's [George Meany] position, I think, on this was clear. Curiously enough, I think that Meany's strong support and interest was motivated by precisely these architectonic aspects of the whole thing: the foreign policy, the grand design, and all that. Meany happens to be a believer in a strong Atlantic community, and he's very strongly anti-communist, perhaps for the same reason, but they both merged. But I never had any doubts about that. My relationships with the Labor Department [United States Department of Labor] were excellent, with Arthur Goldberg [Arthur J. Goldberg] and Bill Wirtz [W. Willard Wirtz], so that there was never any problem there....

STEWART: Were you...

RASHISH: ...that I recall. Did anybody else recall any problems?

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STEWART: No. The Manufacturing Chemists was, of course, one of the biggest groups involved, one of the most, the most involved. Did you have any contacts with them early in the game?

RASHISH: A good deal of contact with the Manufacturing Chemists Association because of the fact they're one of those squeaky wheels that get the grease, that are important, and they've always had problems with trade policy, liberal trade policy. So they got a lot of attention, and there was a lot of conversation. It was our luck that the President of the Manufacturing Chemists Association at this time was a guy of progressive spirit, liberal temperament and mood, Robert Semple [Robert B. Semple] of Wyandotte Chemical, and so it was a lot easier to open up, as I say, a dialogue with them that might not otherwise have been the case.

The industry had changed a good deal, too, over the years. It was a very substantial exporter with considerable international interests, and so on. So we, I think, took great pains

about maintaining communication with various major industry groups, particularly those that had strong opinions on the other side.

STEWART: Did this whole matter of a textile agreement in the summer of 1961 present any problems as far as people saying, “You’ve done this for the textile people, why don’t you do it for us?”

RASHISH: Well, sure, there were people saying that. However, they didn’t have the political muscle that the textile industry had. You know, I think the textile agreement—first, the initial commitments, and the textile agreement, generally—was not directed exclusively at the Trade Expansion Act. Throughout President Kennedy’s, part of his legislative strategy was trying to weld a natural coalition between the liberal Democrats and the Southern Democrats. And this had to do with a great many other aspects of his legislative programs, not alone trade legislation.

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As a practical matter, if you were to confine the thing to trade alone—and abstract from the total legislative picture—I think that you could have come out a lot cheaper. That is to say, let’s assume that the textile agreement was not desirable, as a lot of people in the Administration felt, then I think you could have gotten away without a textile agreement if you were prepared to do something with some of the Northern Republicans. As it was, we made some efforts in that direction, and we got forty Republicans’ votes on the critical motion to recommit in the House. Are you getting to that later because it’s an interesting vignette on that...

STEWART: No, no.

RASHISH: ...that might interest you? As I say, we cultivated a number of these Republicans, notably Tom Curtis [Thomas Bradford Curtis] on the Ways and Means Committee and through Tom some others. Liberal, internationalist, middle-of-the-road Republicans. And I can recall that, as I mentioned earlier, I was expecting the adjustment assistance provisions to be the lightning rod, and they turned out to be—a big brouhaha with the state employment commissions, and all this kind of business, on the workers assistance provisions.

And there was a meeting a day or two before—the evening, I guess—of the vote on the motion to recommit in the House, a meeting in the Speaker’s office, Speaker McCormack’s [John William McCormack] office, with Carl Albert [Carl B. Albert], Hale Boggs, and Larry O’Brien and Arthur Goldberg. I’ve forgotten who else was there. I think that’s about it. I was there. And the question was whether they ought not make some modification, have the committee come with a committee amendment on the adjustment assistance provisions because of all this excitement. Well, Mills was not there, and Mills knew we had the vote, so it didn’t make much difference what we speculated in that office.

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The interesting thing is that I was arguing... You know, we had our count, our final count, and Carl Albert was convinced by it, or at least he accepted it. He may have accepted it under the false impression that it was Larry O'Brien's count. At one point Carl said, "Well, we got forty Republican votes, and even with these defections here, we're fine." So Larry said, "What Republican votes? We may have one Republican vote." You may remember that there was a series of Administration bills which collected one Republican vote each. Chester Merrow [Chester E. Merrow] of New Hampshire was his candidate, I think, for the one Republican vote on the motion to recommit because he'd been with the Administration on a couple of things before. And there was a little bit of discussion about whose count this was. And I said it was our count, and Larry said it wasn't his. And my old pal Hale Boggs counseled me in a fatherly fashion and said, "Mike, we just don't have Republicans."

Well, we ended up having forty Republican votes, and my feeling is that we could have gotten another twenty or thirty if we'd worked at it and it wouldn't have been necessary to have the textile agreement. But the answer to that is that it was essential for the Administration to have Southern Democratic votes for all kinds of reasons—not only in other legislative programs, but in other matters.

STEWART: Did you find this whole thing getting tangled up with other legislation?

RASHISH: No. It was remarkably clean. The legislation that preceded this in the House floor was the agriculture bill, and you know what a mess that was. And it's remarkable, considering the difficulties that that engendered, how clean the performance on the trade bill was. It's just that I guess maybe people had purged their bile on the agriculture bill. Whatever it was, anything, it didn't seem to get tangled up in other legislation at all, not even in terms of programming, scheduling. That's my recollection, at least. I don't recall anything.

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STEWART: I was reading an article recently by Seymour Harris [Seymour E. Harris], who was critical of the emphasis that you people placed on jobs and the number of jobs that this whole Trade Expansion Act would provide. One, was this true, and two, did you ever find yourself doing.... Were there other things that you felt were misplaced as far as their emphasis was concerned?

RASHISH: Well, as you mentioned earlier, there was some exaggeration, obviously. When you advertise your product, you don't make a point of mentioning the other fellow's. Whether the job thing was exaggerated, I don't know. That was not my feeling at the time. I thought it was a fairly honest statement. There were no official estimates out of the Administration, to the best of my recollection, on how many jobs would be created. That would have been idiotic. I think all they said was that so many jobs could be reasonably attributed to foreign trade, so many jobs could reasonably be regarded as created if you were to cut off imports of competitive items, or something like this. But I don't recall any discussion of how many jobs would be

created if we passed this legislation. I suppose one could make an estimate of how many jobs would be created if exports increased by X billions of dollars or something like that, but I don't think we even did that. Is that what it seemed like?

STEWART: I think so. I'm pretty certainly that there was...

RASHISH: If that was the case, I want to dissociate myself from it.

STEWART: I think there was a specific, well, not specific figure but a general figure.

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RASHISH: I think that's kind of silly. You know, I think in an expanding economy, you get more jobs, whether the economy expands because of international trade expansion, or what have you. Similarly, we used to argue quality jobs. This is to say that as foreign trade expands, your export industries tend to be the more progressive, the higher paying, and so on. Employment opportunities open up there, and you can get better jobs. But I don't recall much emphasis on that.

STEWART: Was it ever the slightest question that you didn't have to give the assurances to Senator Kerr [Robert S. Kerr] that cattle and oil wouldn't be touched? Was there any opposition to giving these assurances is what I'm asking.

RASHISH: The oil thing was decided long before the conversation with Kerr was engaged. Let's see, when we drafted the bill, we left the national security provision in the law as it was before, in '58. As far as cattle is concerned, I don't know what commitments were made on cattle. I don't even know the nature of the commitments on oil, if any. I mean, if there were any, all we've seen is a liberalization of the oil import program in subsequent years.

What it is that moved Kerr to go along, I don't know. I was very close to him because the President assigned me as the man to work with Kerr on the Finance Committee [United States Senate Committee on Finance] on this legislation. And so I used to see Kerr every day over the period in which the bill was being considered, both by the Finance Committee and the Senate, and in fact at Kerr's insistence, when he was asked to take over the leadership of the bill on the floor, I went on the floor of the Senate with him during the two days, or whatever it was, of debate and votes. Trying to psychoanalyze Bob Kerr is not easy, but perhaps because it's been neglected as a factor by other people who have engaged in psychoanalysis, let me say that Bob Kerr was not immune to considerations of large national policy—higher consideration of national policy, if you please. And I think that the fact that this was all couched in the grand design terms, as the sort of matrix within which all this debate took place, was not an unimportant factor in Bob Kerr's decision to go to the mat on this.

Now there were other factors involved, too. That is, with Harry Byrd [Harry F. Byrd, Sr.] as chairman of the Finance Committee and having already scored some successes on the Senate floor as the spokesman, it was natural as hell for Kerr to want to be the leader. Besides which, he always liked a good fight, and the less involved he was in the matters and issues, the better he fought. But I wouldn't want anyone to neglect this other consideration. As I say, I talked to this man daily over a period of several weeks, got to know him quite well, and developed a great affection for him. He was really quite a guy, and I wouldn't want anyone to neglect the fact this rough and tough two-fisted frontiersman who knew how to make millions the way we make hundreds was not immune to these other considerations. There's something to that.

STEWART: Let me ask you a somewhat unrelated question. What were Senator Kerr's opinions of President Kennedy and people at the White House at that time?

RASHISH: I never heard him voice any opinion. I've no reason to suspect that he had anything but the highest opinion of President Kennedy. Certainly from the way he acquitted himself throughout the period that I knew him well, there was no reason to think anything else. I couldn't image he would have done as much as he did without having this kind of opinion. As to members of the White House staff, the only one that I saw him come in contact with during this period was Larry O'Brien and didn't reflect anything but the highest regard for the man. So I didn't get any opinions. He was not the sort of fellow who would be imprudent about...And he knew I worked for the President, and I was a colleague of these people, as it were.

STEWART: No. I'm just sort of fishing because there are a number of people in Senator Kerr's position, namely that they're deceased, who we're, of course, always trying to get tidbits on as far as their relationships with the Kennedy Administration.

RASHISH: Well, I don't think it was particularly close, Mr. Stewart. I think that Bob Kerr regarded himself as an independent power in American politics. And certainly his survival and his position and power did not depend on who was the President in the White House at that time so long as we had a Democratic majority in the Senate. And it was also obviously clear that he was a Lyndon Johnson [Lyndon B. Johnson] man from the start, at least in terms of the choices that were available in 1960.

But I think he regarded himself as an independent power, and he was interested in maximizing that power. And he once said to a friend of mine, he said, "We'll be around long after they're gone," referring to the Kennedy Administration. I'm sure he had his—it was

pretty clear that he had some points of reservation about the Kennedy Administration and the personalities in it, but I think he felt pretty secure in the position he had.

STEWART: That leads to another question. What role, if any, did the Vice President play in getting support?

RASHISH: The Vice President was Lyndon Johnson, as you recall, and it was our feeling that he could play a very important role. Of course, during this period we were devoting a good deal of time to the House, it being critically important to get the legislation out right—out of the House of Representatives with the right vote. And when we began to think ahead a little bit to the Senate, I recall we had a number of conversations with Walter Jenkins [Walter W. Jenkins] about the Vice President's role, his counsel, advice, and so on.

I got this very clear feeling that the White House did not want the Vice President involved in this. And in fact, at one point, a critical period, he was sent off on a foreign trip. It seemed to me to have no rationale or purpose or make any sense. So I'm left, with the meager scraps of information that I have, with the very clear impression that the White House did not want the Vice President involved in this legislation at all, did not want him to get his hand in it. I regretted that attitude, if I'm correct in describing it, but that was the case.

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He did make a speech to a conference of national organizations that was called by the Committee for National Trade Policy. Representatives of various labor organizations, the League of Women Voters, and all these, all came together in Washington. It wasn't even the national presidents of these organizations, but usually their Washington people came together. So it was a working staff type of meeting with about fifty-odd people in the room, I would guess, over at the National Housing Association building. They have a conference room down stairs. And the Vice President came over and gave one of the most graceful and pertinent speeches on United States trade policy I'd ever heard. And I thought he was, you know, a hell of a good scout to do it because this was not an audience of that sort. He obviously had a great interest in this. He had a good deal of experience in it obviously from various times over the years as the legislation came up. Of course, it was a subject in which Rayburn [Sam Rayburn] was greatly interested, and Johnson was aware of that. Well, I can say that an effort was made to bring him into the picture, but it did not materialize.

STEWART: For what reason? Did you ever find out specifically?

RASHISH: Well, I think it's part of a larger piece. He did preside, he was back in time from this trip to preside over the Senate when it voted on the bill. And I just remember that as I walked off the Senate floor after the final vote was taken, Kerr took me over to the Vice President in the lobby behind the presiding officer's chair in the Senate and introduced me to him, and we had a little chat.

STEWART: Did you anticipate the opposition, or the partial opposition, of Senators Douglas [Paul H. Douglas] and Javits [Jacob K. Javits] and Congressman Henry Reuss [Henry S. Reuss]?

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RASHISH: Well, as I told Paul Douglas just the other day—I ran into him over at the Federal City Club, and we were talking about this period—I said to him, I said, “You’re the only Senator who insists on amendments that are in the national interest.” His amendments were the least parochial amendments one could imagine. And they were very easy to accept. He had one amendment, as I recall, that was a little awkward for us. But he was eminently reasonable about it, and we worked out some language which, in effect, preserved the President’s discretionary authority, which is all that we were interested in. And so we were able to accommodate him on all his amendments.

In fact, there was a great reconciliation meeting in Bob Kerr’s office in which I got Douglas over there. You have to understand that this came out long ago over a tax measure in which they were bitter enemies. And I got Gene McCarthy [Eugene J. McCarthy] to come in just to sort of be the tame horse between the two broncos. There was Abe Chayes, I think Jack Behrman [Jack N. Behrman] from the Commerce Department, and myself, and we negotiated out the Douglas amendments by accepting them. All Kerr was interested in was that since Paul had Gore’s [Albert Gore, Sr.] in his pocket, and he needed those two votes to make sure that he had a strong, unwavering majority in the Finance Committee, he just wanted to be sure we settled these things up, which we did with great pleasure. I think, in fact, that the Douglas amendment modifying that zero tariff authority—that was something that Javits was also plumping for, Henry Reuss in the House...

STEWART: Based on Great Britain...

RASHISH: Yes....membership in the European Economic Community. It would have made that authority operative even if Britain had not become a member. But I could never understand why Ball resisted having that. I never have. As someone who’s worked in the Congress for four and a half years just before joining the Kennedy Administration, I couldn’t understand why a President would resist having more authority given to him on a silver platter by the Congress than he needs. And I thought the psychological and cosmetic arguments that Ball offered were

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entirely irrelevant. I regret that...

STEEWART: Wasn’t he saying that this would remove a certain amount of the incentive?

RASHISH: Well, all I can say is that if he felt that that was an important factor in the decision as to whether Britain would become a member of the European Community, he didn't understand the motivating factors in the negotiations. I could not believe that that was the case. In fact I argued....This was an issue that came up in the course of our preparing the legislation, and I argued against Ball in one of these steering committee meetings on this very point. But he was "Mr. Europe," and his voice was heard.

STEWART: He obviously didn't have much additional opposition, or....Well, obviously the President supported him, or at least Myer Feldman or someone who was close to the President.

RASHISH: Well, I think the President supported Ball on that part. There's no question about that. But we could have gotten Mills to accede to this amendment very easily.

STEWART: There were a few concessions—carpets and glass.

RASHISH: Well, those were escape clause decisions that came up to the President. These were...

STEWART: Right, which they...

RASHISH: And what preceded the President's decision was the finding of injury by the Tariff Commission. In the decision to impose the higher duties, the President was free to do what he wanted.

STEWART: Well, these weren't looked on as concessions?

RASHISH: Well, they're clearly concessions, sure.

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STEWART: Yes, during the...

RASHISH: But, well, they were a different order of concession from the textile agreement, for example. Sure, they were concessions. They were designed, presumably, to make it easier to get votes for the legislation.

STEWART: Were there any others in this category? I've heard it said in a very general way....Of course, there was a certain amount of criticism of Myer Feldman for being too ready to accede to...

RASHISH: I think that's a fair criticism. I mentioned to you that when we brought up this legislation with all the negotiating authority in the world and all these liberalized amendments and so on, of prior legislation, Feldman's natural reaction was, "Well, the more to compromise with." I think that Feldman was too prone to concede. You know, I think he had other things in mind, and I think he's the kind of political animal who thinks in terms of buying votes by giving favors. That's my own judgment. I think we could have gotten away with a lot less. As it was, it was pretty—the price was awfully cheap.

STEWART: Was there much criticism during the period when the bill was being considered of the fact that it was trying up a lot of other things, mainly Medicare and other aspects....

RASHISH: There may have been some criticism in some segments of the press and journals of opinion.

STEWART: I mean within the Administration.

RASHISH: Oh, within the Administration. I frankly don't recall any vocal criticism. I just don't recall any criticism. Did you pick up any? I was just curious. I don't recall any.

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STEWART: Well, Arthur Schlesinger again...

RASHISH: Oh, he made that point?

STEWART: ...in a general way made that point.

RASHISH: The fact of the matter is that the bill went through so easily, through both Houses that, you know, it's hard to see how it could have consumed less time. Now on Mills' part, sure, I'm sure he would have been delighted not to take up Medicare. But this was hardly an excuse for not taking up Medicare. He would have found something more legitimate as an excuse. I mean, this was on the agenda. He knew it. No, I don't think so; I don't think so. Well, we got Medicare, too.

STEWART: Except for some other criticisms that Arthur Schlesinger has that the significance of the whole thing was grossly exaggerated and that he makes the statement that he questions whether the advocates understood that true partnership—I don't know whether this is the exact quote, but it's close to it—that true partnership would have to go beyond tariff reduction to monetary and agricultural policies.

RASHISH: Well, the advocates understood this very well, I think, better than Arthur Schlesinger, I would suspect, because I don't think that Schlesinger makes himself out to be an expert on foreign economic policy. I think they understood this very well. All I can say, it was heavily soaped. There's no question about it. (A) I think you have to do that sort of thing to get the job done well; (B) I think that there was value in this, quote, overselling, because we were selling more than a piece of legislation on the trade field, we were selling a foreign policy posture and aspirations of the new Administration, point of view about the world; (C) we were also selling it to the foreign community; that is, we were addressing ourselves not only to the American community. And so you had to oversell to get that across.

[-35-]

In terms of results—and we can now measure results because the Kennedy Round is finished—in terms of results, I don't think the overselling of the legislation was out of symmetry with the results of the negotiations when you compare what has happened in previous trade negotiations. This is a very substantial result, probably the largest trade agreement and most consequential one, certainly since World War II. There's no single piece of legislation—and this is, I think, the point of overselling—there's no single piece of legislation that provides an opportunity to educate the public about foreign policy. Treaties don't do it.

The very independence, which is being called into question these days by a number of senators, that the President has in the formulation and the making of foreign policy makes it difficult to educate the public about foreign policy, and the Congress about foreign policy, until the Congress becomes engaged, and it only becomes engaged when it's appropriating powers or its powers to levy duties, as in trade matters, come up. So that it isn't only authority to negotiate trade agreements that becomes an issue when you have trade legislation, it becomes the total foreign trade policy, which, in turn, relates very strongly to important parts of foreign policy as a whole. And so you have to treat this as an organic whole. And it's good that you do. I think that it's necessary to do it, and it has desirable results.

STEWART: Just a couple more. Was there any consideration of amendments in 1963 when Great Britain failed to get into the Common Market?

RASHISH: I don't think there were any considerations in the Administration seriously. I left in March of 1963, so I can speak up to that point. There were people in the Congress like Henry Reuss, Paul Douglas, and so on, who may have considered this, but I don't think anyone in the Administration seriously did.

[-36-]

STEWART: Did you have any part in the selection of Ambassador Herter [Christian A. Herter], Governor Herter, to...

RASHISH: I think I did, yes.

STEWART: Could you describe any major problems that were encountered in that?

RASHISH: In the selection of Governor Herter?

STEWART: Right.

RASHISH: Well, there were a lot of other names that I thought were a lot less attractive than his. And I can remember speaking to Ralph Dungan [Ralph A. Dungan] about Herter, and his attitude was quite negative. I kept on pressing Herter's name. He was my candidate. Finally the thing got to contentious between all the various agencies having their own—particularly the Commerce Department, which, I must say, was always a bit of a problem for us throughout this whole exercise—that the President turned to Clark Clifford [Clark M. Clifford] and said, "You find a man for me." Happily, I was able to suggest Herter to two of Clark Clifford's associates at that time, and that's the name that came back through the pipeline. And it made a good deal of sense, I thought.

STEWART: He signed it, I think, in October, and you stayed on until the following March in that office?

RASHISH: Yes. Well, I stayed around sort of to finish up. There were things that were left over after the bill signing. I stayed around sort of to tie up all the loose ends and so on and to provide some transition to whoever it was that was going to take over. When Herter was invited to serve in that position, he asked me if I wouldn't stay a while to help out, which I was glad to do. I helped him get his office organized and his staff hired and his budget and all that sort of mechanical business, went with him on his first trip to Europe in late January of 1963 when he made his first round of some of the, well, Brussels, Geneva, Paris and London, and then left in early March.

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STEWART: Again, because he's deceased, do you recall anything particular about his relationships with the President or people in the White House? Was he well accepted generally?

RASHISH: I think so. I think he was.... You know, this was just after he was reappointed, so there's no reason to assume he would be any less well accepted in March than he would be in December. I did get the feeling, as I used to see him quite frequently after I left—I would go over and chat, and we'd gossip—I got the feeling that he felt that it was very difficult to get through the President, it was difficult to get through the people around him and get over to see him. I don't think he made much effort. In part, it was convenient for him to rely on Bundy, who was a fellow

Bostonian whom he'd known since a little boy, and so on. So that was a great help to him. Maybe he wasn't as aggressive as he might have been because he had a different channel to go through. But I didn't get any feeling of more than the normal level of frustration. No, he seemed to be....

I think most of his frustration was how do you get these negotiations off the ground rather than the problems of the White House. I remember assuring him that I thought he could look for maximum cooperation from the President. I felt that way, and I counseled him. It wasn't for me to counsel him, but I suggested that it would be desirable for him to maintain, even through a phone call, a connection with President Kennedy, and I felt that the President would welcome that, just chat, sort of keep him informed of what was going on regularly. But then he was an old hand. I didn't have to teach him any tricks.

STEWART: It's often been said how amazing it was that a person could go from Secretary of State to a position like that and still be terribly enthused about it.

[-38-]

RASHISH: Well, there again it was a question of commitment and his own ideological proclivities, as well as the fact that, even though he was encumbered by this arthritic condition, he was still a vigorous man and felt that he was not working up to his capacity doing what he was doing, which wasn't very much. So I think he welcomed the opportunity to become more active. And he was, I think—well, until his final illness—charming old man, who was also an extremely astute politician. You don't survive as Governor of Massachusetts for two terms if you are, in fact, as benign as he looked.

STEWART: Well, he beat a very capable politician, Paul Dever [Paul A. Dever]. [Interruption] There's a few feet of tape there, if there's anything else you'd like to say.

RASHISH: I don't enjoy whoever it is that has to transcribe this.

STEWART: Pardon.

RASHISH: I don't envy anyone who has to transcribe this.

STEWART: Oh, they do it all the time.

[END OF INTERVIEW]

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