

Claiborne Pell Oral History Interview – JFK#1, 2/06/1967
Administrative Information

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Biographical Note

Claiborne Pell (1918-2009) was a senator for Rhode Island from 1961 to 1997. This interview focuses on Pell's friendship with John F. Kennedy and legislation proposed during the Kennedy administration on transportation, trade, and international affairs, among other topics.

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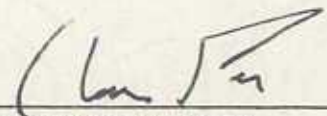
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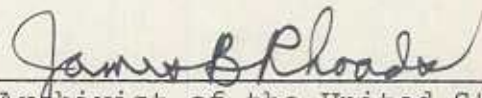
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Claiborne Pell
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Month, Day, Year

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Claiborne Pell– JFK #1
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Oral History Interview

with

SENATOR CLAIBORNE PELL

February 6, 1967
Washington, D.C.

By John F. Stewart

For the John F. Kennedy Library

STEWART: Senator Pell, why don't we start by asking you, when did you first meet John Kennedy?

PELL: I guess the first contact that I had with President Kennedy was considerably before the War on Bailey's Beach in Newport where I remember hearing him spoof some friend in that marvelous, inimitable accent of his as to whether they had come over from Ireland because of the famine of '48, or whether it had been later. I guess at that time life was fairly full and joyous and gay, and those of us of our age had a short period of what we might call "salad days." There were many debutante parties, and we were on that circuit. This was before, obviously, World War II had started or even Britain, itself, had started fighting.

Then, in addition, I knew him because I used to take out his sister, Kick, or Kathleen, who was a wonderful girl, gay, intelligent, bright, good-looking, and thoroughly nice. And I can remember, I guess, the first exposure to the family was one time when I visited and took her out at Eden Roc, at Antibes in the south of France. It was also a memorable day for me because it was my introduction to water skiing, and I'll always remember that very nice afternoon with her.

Another time I remember accidentally going to their house at Hyannis Port because I was visiting some friends there who said they would meet me at the local country club. I passed this building which had, as I recall it, a flag flying, lots of cars, young people around, and I thought it was the club. I found it was the Kennedy house.

Returning, however, to my contacts with the President--which I know is the reason, the occasion for this interview--I saw him after the War. During the war years, our paths did not cross even though I spent some time in Rhode Island, in Newport, both as an enlisted man in the Coast Guard prior to the war and then convalescing in the Naval Hospital there. But the President's tours of duty at Melville must have been in between those periods. And his War was mainly fought in the Pacific; mine was more in the Atlantic and Europe. So I did not see him again until after the end of the War when we were out at the San Francisco Conference where I was an assistant secretary of one of the committees there, and he was a correspondent. I forget for what newspaper, I think the Hearst Papers, but I'm not sure. Then he followed the course of the Conference and also participated in many of the activities connected with it.

STEWART: How serious was he about his duties as a correspondent at that time, do you recall?

PELL: I do not recall. The occasions I saw him were more social, at swimming, or in Burlingame, something of that sort. Then, the next thing I knew was that he was a member of the House of Representatives, at which time I was in the Foreign Service, and then he. . . . I met him when we had a small house in Washington on 33rd Street, just around the corner from where he lived. I well remember one dinner party we had where [G. Frederick] Fred Reinhardt was going out to Indochina, or to Vietnam, as ambassador. My recollection is that Kennedy was there and asked him a good many searching questions.

We invited him up to Rhode Island to address a Jefferson-Jackson dinner, I think, in 1954. And he was very kind, accepted, and I noticed that he did most of the writing of the speech himself. When he came to Rhode Island, the force of his personality and the strength of his personality were such that he received a tremendous welcome from everybody he met and from all those at the dinner. However, from the viewpoint of delivery I must say that he was nowhere near as good as he became in later years, or as his brother Ted [Edward M. Kennedy] was to show himself at the same age, or even younger. That Jefferson-Jackson dinner was marred for President Kennedy by the fact that he lost, or somebody took as a souvenir, his nice dark blue overcoat that he had with him.

Then my contacts with him were comparatively limited. We'd see each other in Newport when he'd be visiting his in-laws. I remember he came to my house there one time with his fiancée, Jackie [Jacqueline B. Kennedy], and we would see each other as time went on in various people's houses or around Washington.

The next really close contact that I had with him was after he was elected to the presidency, and I was elected to the Senate. I think he was very, very startled about my election because of all of his friends I think I was probably as unlikely a political candidate as could have been found. And most of my friends thought the same thing. It was particularly so in that I was running against the man who'd acted as campaign manager for President Kennedy in his 1956 try for the vice presidential nomination, the former Governor Dennis Roberts of Rhode Island. In my campaign President Kennedy, naturally, did a film strip with Governor Roberts, but did not otherwise participate in my campaign.

My wife went down to West Virginia and helped open a couple of headquarters for him there drawing on her own experience at having set up and run a Democratic city headquarters in Newport in several campaigns. But after we were both elected in 1960, we saw a good deal of each other--in fact, more than had ever been the case before.

STEWART: Could I interrupt right here and ask you another question?

PELL: Anytime.

STEWART: To go back a bit, were you at the 1956 Democratic National Convention, and if so, did you have any role in the vice presidential bid?

PELL: No. I was at the 1956 Convention as Chief Delegation Tally Clerk. This latter function meant I was responsible for the tallying, or polling, of votes as they occurred on the floor. Also, in the course of that campaign I was the National Democratic Registration Campaign Chairman. So I was then working as an official of the Democratic National Committee.

I will never forget when the vote was taken because I was sitting right on the platform in back of Speaker [Sam] Rayburn, as the people waved their banners in an endeavor to be counted. And I've always believed that it really was completely accidental that Speaker Rayburn turned towards the decisive state, I forget which one it was now, and recognized it. There was no malice aforethought; there was tremendous confusion; and I think it was just the luck of the toss that it went to [Estes] Kefauver. Actually, from President Kennedy's viewpoint, I think he's probably better off not having won than having won that nomination.

STEWART: Were you at the 1960 Convention?

PELL: I was at the 1960 Convention in a rather difficult position. I was again Chief Delegation Tally Clerk, but I was also in Coventry from the viewpoint of my own Rhode Island delegation because they were all supporting Governor Dennis Roberts, who was the chairman of the delegation, and very actively supporting President Kennedy on the floor of the Convention. So while I lived at the same hotel with the Rhode Island Delegation, they did not speak to me with any enthusiasm, and I was in a difficult position.

STEWART: I've heard it said that there was a certain amount of [Lyndon B.] Johnson support, second ballot Johnson support, in many New England delegations. Is this true? Do you know of this?

PELL: In 1960?

STEWART: In 1960, at the Convention.

PELL: I've heard that, and there may have been one or two of our delegates who felt that way, but I don't think any of them voted that way, if my recollection is correct.

STEWART: You had no definite indications that any sizeable number of them would have voted that way had it gone to a second ballot?

PELL: I do not. But, again, I do not know because I was not close to the campaign at that time. There were one or two people who were very close to President Johnson. There were those who were very close to President Johnson through New England who I guess well might have, but I would add that Rhode Island, because of its relationship, its proximity to the Kennedys and the admiration for them there, the fact ~~that the~~ [Hugh D.] Auchinclosses, his in-laws, have many close ties with our state, and he's visited our state so often because of this reason--and because of his own close ties there, our state feels particularly friendly and warm towards President Kennedy or, in fact, towards any Kennedy.

STEWART: Do you recall ever having discussed Rhode Island politics with President Kennedy, and if so, did he view them in a similar vein as he viewed Massachusetts politics?

PELL: I do not recall any specific discussions of this sort, although I do recall, when he did come to dinner with his then fiancée to our house, we had as fellow guests Governor Roberts and Lieutenant Governor Armand Cote. But I do not recall any specific discussion about Rhode Island politics.

STEWART: Before coming to Washington, did you fear, as some did, that the Kennedy Administration would be extremely cautious about projects and programs of benefit to New England economy? In other words, that they would bend over backwards to avoid any charges of favoritism to the New England economy?

PELL: No, I didn't but then, being a New Englander, I'm sure that probably we'd be the last to have heard that.

STEWART: I have heard it said that there were occasions when they specifically were wondering.

PELL: That certainly was not the reaction in my state because in my state we felt wouldn't it be wonderful to get a New Englander into the White House. I remember talking later on when he was President about such local problems as the railroad transportation, one of my main areas of interest, and President Kennedy, who used to take the Federal, the overnight railroad, back and forth from Boston to Washington, was very familiar with the problem. And because of his bad back he'd had to have a special board, I believe, for the bed. He was very familiar with the railroad problem.

STEWART: Well, do you want to go on?

PELL: No, I guess we'll go now to the period after, when he was President. As I said, I got to know him better. He used to be very kind and hospitable to my wife and me, and we used to see him either at small dinners in his house, the White House, or at Franklin Roosevelt's or visit with him on his boat the Honey Fitz in Narragansett Bay, which he liked to do a great deal. Then he was very kind and would take me back and forth, together with other members of the Rhode Island congressional delegation, to Rhode Island when he went up for weekends. But the times I recall the best are the times when we would be out on the boat because he seemed to relax more, either on the Honey Fitz, which was a power boat, or on another boat we sailed on, a Coast Guard I think it was a yawl called the Manitou, or something of that sort, which he would actually sail himself.

Then he liked very much the atmosphere at Newport because it was one of the few communities where you could really have privacy. People didn't mob him; people were used to celebrities, although not as great celebrities as the President; they had had President Eisenhower before; and they were courteous and polite and they left him alone. He could go down to Bailey's Beach and sit in a cabana there, and people would come, treat him in a relatively normal way--nobody could ever treat a President in a completely normal way. But, he would be treated in a more normal way than would be the case, I would imagine, in any other resort or in any other community of that sort in the United States.

I can remember one time swimming in a swimming pool when, at the beach, there was only he and his own house guests and myself in the pool, and he really had a sense of very real privacy. Also, when sailing. Also, he really loved the sea. One sensed that watching the [America's] Cup Races with him and saw the trouble that he had taken in organizing the group, and the destroyer, I think it was called the Kennedy, the Joseph P. Kennedy that we were out on. And he really loved the sea, as all of us in Rhode Island and Newport also do.

In the evening his conversation would not be about too heavy things, he'd touch lightly on politics, but he was also interested in everything, in people, very interested in people, men and women and their frailties and their strengths, and who was seeing who. I think he had so many heavy problems all day, and they must have weighed on him when he was awake at night that he would almost make a conscious effort to change gear in the evenings when he would have a daiquiri and light, interesting, sparkling conversation, and maybe play backgammon or something of that sort after dinner. I also recall that while we were removed from the general office subjects in these evenings, his mind was always very absorptive and never wandered too far afield. Serious subjects would come up: the question of what to do about Germany, the question of Cuba, the question of social programs, the question of appointments, things of that sort, and he would use those who were with him at dinner as his sounding board.

I also noticed another really remarkable thing about him--his fabulous memory. One evening I went to dinner with three little projects in my mind that meant a great deal to me. One of them concerned, if my recollection is correct, something to do with my state, another one I do not presently remember, and the third was I had a very bad back and wanted to be looked at by Dr. [Janet] Travell to see if she could help me. In the course of the evening, I mentioned all these points in passing. The President never seemed to note them particularly, did not jot down a memorandum or anything of that sort, and yet, the next day, or rather within two or three days, all three points had been handled and action taken.

STEWART: How did the idea of the summer White House originate?

PELL: Well, I guess I had a good deal to do with it. I have quite a thick file on it if anyone is ever interested in it. There have been I can't recall if it's seventeen or twenty-seven Presidents, some number in that range, who have visited Newport in the course of the summer. I know I've always heard of the days in my parents time when so many of the embassies would be in Newport. My recollection is that before World War I the Russian, the British, and the French Embassies were all in Newport. And I also know that President Kennedy really loved Newport. He spoke to me about it himself in this regard. We went around in the boat one time looking at houses from the sea. I remember the ones he turned down and the ones he liked. And what is not generally realized, I think, is how much he loved Newport. Perhaps it was the sense of even greater remoteness, isolation and privacy than he enjoyed in Massachusetts, than in Hyannis Port. I don't know what the reason was, but when the time came for him to get a house, he was the one who made the moves.

One summer, as I recollect it, we were trying to make the arrangements to buy a house, the house of Barclay Douglas, called Annandale Farm, but the price that Barclay asked for it was too high, and the President finally decided that even though we could have got a citizens committee together to purchase it, and I helped organize the citizen's committee which met in Providence, and the newspaper and Humberto Patalano and Senator [John O.] Pastore and everyone was very helpful on it, he decided the price was such he just felt it would hurt him politically. Returning for a moment to how the idea first came up, I think full credit here should go to a Rhode Islander from Providence, Humberto Patalano, who had the idea and first talked to Senator Pastore and then to me about it. And because I was both a Newporter and friend of President Kennedy's, I took hold of it as hard as I could.

STEWART: Didn't Secretary [Stewart L.] Udall make a study or get involved in it in some way?

PELL: A certain amount. The next summer. . . . I think it was mainly through the Navy. We had the Navy go in there, looking it over, and they came up one winter and examined the house and everything else. Then the next year he decided he'd like to rent a house, and again, it was the same house that he wanted. Barclay Douglas, who had suffered a certain amount of adverse popularity because it was felt that the summer White House idea for Newport had been turned down because he'd asked for too much money, this time was willing to rent it.

If my recollection is correct, at first he asked for a large sum, and then it was reduced. I think the amount he asked was two thousand dollars a month for two months, which, in view of the yacht races and the season, was not only not high, but actually meant that Barclay really made no profit because he had to move out and live somewhere else. I think he felt that he should do it because of having lost the permanent summer White House for Newport earlier. Then this proposal was made by the President to me privately to look into renting it, and his wife Jackie was not aware of it when he first spoke to me about it. In fact, it was only after we had pretty well worked it out that he informed his wife.

One of the sad unwritten vignettes of his death was that a couple of weeks before he died, he was asked that a half of his rent for the next summer be paid to him, and President Kennedy made out his personal check for this amount. After he died, I had a conversation with Clark Clifford concerning the possible refund of the check. I never knew quite what happened.

And I personally have not given up the idea of a summer White House, government house, something of that sort in Rhode Island. As long as I'm a senator or a citizen of Rhode Island I will continue to press in that direction and am, in fact, working on the idea of a government house now where visiting chiefs of state could stay when they are recuperating or visiting in the United States, perhaps in a less official capacity than when they're actually at Blair House. Or such a government house could also provide quarters for visiting lecturers in the Naval War College.

There's one other point which I think may be of interest here, that is, I was always very impressed with the stories of how quickly President Kennedy could read, and I can vouch for them. Nobody could read a newspaper, a book, or a magazine more quickly than he did. But I also noticed that when it came to reading a serious memorandum, something that had to be absorbed word by word, he would read it very much the way everybody else does, line by line, and I thought this was of some interest.

STEWART: Could we move on, could we discuss your whole idea of a Northeast Seaboard transportation plan? You, in June 1962, introduced a resolution to create a multi-state authority, and I believe the Administration did set up a task force and there was a study done by the Department of Commerce. One, did you ever discuss this proposal with the President, or with anyone else in the White House, and what was their reaction to it?

PELL: I discussed it a great deal with the President. He was very familiar with the problem, as I said earlier, because of having taken the "Federal" so often and he helped me as much as he could on it. And when I didn't discuss it with him, it was with Myer Feldman, the general counsel, who followed this problem and gave me every kind of possible assistance.

STEWART: Were you generally satisfied with their insight into the whole problem? Did they view it, for example, as serious a problem as you did, or was there any . . .

PELL: Yes, they did because they recognized that the East Coast would not remain alone in having a megalopolis; megalopolises would develop in other parts of the country, and we'd have to find some solution.

STEWART: Was there any fear that it shouldn't be done in the Northeast for political reasons, or . . .

PELL: No, because all you have to do is a study of the map and you realize that this is the only megalopolis as of the time with 1.5 or .6 per cent of the land, 20 per cent of the people, 30 per cent of the wealth. There was no other place quite like it in the country.

STEWART: What differences were there, if any, between you and the White House's opinion on the whole project?

PELL: The question of speed. My job was to prick and poke them along, so that the project wouldn't die down. We had a terrible time shortly after President Kennedy died. The Administration didn't know quite which way to go. But my role was continuously to press the project ahead.

STEWART: Was there any quarrel over the method of financing that you were proposing?

PELL: We didn't get into the specific discussion of it.

STEWART: You didn't. Did you have any definite indications that all of the--how many were there?--eight states involved in this would go along with this type of an arrangement?

PELL: No, this was all my idea. I think it was a little early, but eventually, I'm convinced, this type of approach will be accepted. And I've noticed in my work in the Senate that while my ideas often seem a little far out, as the years go on, they seem to secure an increasing degree of acceptance. I believe President Kennedy was very kind to me about these ideas, such ideas.

STEWART: Did you have, I assume, some pretty strong repercussions from airlines and other forms of transportation?

PELL: No, because I never was trying to put anybody out of business, or change, or hurt any of the means of transportation. It was really directed at how we soak up the transportation needs of the future. And I think the airlines themselves would be the first to say they're not too happy about hauling people less than two hundred miles.

STEWART: Did you ever feel that people in the Administration were more concerned with immediate commuter problems than with a problem that went somewhat beyond the commuter problem?

PELL: Yes, because more people are affected by it, more voters are affected by commutation, intra-city transportation, than by inter-city transportation.

STEWART: But you felt generally that your proposal got as much of a hearing as it probably could have under the circumstances?

PELL: Absolutely. I was very fairly and very kindly treated by the White House. And I must say that President Johnson treated the project very kindly and very fairly indeed afterwards when I went to discuss it with him. In fact, it was under President Johnson that we got the High Speed Ground Transportation Act passed.

STEWART: You were also involved, I think, on a number of occasions in the whole area of the federal government's involvement in the arts, specifically the setting up of the Advisory Council on the Arts in the spring of 1963. Do you recall ever discussing this whole problem with the President?

PELL: No. I did discuss it several times with Mrs. Kennedy, but I'm not sure that's within the terms of this interview. The President was all for it, but it was not a subject of too much discussion between us. With Mrs. Kennedy I did several times. If you'd be interested, I have a rather long copy of a letter I wrote her concerning my views as to the role of the Arts Council Advisor, and we discussed the appointment as to who should be the first Chairman of the Council of the Arts. The understanding of the White House was that it would be [Richard N.] Dick Goodwin. But naturally, when the President was killed, the new President made his choice, Roger Stevens, who proved to be a thoroughly fine and excellent appointment.

STEWART: I believe . . .

PELL: Do you want that memorandum to Mrs. Kennedy?

STEWART: Yes, it might be of some value. Did you have any quarrels at all with how the Administration went about setting up the original Advisory Council on the Arts?

PELL: No, I felt that--no, my recollection is I had no quarrel at all. Again, it's a question of pushing ahead, of giving enough money, enough status, enough power. I remember a good example of this question came up with the disarmament, the ACDA, the Armament Control and Disarmament Agency. Originally, we'd all discussed it in the campaign, and it was going to be a separate agency set up by stature. Then the Administration got cold feet as to whether the stature, the necessary statute or law, could get through the Congress, so they decided to do it by administrative action. A friend of mine, [Julius A.] Mac Migal from Rhode Island, together with the president of the [United] World Federalists, Mr. Paul Walter, came in and had breakfast with me one day, and as a result of that breakfast, or maybe it was lunch, we decided to try and push again to get it set up by legislative enactment. And Senator [Joseph S.] Clark, Senator [Hubert H.] Humphrey, and others shared this view. We all went down to the White House together, and we were able to persuade them to change it and to set it up by legislation. This is the way it should have been done rather than by administrative action.

STEWART: The whole problem in the New Haven Railroad I guess, came to a head and was resolved, in a certain fashion, during the Kennedy Administration. I assume you were deeply involved in all of the negotiations regarding a loan from the OCDM [Office of Civil and Defense Mobilization] and so forth.

PELL: Not very closely because my senior colleague, Senator Pastore, was more involved as a member of the Commerce Committee; he's number two man on the Commerce Committee. I was not on the Commerce Committee, so I participated, helped it along, but I was not intimately involved.

STEWART: So you never really discussed the whole problem, for example, with Myer Feldman, or anyone else in the White House?

PELL: Only in more general terms.

STEWART: Yes. Were there any major disagreements among New England senators on the proposal, I think it was in May of 1962, to establish a federal authority to finance subsidies for the New Haven Railroad and other railroads?

PELL: I do not recall any great disagreements. As a general rule, one must recognize that the northern tier of New England states, Vermont, New Hampshire, and Maine, have a more academic interest in the New Haven Railroad. They've lost their service long since. So they're not as enthusiastic as the southern tier of Connecticut, Rhode Island and Massachusetts.

STEWART: Did you have any significant quarrels with the way the whole matter was handled by the White House?

PELL: No.

STEWART: The initial problem of the loan and the bankruptcy?

PELL: No.

STEWART: Wasn't former Governor Dennis Roberts proposal at one time as a trustee for the . . .

PELL: That is correct, although the first I knew about it was when I read about it in the newspaper.

STEWART: And his nomination was blocked somewhere along the line?

PELL: Not by me. I would have been all for it. But it did not go further. I forget the reasons now. Actually, he would have been very good. And I would have been glad to have supported him.

STEWART: You were then, I presume

PELL: My relations with Governor Roberts are excellent. I admire him a great deal, and I actually discussed several times with President Kennedy the possibility of finding the right spot in the federal government for Governor Roberts. In fact, I can remember bringing this to President Kennedy's attention far more than he ever brought it to my attention.

But we were unable to figure out the right slot. I believe that Governor Roberts was offered the Embassy to-- one of the British Commonwealth countries--I believe Australia, although my recollection is dim as to which country it was. He was offered an appointment on one or two of the major commissions, but he turned them down. But I did feel that the Administration, the Kennedy Administration, really should put him in a position and mentioned this to the President, although nothing was ever done about it.

STEWART: I assume then that you were in favor of the loan under the Defense Production Act at the time even though it was recognized that the railroad was heading for bankruptcy no matter what happened.

PELL: As a Senator from Rhode Island, one would naturally be for anything to extend the life, recognizing at the same time the difficulty of it.

STEWART: You weren't any more optimistic or pessimistic than anyone else then about the chances of the railroad thing?

PELL: Not that I recall.

STEWART: You, of course, were very much concerned with the trade expansion program and the impact on the economy of Rhode Island. Originally, were you totally in favor of the Administration's proposal? Did you have any quarrels with them at all?

PELL: No, I just was very concerned that the Trade Adjustment Act should provide for some safe guards for our industries that were hurt by foreign competition. Except for that, I supported the program in its general terms, recognizing that it could have an adverse effect on us, but hoping that the Trade Adjustment Act would handle this adverse effect.

STEWART: Was it actually worked out to your satisfaction, or. . . .

PELL: Pretty well. Obviously, we would have preferred to retain the protection that we had before, but one has to recognize that you fight for your own area, your own state, your own region, but in the end we're a body of a hundred senators and the majority rules.

STEWART: Did you ever discuss this whole matter with the President, do you recall?

PELL: It came up once or twice, yes.

STEWART: Was he very sympathetic to your. . . .

PELL: I can't recall now how the conversation went. I know he was very familiar with the plight.

STEWART: The President, in 1961, sought an equalization fee regarding the tariff on textiles, and the whole thing was turned down by the Tariff Commission. You, I assume, were involved in this proposal and, again, with the subsidies that eventually got passed in the latter part of 1963?

PELL: Just as one of the New England senators.

STEWART: Do you recall discussing this whole matter of textiles?

PELL: I undoubtedly did. We had meetings down at the White House, all the New England senators together.

STEWART: Well, this is what I'm trying to find out, if, in fact, you did discuss these matters with the President, or with people in the White House, and what . . .

PELL: No, no. Just as one of the New England senators. And then, naturally, whenever you see the President, if you can swing your conversation to the plight of your own state, your own industry, you do it.

STEWART: I don't understand. Why don't you feel this is a legitimate oral history? I'm not. . . .

PELL: Because it's all a matter of record.

STEWART: Well, I realize most of your views on these things are a matter of record. . . .

PELL: Statements in the Congressional Record, and letters to the White House, round-robin letters. I'm not sure that they. . . . I thought you were more interested in the personal and unofficial relationships and factors.

STEWART: Well, we are, we are. But insofar as the personal relationships relate to these specific problems and presumably involve discussions which just didn't get written down in any form.

PELL: Right. I'm sure at least once, maybe twice or three times, we were all assembled in the Cabinet Room and talked with the President. My own senior colleague, Senator John Pastore, took the lead in these discussions because he was chairman of the committee up here on textiles--I forget the formal name for the moment--and did an excellent job in projecting our state's and area's interests.

STEWART: Moving on to Berlin, you, of course, made some proposals in the summer of 1961 regarding the whole German problem. President Kennedy, according to many people, was quite impressed with these proposals. Here, again, did you discuss them, either at the time or shortly after, with the President?

PELL: Yes, I did. I discussed them at some length with him, and he seemed quite interested in these proposals. In fact, one time at dinner at Franklin Roosevelt's house he said to David Ormsby-Gore, who was also there, and I was there, he said, "You know, we're all going to end up in Germany with this Pell plan before we're through." And then I had the great fun of describing to David Ormsby-Gore, who was the British Ambassador, what my plan was. I think that the time was not ripe for my plan during President Kennedy's term of office, but as history moves on, and times moves on, it seems to be going in that direction. In fact, one of the things I remember that Mrs. Kennedy told me once, that Jackie told me once, was that her husband had said some very nice things as to the originality of some of my thinking and its validity.

I should have added here another reason, originally, why I had a relationship with the family was also through her parents because I was a limited partner in Auchincloss, Parker and Redpath and joined that firm in 1959, I think it was.

STEWART: Your proposals, of course, a number of people disagreed with them, and disagreed with them quite violently.

PELL: Most people disagreed with them then quite vehemently, and many disagree with them now, yes.

STEWART: Did you have any discussions with people from the German Embassy regarding your proposals at all?

PELL: Oh, yes. They got very upset about it, and the German Embassy sent around a letter criticizing me to a mailing of some thousands of people, and I think they were quite aggravated with me.

STEWART: Did you know of any complaint by the German Embassy that they didn't have as much access to the White House as, for example, the French and British?

PELL: I never heard of that at all. I do know that the President didn't have the highest regard for [Wilhelm G.] Grewe, the German Ambassador. He just was not a very appealing person, rather phlegmatic in appearance and did not project his country's image with much tact, or delicacy, or skill, in my own view.

STEWART: Did the President ever discuss with you the quarrels within the Administration over the stand that should be taken on Berlin?

PELL: No, I think he thought it served a very useful purpose though by raising my plan for discussion and by utilizing the role I played as one in advance of the times.

STEWART: Were you in agreement with the call-up of reservists in . . .

PELL: I wasn't consulted, obviously. I was. Yes. I think when you have a crisis, it makes people realize the crisis. I was. I'd much rather we call up reservists than we put our reliance on nuclear weapons. And the thing I liked so much about President Kennedy's Administration was the reversal of the previous dangerous trend towards fighting with nuclear weapons or not fighting with anything, and I tremendously believe in developing our conventional capabilities and being able to use them, and show that they're in readiness. This is what calling out our reserve meant. Now, in my own state, according to the Adjutant General, 90 per cent of those who were called up tried either verbally, or in writing to wiggle out of being ordered back to active duty and going over to Germany.

STEWART: Did you feel that the President's attitudes about European affairs, in general, changed considerably after Berlin?

PELL: I could not say. I do recall speaking of. . . . Well, we'll cover Cuba later.

STEWART: Well, that was going to be my next question. Do you have any definite indications that the crisis helped in the responding to the Cuban problem in October of 1962?

PELL: No, but I do remember one thing. I do remember that, shortly after the Bay of Pigs, he was a little critical of me. I had gone to Cuba as a Senator-elect in December of 1960, I think about two years later than any other member of Congress, and spent several days in Havana, and drove around and out into the country. I came back absolutely convinced that the Cuban people were, in general, behind [Fidel] Castro. They'd not yet been disillusioned with his promises, nor recognized that the new planned schools and roads were figments of his imagination. And the opposition had fled or were in jail. I felt that no revolution could be started there when the people were so behind him.

I came back and told this to the director of the Central Intelligence Agency and all their top high command, during and after a luncheon at their headquarters. But, because I was so low down on the totem pole in the Senate, I did not realize that an invasion was imminent and so did nothing more than let my views be known to Mr. [Allen W.] Dulles. Then a couple of weeks later, three or four weeks later, the invasion of the Bay of Pigs occurred. I felt very heartsick about it, and thought I should have spoken to the President about it. The President was critical of me, in a nice way, afterwards and said I should have spoken to him about this. Perhaps I should have. I'm sure that my views would not have been enough to change his mind, but if his decision had been in balance, it might have been the straw to have changed it. And I've made a resolution ever since that when I think something is truly of national interest . . .

BEGIN SIDE II TAPE II

PELL: . . . I will always go to the top about it.

STEWART: Did you ever discuss your trip in detail with the President or . . .

PELL: No, just my own impressions, which were that the Cuban people then were behind the regime there.

STEWART: In response to my other question about the relationship between the handling of ~~the~~ Berlin situation and the handling of the missile situation, you don't see any real relationship?

PELL: No, I don't, and I was not close to the President or in communication with him at the time of the Cuban missile situation. The only way we really became aware of it was that that Sunday evening he was supposed to be coming to dinner at our house in New York, and then cancelled out that morning.

STEWART: Moving on, in June of 1963, you voiced your opposition to the Administration's proposal for a National Academy of Foreign Affairs. Did you ever discuss this with the President, or others in the White House, and what was their counter to the academic freedom argument that you were putting forth?

PELL: I don't recall discussing it with the President. The Administration was a little--some members of the Administration were a little aggravated with me. Senator [Stuart] Symington was very aggravated with me. But the majority of the people in the Administration, I think, agreed with me. And I do not recall having discussed it with President Kennedy.

STEWART: Was this proposal, to your knowledge, in any way related to the whole program to, quote, democratize the Foreign Service? Were you opposed to these efforts?

PELL: No. I think that the Foreign Service should be a small, elite group--that does not mean Ivy League, but an elite, or able group of men in reasonably close communication with each other. And they should receive their education and training prior to joining the Foreign Service in order to have as diverse and wide and, if you want to put it this way, democratic background. I think to get them in and train them for four years in an academy, hewing them all in the same mold would be a great danger. And then, in addition to that, I also think that you can't really get good professors who will stay and work for the government indefinitely because you see that here in the National War College, you can not get a good civilian professor who will be more than a visiting professor for a year.

STEWART: Were you generally, then, critical of any of the other steps that were taken regarding the recruitment and training of people in the Foreign Service?

PELL: No. I was rather active last year, long after President Kennedy died, in some of the Foreign Service problems. And President Kennedy had strong feelings about the Foreign Service. He wanted to improve it in every way he could. He also was genuinely concerned about the question of color.

STEWART: To move on, in August of 1962 you argued that a tax cut was unnecessary, along with Senator [Paul H.] Douglas, I believe, while a number of people, including Senator Humphrey, and probably Secretary [Luther H.] Hodges, argued for one. Would you say that the basis for your conclusion was the same as that of the Administration's, namely that it probably couldn't get through at that time?

PELL: I don't recall.

STEWART: You don't recall what the basis of your opposition was? Did you recall ever discussing this whole matter of a tax cut with the President?

PELL: I don't think so. I don't recall. I have a habit here--of sometimes trying to erase my mind of things that have occurred because I find that we have so many balls in the air, and I'd rather concentrate on the present and the future.

STEWART: Were you significantly involved in the President's 1963 tax reform proposals?

PELL: I can remember Secretary [Henry H.] Fowler was handling it. Under Secretary Fowler was handling it. I remember him talking with me, but I don't think I was really much more involved than any other administration Democratic senator.

STEWART: A number of people, including yourself, were concerned, during the Kennedy Administration, with the quality of the programs at the Library of Congress. Do you remember discussing this with the President, or anyone in the White House, and the initiation of, I believe it was called, the [Douglas W.] Bryant Study that was undertaken?

PELL: I think, wasn't I responsible for the Bryant Study?

STEWART: I believe. I think, probably, yes.

PELL: I think I was. Wasn't he the librarian at Harvard, or something?

STEWART: I think so, yes.

PELL: Yes, this was my baby, it was my responsibility, and it came out of a conversation with Arthur Schlesinger. And it was not meant to be a criticism of the Library of Congress, but I just had the feeling that it was not achieving its full potential, and not being truly a national library, our libraries' library. And for that reason, I had the study made, or requested it, and put it in the Congressional Record, and then there seemed to be quite a lot of excitement about it afterwards.

STEWART: Do you recall ever discussing this with the President?

PELL: No.

STEWART: Or anyone else, other than Arthur Schlesinger, in the Administration?

PELL: There were several others at the White House, I forget who I discussed it with. I think Lee White was very interested in this. I forget who else.

STEWART: A few other things relating to your work on the Committee on Rules and Administration. I think the whole subject of a National Portrait Gallery came up at this time. Were you. . . .

PELL: I don't remember.

STEWART: You don't recall that at all? Anything regarding the Smithsonian Institute, the Board of Regents appointments?

PELL: No, I don't. I'm chairman of the subcommittee on the Smithsonian now. But I do not recall anything I had in connection with it--anything really about it in the Kennedy time.

STEWART: Immigration. You, in 1961, proposed certain restrictions on, quote, new seed immigrants. Did you feel that this conflicted with the President's views on the whole subject of immigration?

PELL: It did, and it didn't get very far..

STEWART: Did you ever, again, discuss this with him, or anyone in the White House?

PELL: I never did discuss it with the President. Nobody was very happy with me about it, but I still believe I was right. And one part of the concept has since been accepted in that there has to be a relationship between job availability and the immigrant coming in. What I was trying to get it away from was the previous habit of them coming into an area where there were already many people of the same ethnic background, and where there was also unemployment. I felt it created a hard, undigestible core.

STEWART: Did you feel that the President was wise in holding off until 1963 on this proposal to abolish the National Origins Quota System?

PELL: My father had worked very hard when he was in the Congress and I believe was responsible for postponing by a period of weeks the original inauguration of this system in 1919 or '20. So I was always for the quicker the abolition of the National Quota System the better. So I would have liked to see it done earlier.

STEWART: Here again, did you ever discuss the reason why they held off until then? I assume there were political reasons.

PELL: I just can't recall. I saw a certain amount of the President, and we covered all kinds of topics of conversation, but, quite honestly, after four or five years, you just don't remember.

STEWART: Well, a few other things. Refugees and escapees. You made a plea for an increase in the number of refugees to be admitted. Did you discuss this with the Administration or anyone there, do you recall?

PELL: I don't think so, but I used to be vice president of the International Rescue Committee and have always felt very interested in their plight and sympathized with them. I don't think I discussed it with the Administration.

STEWART: Were you basically in agreement with the handling of the Cuban refugee problem, or weren't you deeply involved in that?

PELL: I was not deeply involved. I think we did as good a job as we could have.

STEWART: Your work in the Senate [Privileges and] Elections Subcommittee. There was a little splash regarding the Hatch Act--Senator [Carl T.] Curtis, I think, was criticizing the Administration for a dinner they had. . . . Did this . . .

PELL: Well, we had some little row about it. I forget what it was now. He said we shouldn't have written letters, the Democratic Party shouldn't have written letters, and then I think I got hold of a Congressional Directory or something, a Civil Service Register which had their home addresses. I really forget at this point.

STEWART: There was no further involvement?

PELL: No.

STEWART: Revision of the Hatch Act, or anything like that? How about the whole problem of former Presidents, you introduced a resolution to give office space and allow them nonvoting membership in the Senate.

PELL: And the right to speak upon recognition.

STEWART: Right.

PELL: Very important. This all came out of a dinner conversation, also at Franklin Roosevelt's house, with the President, with President Kennedy. President Kennedy was discussing what he would do when he was through being President, and he was saying how hard it is on an ex-President to continue to be useful. And he liked this idea of mine about ex-Presidents and the Senate very much. And it was really because of that conversation that I pressed ahead and got this rule changed, which was passed. I think he was a little disappointed that I was not able to get an ex-President the right to vote. He felt that that was the most important point. However, my recollection is that he expressed his support for my idea even if it did not involved the right to vote.

STEWART: Did he, at this time, and I'd expand it to say at any other time, really discuss what he was going to do after he left the . . .

PELL: Not with me. Somewhere in the back of my mind, I've got the recollection he was thinking of a college or--but I don't think he said it. I'm just not sure I have a recollection that being president of a college was one of his ambitions, was one of this thoughts.

STEWART: But this whole idea did originate from the . . .

PELL: From this dinner at Franklin's.

STEWART: And he was definitely in agreement.

PELL: Very much.

STEWART: The resolution just covered--as it finally passed--just covered allowing ex-Presidents to speak on advance notice.

PELL: That is correct.

STEWART: Did it cover the office space of the . . .

PELL: I don't recall. I don't think it includes office space.

STEWART: Aid to education. In 1963, you, along with Senator [Thomas J.] Dodd, endorsed a proposal by Senator [Abraham A.] Ribicoff for aid to private schools which presumably would get around the whole church-state problem. Do you recall, again, discussing the whole problem of aid to private schools with the President?

PELL: No. I'm sure I must have, but I don't recall it.

STEWART: Do you recall attending a meeting at the White House in early January, 1963, regarding the education bill?

PELL: No.

STEWART: And, if so, the topics included?

PELL: Was I there? I don't know.

STEWART: Yes.

PELL: I don't recall it.

STEWART: A few other things. Farm price support. You were one of nine Democrats who voted against the Administration's emergency feed grain program in 1961. Do you remember any . . .

PELL: No, I represent a consumer state. I believe in a reasonably free economy, and I don't think the farmers can have it both ways. If they accept support, they've got to accept controls. If they won't accept controls, then they can't have support. And I usually voted with this philosophy in mind and also doing what I could to vote in the direction of reducing surpluses.

STEWART: Again, you don't recall specifically discussing this with the President?

PELL: No.

STEWART: I don't think he was that particularly interested in farm problems himself, was he?

PELL: No. I remember after 1956, he had a conversation with my wife and our friends, the Taylor Chewnings, at Newport describing the problems that he would have to face now, moving from being a regional leader into being a national leader.

STEWART: We went through the files on White House appointments and got a whole list of dates and times you were at the White House. I'd just like to ask you about a few of them, ask you if you recall anything significant about the occasion. March 28, 1962, you attended an E-for-Export Award presentation, I assume this was just a very normal ceremonial thing, nothing. . . . Or was there anything unusual?

PELL: I remember nothing.

STEWART: The Dooley Medal presentation?

PELL: Well, I was interested in that because originally as vice president of the International Rescue Committee, I'd helped give hospitality and secure the tax deductible status for Medico, which was Tom Dooley's organization in Laos, by making it part of the International Rescue Committee.

STEWART: A meeting on January 16, 1963, with the President of Princeton University, Senators [Clifford P.] Case and [Harrison A., Jr.] Williams of New Jersey, and Mr. George Denniston, who, I believe, is connected with the alumni of Princeton University.

PELL: I forget what the meeting was about. I think it was to try to get the President up to speak at Princeton. You must think I have a very empty head, but I just really don't remember these details of some years ago.

STEWART: If you remember anything significant about this next one you're going to. . . . This is March 1963, Junior Miss of 1962.

PELL: I remember that. Oh, yes, I think she was a Rhode Island girl. Yes, she was Miss [Jean] Allen from Rhode Island. A very attractive girl.

STEWART: This was just bringing her down to introduce . . .

PELL: I think that was it.

STEWART: The Fayal Disaster Group, in May of 1963?

PELL: The who?

STEWART: Fayal.

PELL: : Oh, Fayal. Yes, that was to do with the bringing in the immigrants from Fayal, from the Azores Islands. Senator Pastore did an excellent job of pushing the bill that looked after them following their disastrous volcano.

STEWART: Would you care to comment generally on the relationships of President Kennedy with Congress? How would you sum up? Would you say, as many people have said, that he was overly cautious in the beginning, too conservative as far as pushing his general program? Just how would you sum up his relationship with the Congress?

PELL: No, I think he tremendously wanted and respected privacy, and he liked a formal relationship. He was not a man who would put his arm around other men, who liked to be intimate with people at all. He did not like to press people. And he wanted to appeal to reason; if he couldn't appeal to reason, then I think he felt the time probably wasn't ripe, and he could make the appeal later. I think his relations were very correct. And as a man, myself, with similar views and reactions, I respected the way he worked very much, indeed. I know how I react. If somebody presses me too hard to do something, I find I react the other way. I'm sure that he reacted the same way.

STEWART: You felt then that his reading of the situation in most cases was proper? For example, on civil rights, holding off until 1963, on a major civil rights proposal.

PELL: I guess so. Obviously, if you're very interested in the bill, you think, gee, why can't we get at this more quickly.

STEWART: Were you at all involved in the 1963 civil rights proposal?

PELL: No.

STEWART: On the Employment and Manpower Subcommittee?

PELL: No, just followed the committee hearings. You know, I could say I was very involved, but. . . . I'd go to hearings and spent hours discussing it. I contributed ideas, but you look back with the objective viewpoint of history, they do not stand out terribly high, I believe.

STEWART: A couple of more things. In a speech in August '62, you pointed out that the power of Communism, generally, was waning and that the United States was losing the propaganda war regarding the charge of colonialism. Again, did you ever discuss this whole problem with President Kennedy? Do you feel any significant changes were made in this whole area during the Administration?

PELL: No. I did discuss it with him because I used to be in the Foreign Service and I profoundly believe that Communism contains the seeds of its own destruction within itself. As soon as people acquire education and some modicum of consumer goods, decent medical care, they start wanting the basic freedoms to travel, to worship, to pile up a little money and leave it to their children. These basic drives are common to men anywhere, and they're just as common to men living under Communism, too. And the Communist system has to respond. And we did discuss this, and I think the President was not unsympathetic to my approach. He just felt, as I said earlier, that I was a little in advance of things sometimes.

STEWART: There were no really significant differences then?

PELL: No, I think he felt that I was a little too theoretical and far out.

STEWART: Can you think of any specific discussion you had with him?

PELL: No, no. I think he thought that my thinking was always five to ten years ahead, instead of for the year he had to cope with and the problem at the moment.

STEWART: Did you see any change in his approach to things such as this, say, between 1960 and 1963?

PELL: Yes, but I can't take credit for it. I think it was his own good sense, wisdom, and experience that made him recognize that the flow of history is more with us.

STEWART: Well, can you think of any examples of how his attitude may have changed?

PELL: No, no, I can't.

STEWART: That's about it.

PELL: One other point I should have mentioned, which should be a matter of record, is I think one of the people who really played a very real role in the President's election was Anthony Akers, who had been one of the PT boat heroes in They Were Expendable. He was visiting me in Washington on 33rd Street when President Kennedy came by in the summer or the spring of '60 to urge him to help him in New York State. He later was sent by President Kennedy, after a couple misunderstandings--not misunderstandings, but first it was on and then it was off--as Ambassador to New Zealand. Then shortly before President Kennedy was killed, it was agreed that Anthony Akers would succeed Angier Duke as Chief of Protocol. On this understanding, he resigned his mission in New Zealand and returned. But by the time he got back to Washington, the President had been assassinated, and as a result of that Mr. [Lloyd N.] Hand was appointed instead by President Johnson. And I've always believed that Ambassador Akers had been very unfairly treated and that he should have been given another post in the Administration. He was the kind of man who was much needed in it, and was much admired by President Kennedy.

STEWART: Were you involved in any other appointments or any proposed appointments?

PELL: Yes, we would discuss appointments sometimes. I remember the idea of Franklin Roosevelt becoming Under Secretary of Commerce really developed out of the same dinner I mentioned earlier at his house. I can remember an earlier time when I suggested Franklin Roosevelt be Under Secretary of Labor, but the idea was vetoed by somebody at AFL-CIO [American Federation of Labor-Congress of Industrial Organizations]--headquarters. President Kennedy originally liked the idea very much, and indeed, went ahead with it, but there were problems of which I'm not fully aware that prevented its full and final implementation.

STEWART: You don't recall any disputes over appointments, for example, of any people from Rhode Island or the area that you were proposing?

PELL: We tried to get Bruce Sundlun head of the FAA [Federal Aviation Agency], but didn't succeed.

STEWART: Is there anything else that you can think of of significance, for example, social activities at the White House, or . . .

PELL: No, no. I guess you have enough on what you had for dinner and what you did when you went there. One thing I'll never forget, or anything about it, is after he was killed when I went out with Senator Humphrey to the airport--there were only about three or four senators who were there--and then after the death, my recollection of the funeral. Our youngest daughter, Julia, went down to keep his children company in Virginia awhile. She was a little older and she helped them greatly. I remember going out to visit them in Virginia, too, once at least, I forget how often.

STEWART: Did you ever discuss the house that was being built?

PELL: Oh yes, I discussed it with him and with his wife. I went riding around it once.

STEWART: He was very enthused about--very intimately involved, I guess, in most of the plans, wasn't he?

PELL: Well, he was very interested in household or in good living. As I said earlier, it was his idea to get the summer White House in Newport, to rent the house. The idea was his, not that of his wife. And he was very interested in good cigars, clothes one wears, and the good, the interesting things of life, the beautiful things of life. And one of the very real losses to our country, at least to me, was this sense of interest in life. He was a very civilized man. Perhaps because we were the same age, or same background, same general view, I always felt that there was a fairly good communication, as if we were on a similar wavelength.

STEWART: Was there any one thing that you really felt the Administration didn't do, or was there anything that you very strongly disagreed with them on?

PELL: I wanted to move harder on Germany, I felt that perhaps he should have broken that impasse. And I wanted to get that summer White House. Those are the two issues about which I felt the strongest.

STEWART: Did you generally share the President's views regarding the ability of the State Department to respond to current pressures and so forth?

PELL: Yes. And no insult to the younger officers in it. The middle grade officers are excellent, but it's the system itself that seems to encourage a certain sterility. It's the same way now in connection with Vietnam. They're in a very frozen position, far more frozen than is the Pentagon.

STEWART: I don't mean to put you on the spot, and maybe you can't answer this question, but would you generally say that President Kennedy's attitudes regarding the State Department are accurately reflected in Arthur Schlesinger's book, or aren't you that familiar with it?

PELL: I am. I think his attitudes regarding the top people, yes. But he had a tremendous respect for the middle grade officers, many of whom he knew and many of whom were the same age that we were. So, while we had a dim view of the system, the top ones, he had a very real respect for the middle grade or the rank-and-file of the Foreign Service.

STEWART: Did you feel he was genuinely sympathetic, or at least eager, to recognize that there were built in institutional problems that had to be resolved? Did he have a certain patience in seeing that these things could be resolved eventually?

PELL: Yes, he did. He was very patient, very good natured, much more so than people realized, I think.

STEWART: Because many people have been quick to totally condemn the situation in the State Department and say it's just unsolveable.

PELL: I think he was going to apply himself to it, but he hadn't gotten to it by the time he was killed.

STEWART: Is there anything else that you can think of that you'd . . .

PELL: No, just my own sense of great personal loss. I don't think I've ever, except for the death of my own father, I've ever been as grieved. I just remember the terribly personal and profound grief at his death as something I'll never, never forget. It may have been because it was a personal relationship and a personal admiration and also because it was a general viewpoint. And now we've dropped back into the old New Deal, and when the present administration goes its way, we'll probably drop down to the generation after World War II. But all of us who had been through World War II for four, five years, close to that, we really had something in common, and President Kennedy was the only man in high office in government who represented this viewpoint. I'm sure in the future it will be the Korean War. We've become a skipped generation. I think his ideas are excellent.

STEWART: Did he ever really discuss this whole matter of generations?

PELL: No.

STEWART: And ages of people in power and so forth?

PELL: No. But I can honestly say that since his death, I've said in my prayers each night, "May the ideas of John F. Kennedy for our country, earth and universe come to be." And I believe it.

STEWART: This seems an appropriate way to end this, unless you have something else.

Art. *Allen*
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October 24, 1962

Mrs. Kennedy
The White House
Washington, D. C.

Dear Jackie:

Here are the ideas and the enclosures for which you asked me. I am, incidentally, very much pleased that you would ask me.

My thought is that the Art Advisor at the White House has essentially three areas of responsibility: The Executive area of Government, the Legislative area of Government, and the private areas of the Arts themselves.

Executive. The Art Advisor should do the preparatory planning for a Federal Council of the Arts. In my view, he should keep a very firm hand on this planning, since it is most important that the Federal Council of the Arts should be under the direct guidance of the White House, and should not be placed under the Office of Education or elsewhere in the Department of Health, Education and Welfare, where it would be too far down in the maze of bureaucracy.

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The White House Advisor should have close personal and active relationships with the already extant Federal officials working in the field of the Arts: The Secretary of the Smithsonian Institution, the Chairman of the Commission of Fine Arts, the Director of the National Gallery, the Chairman of the Board of Trustees of the National Cultural Center, the Assistant Secretary of State for Educational and Cultural Affairs, the Staff Director of the Advisory Commission on Educational Exchange and Advisory Committee on the Arts, the Commissioner of Education, and so forth.

He should be responsible for blocking out the type of Federal art program that he believes would be most advantageous to our nation. He should draw up an actual proposed table of organization and the budget for such a program, because only by far ahead moving and thinking and planning will we be able to make even the slightest actual steps forward. Also, the very exercise of thinking forward, of making specific plans ahead, will work out many of the wrinkles that might otherwise occur.

Another area that I have developed in my own State, and where I believe the White House Advisor could play an invaluable role on the national scale, is in the dissemination of

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exhibitions. At my request, the National Gallery made up an exhibition of reproductions of Italian paintings (political appeal, here, too!) which are being exhibited in practically every one of our city and town halls. The idea here is to catch and interest in art those people who would otherwise never take the trouble to go to a museum. For art to have national interest, I believe it must be disseminated in breadth and in depth.

A similar service is already being ably and competently furnished by Mrs. Anna Maria Pope, Chief of the Traveling Exhibitions Service at the Smithsonian. But it is being done on far too small a scale and at too great an expense to the local communities. The White House Advisor could do an invaluable job in enlarging, developing and popularizing this field.

Legislative. The White House Advisor should be responsible for being in touch with each member of Congress who is interested in the art fields. In the past Congress, for instance, at least six pretty comprehensive arts bills were introduced in the Senate or the House. The White House Advisor should not only be responsible for knowing the contents of these bills, but he should show enough interest to be in touch with the various sponsors, indicating where he thinks their proposals

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have merit and where they fall short. In fact, he should be prepared to introduce and guide an Administration Arts Bill, if that should be necessary.

He also would be responsible to lobby for his own ideas and to try to insure that the program he thinks best for the nation is the one that is finally enacted.

He should personally form an informal group that would meet for luncheon or dinner, once a month, to discuss the various art programs and proposals within the Government. Invited to it should be those representatives I have already mentioned in the Executive branch of the Government, those individuals in the Congress who have indicated an interest in the arts, and those private individuals from the field of the arts themselves who he believes might make a contribution to that particular meal.

It would be particularly nice if you could occasionally attend these meals to both decorate and inspire them! .

Private Areas of the Arts. The White House Advisor should maintain as close touch as possible with spokesmen for the various fields of art. In this connection, he should pay special attention to keeping a nice balance between the leaders

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of the visual, as compared with the performing arts. He should also bear in mind the political facts of life, in that the leaders of the folk arts -- Indian crafts, and the like -- should be recognized to help insure general acceptance of any overall legislation in this field.

He should take immediate steps to create a Citizens Committee of the Arts that, without official government status or legislation, would take the lead in helping create the climate necessary for the passage of meaningful arts legislation. This Citizens Committee should be established with three criteria in mind: It should not be too large; it should have representatives from both the visual and performing arts; and geographic representation from the East Coast, the Midwest, Southwest, and West Coast. In setting up this Citizens Committee, the White House Advisor should work hand in glove with the interested arts field leaders.

Finally, the White House Advisor should set up a system of White House awards for outstanding contributions in the field of the arts. These awards should be limited to somewhere around a dozen, maybe twenty a year, and should be given out on an annual or semi-annual basis at the White House itself.

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Those honored, to my mind, would not just be an author of a particularly successful book, or the producer of a particularly stimulating symphony, but also those people in the field of the arts who, perhaps in a more humble way, have made a completely new or unique contribution, or given particularly of themselves. For instance, a theatre scene changer who has developed a new technique for moving scenery; the man in charge of restoration at a museum who has invented a new way of bringing back the correct colors to frescoes; a man who works out a particularly efficient way of packaging and disseminating reproductions so that they may be seen by more people.

An analogy here might be to the lower honors, such as the Order of the British Empire medals, which are distributed by the Queen a couple of times a year. Such awards can do an immense amount to stimulate and fertilize a nation and culture, provided that the awards are distributed deep down enough into the very roots of the community.

Thought and planning should also be given to the role that art plays in industrial design and economic competition. Examples of this are the remarkably attractive factories that are being built in Western Europe, the simple and smart designs

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that the Japanese are perfecting in their products, and all the similar relationships between industrial design and economic success.

In fact, two products can be equally good, but the edge will go to one or the other as the direct result of the simplicity and purity of its design.

Enclosed is the composite Arts Bill that was actually reported out of our Committee this past Session, together with the Hearings and my Report. This bill is basically my weaving together of Jack Javits' bill to help disseminate the works of performing and visual art to the hinterlands, together with Joe Clark's idea of Federal distribution of matching funds to state groups, in order that individual art councils and programs might be established. This matching fund provision to each state group has great political appeal, in that it means that each state derives some benefit from such a program.

Love,

Claiborne

Enclosures

CP:ls