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Biographical Note

Pozen (1933-2016) was the Assistant to Secretary of Interior (1961 - 1967), editor of the book *Strategy for the '60's: Policy Research Centers for the United States Senate*, and lead partner at Stroock & Stroock & Lavan LLP. In this interview, Pozen discusses urban affairs and the Open Space Program, the oil depletion allowance, White House staff during the Kennedy Administration, and the desalination of water, among other issues.

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Fourth Oral History Interview

with

WALTER POZEN

July 18, 1968
Washington, D.C.

By John F. Stewart

For the John F. Kennedy Library

STEWART: Why don't we start by talking about the plans that were being made for the campaign in 1964, presumably in the fall of '63?

POZEN: Well, I think, John, it's helpful to talk about the role that Stewart Udall had played in '62 and, I think, was really going to perform in '64. He was the only Westerner in the Cabinet as such. And, as you know, the Attorney General and the President

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weren't particularly attuned to Western politics. Obviously, Teddy [Edward M. Kennedy] knew a good deal about it, since he worked out there. I mean a lot of people knew about it -- I don't mean to indicate that -- but Stewart was the authority on Western politics. So the kind of thing that we were doing is trying to -- one of the things which we've talked about before is this conservation trip which some people viewed as just a political trip. It was a little bit of both, obviously. It was a chance to do some political soundings. The Secretary was doing some work on a political level for the President, I recall, in Colorado and obviously in Arizona, perhaps in California.

But in the process of all of this I saw a lot as wrong. I saw some of Robert Kennedy, and Bob, who was really, I felt, was the chief political organizer, and I suppose Steve Smith

[Stephen E. Smith] would have, again, reappeared even though at that stage he hadn't. And the curious thing, I think

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that really was beginning to develop -- and I remember one conversation that I had, well, late one evening with Secretary Udall, which was a great hush-hush kind of discussion, which maybe you can help me pinpoint in time a little bit. I had a talk with Bob Kennedy in his office and the Attorney General, along with some people from Larry O'Brien's [Lawrence F. O'Brien] staff -- believe Charles Daly, now at the University of Chicago....

STEWART: Milton Gwirtzman was...

POZEN: Milt.

STEWART: ... heavily involved, I think, at that time.

POZEN: Yes, I think he might have been involved. I don't remember the personnel. But the gist of that Kennedy meeting, and which I discussed with Secretary Udall this particular evening about 7:30 or 8 o'clock, was that, a, the Attorney General reported the President

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was very disturbed about the Bobby Baker [Robert G. Baker] situation and that things were going to be happening on that pretty soon. So let me figure out -- it must have been just before the assas.... I would think it was -- John, am I crazy? Was it almost three weeks before the assassination?

STEWART: Possibly.

POZEN: Could that -- could it be that?

STEWART: I think it was a little...

POZEN: Well, it seemed to me it was warm, and it was probably like the early fall, September.

STEWART: Yes. September or October.

POZEN: Yes -- I'm bad on dates and so forgive me -- but that Bobby was saying that was just going to be dynamite. And I came away from the Justice Department and I reported to my employer that I thought there was a very strong feeling, at least at the Robert Kennedy level, that the

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Vice President was going to be dumped and that there was a very real possibility that there would be another vice president in '64.

STEWART: Did they talk about anyone in particular?

POZEN: No. The whole thing was so circumspect. Let me make that clear. Bobby didn't sit there and say, "Pal, we're going to dump him." But that was certainly what I came out with. Plus, I'd heard -- I just don't remember it now. This was, God, it's, you know, it's a long time ago when you think of it. It's almost five years ago. And I'd had several other conversations with people to indicate to me that there was a serious consideration being given to getting rid of Lyndon [Lyndon Baines Johnson].

And he was also -- President Johnson, at that stage, was enormously unhappy. He had been acting, according to my friends, which is curious I'm sure -- at the least this isn't accurate at all, or maybe it's open to question for sure -- that he had been acting in a very petty way, just wanted to

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go on trips all the time. Maybe someone else had told you that something. A friend of mine in the State Department, and a friend of Jack Kennedys -- that's the reason he was there -- told me that he just would drive him crazy. He just wanted to.... They had just turned him down on going somewhere. He wanted to represent the President or -- I believe it was Europe or something, and, you know, this was.... The friend of mind is Bill Brubeck [William H. Brubeck], who was Executive Secretary of the State Department. Bill was telling me this and he said, "God, let's just get rid of him." And I think there were, in many areas, these knowledgeable people who I really -- I realized the year of.... Whether it be Ted Sorensen [Theodore Sorensen] or President Kenndy, whatever it was, I think

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there were a number of people who were seriously considering.... Now, who they thought of as an alternative, that's sort of nagging in my head because I -- maybe Stewart mentioned the possibility of somebody or.... I don't know. But I must say that this is a -- I would think, from a historical point of view, it's a rather fascinating....

STEWART: Well, there had been a number of conversations and any number of conclusions as to whether, in fact, a conclusion had been reached or not.

POZEN: The reading I got, John, from that particular Justice Department confab was that it depended on what was going to happen with Bobby Baker. And all of

us who -- you know, anybody who'd been in Washington for any length of time knew Bobby quite well, and also knew the magnitude of his activities. And I must say that, as it turned out, it was much more subdued than I thought it was going to be. I just thought it was going to rock the whole boat.

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I suppose in retrospect, thinking about it, it was a pretty dynamic series of revelations. But it just shows you what one forgets. Well, I don't know, for what it's worth. Now, on....

STEWART: Was there anything that you were directly involved with, or Interior was directly involved with, relating to Baker?

POZEN: Oh, you mean our activities with Bobby?

STEWART: Yes.

POZEN: Mmmmmmm. I think I, in the course of being Stewart's assistant, I don't think I ever talked to him -- I mean, I'm not just trying to be defensive -- I don't think I ever talked to him on the phone. He might have called Stewart up for something or other. He didn't need us in some ways. I mean, you know, Senator Kerr [Robert S. Kerr] just would call, pick up the phone and talk to Secretary Udall directly. Senator Kerr is one of the most interesting people in my time in Washington, and

STEWART: What else did you do as far as '64 was concerned?

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POZEN: Well, the other thing that Stewart was doing was thinking about congressional candidates from the West. And this is rather important, obviously. We did come up with a couple of suggestions and people and also some of the senatorial candidates. Dave King [David S. King] from Utah was somebody who, I guess, did run finally and lose for senator in Utah. In other words, we were trying to recruit a lot of young people in that Kennedy image, I realize now. Those plans were sort of dropped, which is a damn shame. I don't know if it was ever -- John, you might know more about it than I do. I don't know if there was any government-wide or coordinated effort in this regard. There should have been, but there wasn't really. Plus, as I say, Stewart's primary interest was the President's scheduling, and when you have an incumbent President, it's an enormous leg up and you can do things which are obviously political but cloaked in a

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nonpolitical veil. For instance, a couple of things we were thinking about were the dedication of -- as I mentioned before, the sixties were a pretty good time in terms of conservation, the

creation of parks, and a lot of these parks hadn't been dedicated. Let's see. I guess we did dedicate Cape Cod on the President's birthday, wasn't that it? No, Teddy did it. Teddy did it.

STEWART: I'm not sure.

POZEN: Yes, I believe Teddy did it. I mean, it was that kind of thing that we were trying to look out for, the business of... For instance, one activity that we had in mind was the St. Louis [Gateway] Arch that Eero Saarinen designed and that.... Strangely enough, it's still -- well, it was just finally dedicated by President Johnson about a year or two ago, but it could have been done in probably 1964. And one of the things that Stewart was talking to Larry O'Brien about was where would be a good spot. We have x, y, and z available; you know, in the next couple of months, what could he do to do it.

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STEWART: But it was primarily in these two areas: in the scheduling of trips and in the looking at congressional candidates.

POZEN: Yes.

STEWART: There was nothing more as far as issues or anything?

POZEN: No. No. Of course, Stewart was thinking about what our Department might be doing and I have the memorandum which I prepared on.... It's very immodest of me, I must say, to say this, what I will say. But, you know, I was concerned. This was before the group -- I guess the Department of Urban Affairs had just been created, or perhaps it hadn't been created. But the Department of the Interior -- and this is getting into another whole area. I guess it was before. The mission of the Department of the Interior, because of Secretary Udall, had changed somewhat, John. It became much more urban oriented and so on.

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And no one. You know there was still the traditional conservation talk of dams and irrigation and reclamation and so on. We started coming up with a new vocabulary. I did a memo for Stewart, which I believe I sent over to and Sorensen -- I don't recall -- around the same time saying that we should start talking about the cities a little more, and that we should really make it clear that the new Land and Water Conservation Fund had an urban function, and that the whole pollution area, or environmental pollution -- I remember writing that phrase which sounded very pompous, very esoteric, environmental pollution. Now John, you know, it's what everyone talks about, environmental pollution. And I suggested to Secretary Udall and to Ted -- again, I got my ears boxed a little bit for it -- that maybe the Department of Interior might assume the air and water pollution functions now

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administered by HEW [Department of Health, Education and Welfare]. I have it here; I'll dig it out. The Secretary wrote on it, "What have you been smoking?" or something like, you know, "Are you nuts? kind of thing. So it turns out that, thanks to President Johnson, we did get the water pollution functions. And I wouldn't be at all surprised, in a new administration, of the air pollution functions wouldn't be transferred to Interior as well.

But it was on this level that I felt that we should start out, and I truly believe that we still have to do -- that much more of this talk as to rise to the level of political dialogue. But that was the kind of thing that I was hoping would be a central issue in 1964. I'm sure what would have been was what was, namely foreign policy considerations. You know, I've told you my own bias in that regard. I just think that

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President Kennedy didn't care about conservation.

STEWART: This leads into one of the items that was on that list, namely the Open Space Program that was in the Housing Act of 1961. Were you involved in that right from the start, and, if so, how did this whole idea come about of setting up this program of grants to cities for acquiring land?

POZEN: For preservation? Well, again, this is Walter Pozen's blowhard warning. I'll tell you how that really happened. It was a very curious phenomenon, and only in Washington -- I used to work for, now Senator Harrison - A. Williams, Jr., of New Jersey. New Jersey is a very small place as far as Democrats are concerned. We hadn't elected a Democratic senator in thirty-six years, and, you know, it wasn't very difficult to get to know the people,

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because you were working for a loser as a rule. I worked for Pete in 1958 and we just had a very small operation really. It was just two of us who did it, and wrote speeches, and traveled with the guy, and went up and down the.... And I wrote a couple of speeches which I got, based on material provided by the Regional Plan Association by a lot of urban planners. There weren't very many, there still aren't that many urban planners, of course. But I was really fascinated by this whole notion of greenbelts. Some friends of mine at Oxford had sent me some stuff about the greenbelts and all this, saving area, saving open space just to have open space. And so I did a speech for Pete which I believe was for some.... What you did, John, was really the press releases every day, and he just gave the same set speech. But I did a press release

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speech for Newark, or some place like that, advocating that New Jersey, being the most urbanized state in the Union, that it should be a function of the Federal Government to save open space and that this should be done by just acquiring land which would be forever open, and, you know, these kind of ringing phrases -- I don't know how ringing, but an awful lot of phrasing -- and didn't think very much about it. Pete got a little interested in it. He did use it a little bit in the state and learned a good deal about it in the two years or so, before President Kennedy became President.

And then, one day he, when the Housing Act came to the floor of the Senate, he called me up about 12 o'clock, as they were going in, and he said, "You know what?" (As you know there's no germane rule; I mean you could easily amend on the floor of the Senate.) He called up, he said, "You know, I'm going to

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offer an amendment on that open space thing." And he read me what the language was and so on. I guess there were a couple of people at the Housing and Home Finance Agency, or HUD [Department of Housing and Urban Development], who were urging him to do it; I checked with them too. And I said, "Pete, that's great," I said, "Is there any hope?" He said, "No, hell there's no chance." So he offered the amendment, John, and it passed -- just like that. He called me up later in the day, and he'd had a couple of drinks, was feeling pretty good, and he said, "My God," he started to say, "the damn thing passed." And I said, "That's great. You think it's going to stay in conference?" He said, "No, never. You know Sparkman's [John J. Sparkman] not going -- wouldn't plunk for that," or something like that. Well, to make even a longer story longer -- I mean, to make a short story long, it did emerge, totally by accident, in the Housing Act of 1962, I believe. Is that right?

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STEWART: '61.

POZEN: '61.

STEWART: Title VII, wasn't it?

POZEN: And so it was amazing to me and it was amazing to Senator Williams. But I felt that I was rather an authority on this whole thing. I'd never discussed this with anybody. Stewart knew about it because Pete knew -- because through my relationship with Senator Williams, Stewart got to know him pretty well.

And it was our feeling that, by virtue of the fact that -- and it's all terribly biased -- that Secretary Udall was the most dynamic person in this whole field, and we were working on the Land and Water Conservation Fund, and we were making some headway I thought, that this Open Space Program in cities -- which I realize now was impossible -- should have been transferred to the Department of the Interior. But in any event there should be a very close working

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relationship with the Department of the Interior, and that ultimately we would take over the program was my hope. I even did some work because a chap, a very bright kid who worked for Pete Williams as a legislative assistant, was now working for the Secretary of HUD, whose name was R.D. Ames. R period, D period, Ames -- that's all the name he had. Do you know him -- R.D.?

STEWART: No.

POZEN: And we had a breakfast, I recall. Stewart invited R.D. over, and some other people from HUD, and suggested that -- it's sort of a pompous thing really, when you think about it -- that we were doing great things and that they should sort of cave in and give us the program. In any event, that didn't occur, and we had this rather attenuated, prolonged negotiation with them to define their participation and the overlap between the Open Space Program and between the new Bureau of Outdoor Recreation of the Department of Interior

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which administered the Land and Water Conservation Fund and the grants we'd make, ultimately to the cities, under the Land and Water Conservation Fund. And I must say that we didn't -- if I remember; I was thinking about this before you came in -- again, we didn't get very much help from the White House. We worked it out with the Bureau of the Budget. I remember sitting with Elmer Staats and whoever was the Director of the Bureau at that stage and just, you know, getting very little sympathy or help from them.

STEWART: But it never became a major problem between you and...

POZEN: Yes, it did.

STEWART: The urban renewal people were running it in...

POZEN: The HUD people. Yes. In essence, what they were trying to say, John -- and, as I say, in some perspective maybe they were right -- was that Interior should not get involved in the city business. And they tried to plot it out on a population density map where they said that if the density were above so and so in an area then clearly that's a city, or urban area, and if it were below that number, then it's a rural area and

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we should get involved. And the way they proposed originally, John, we would get involved only in the most -- essentially where there are three people a mile. Then we went through several kinds of drafts and finally emerged with an agreement. I believe there was a written agreement between the two Secretaries which defined the coordination between the two agencies.

But again, John, it was just this kind of a -- we were left to ourselves to do it, with a little help from the Bureau of the Budget, but I didn't feel that we -- I'm riding this hobby horse pretty hard -- I don't think we ever got any help from the White House at all.

STEWART: Certainly there was no concern with any possibly political value with the whole thing.

POZEN: No, no. And you know the whole program has really been administered rather poorly, it seems to me, up to now.

STEWART: Look it... [Interruption] Why don't we get into the whole matter of the fuels. Well, actually, I thought you were going to talk about this National Fuels and Energy Study. Do you recall that? But anyway, there's the business

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of oil depletion relating to it. Why don't you get into that?

POZEN: Yes, I think this is sort of a precursor of it. And it's curious that -- in getting some perspective, today is what, the 18th of July, 1968? On the 17th of July, 1968, the Assistant Secretary for tax policy of the Treasury Department, Stanley Surrey, called me -- yesterday -- and he said, Christ, he'd just gotten a recommendation from the Department of the Interior on proposed changes in the Internal Revenue Code relating to the oil depletion allowance and on other mineral areas. He said they were minimal kinds of recommendations -- if anything, they were retrogressive rather than progressive -- and then he harked back to what we had done in 1961. It was curious because it all came back to me. He said, "Remember those rather bold discussions we had in 1961?" And then I did, and, knowing that you

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were coming in this morning and so on, I did think about it for a moment.

What happened was that Fred Dutton [Frederick G. Dutton], who was the Cabinet Secretary, took an interest in the oil depletion allowance and the whole question of oil policy and the oil import program, and asked a group of us to work with him on just getting up some recommendations for the President. And, again, it was this -- in the early days of the Administration that to think that a couple of amateurs, because I really knew very little about it and I think Freddy, in all due respect, didn't know a hell of a lot about it.... He didn't pretend like he knew an awful lot about it. He also got involved in the stockpile. I wonder if

the President simply gave him this job or he tackled it himself. I don't know. I'm going to talk about the stockpile too in a minute. I think that that's right, I think he just got sort of handed the job.

STEWART: When would this have been? Early spring or summer or...

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POZEN: It was the spring. It was the spring of...

STEWART: '61.

POZEN: ... of '61.

STEWART: Right.

POZEN: Yes. It was the spring of '61, perhaps four months after the Administration had really gotten under way, three or four months. We got together and came up with.... Well, it's curious because of the fact that it's such a political hot potato and there are so many fundamental policy considerations here, but it didn't stop us for a moment from making all sorts of radical recommendations.

STEWART: There had been discussion during the campaign of the depletion allowance.

POZEN: I guess there was. I guess there was. I wasn't involved with that. I mean, I really only got interested in resource matters when I came to work for Stewart. I didn't know a damn thing about it before. I'm

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not so sure I know much now.

But we came up with some very radical ideas. Stanley Surrey was involved. And I have a feeling, I have more than a feeling, John, that I think that this would have been something that -- it peaked Sorensen's interest. It was sort of a populist kind of political issues. I think that we weren't very strong with the domestic oil industry anyway. They didn't like John Kennedy particularly, even though Mike Feldman made a major effort to try to win them over, and win them over to his law firm for the future. But I had a feeling that we could have come up with some legislation which would have substantially, at least would have proposed substantial revisions in the oil depletion allowance. Nothing ever emerged. A few times after that, Stan Surrey met with Stewart in a very private, confidential way to talk about this whole matter. Stan and the Treasury people were very much for revising, in a fundamental way,

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the sort of hidden subsidies given to the minerals industry through tax abatement, in essence, but nothing's ever come of it.

STEWART: Who else was involved besides...

POZEN: Surrey, Pozen, Dutton -- gee whiz, I don't recall -- and a very good chap, who was then assistant to the Assistant Secretary for Minerals in the Department of Interior, named John O'Leary. Those are the only people that I bring to mind. I think the way this group came together was that prior to this meeting in the spring of 1961, we had had a number of problems with the stockpile, which I gathered was coming under him, and where this whole question of barter, of releasing materials, strategic materials, from the stockpile came about. The minerals area in the Department of Interior is very rules bound. To be generous about it, they're highly bureaucratic; to be more realistic, they're trade oriented and follow the leader -- and the leader is not, in fact the leader is not, the

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President of the United States. And they kept saying, "Well, you can't do that. we need x minerals" -- I've forgotten.... It seemed to me there were two or three problems that Fred got, brought to our attention. One was a diamond, some situation of industrial diamonds which I didn't -- is that possible?

STEWART: Yes.

POZEN: The bureaucratic response from the Department was, "Well, you can't do that." And he kept saying, "Why can't you do that?" You know, there were obviously some foreign policy considerations and so on. We met on that score a number of times, and the same group of people actually -- Stan Surrey wasn't involved, but the same group of people in the Department of Interior. Here was O'Leary, Pozen, Dutton, somebody from GSA [General Services Administration] -- I bet it was Bob Griffin [Robert T. Griffin]; it must have been Bob Griffin from GSA -- met and we worked it out. The barter arrangement was quite possible and ultimately happened.

Again there was the kind

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of broad recommendations that perhaps the whole strategic stockpile should be revisited and maybe there wasn't too much reason to have the damn thing. Because in the Eisenhower [Dwight D. Eisenhower] years there were some very substantial questions raised about hanky-panky and Secretary Humphrey [George M. Humphrey] and others who had benefited substantially from it. I think this was still very much on -- perhaps on President Kennedy's mind -- I believe it was on Fred Dutton's mind at the time. And out of that series of group meetings came these ideas about the oil industry and...

STEWART: Wait a minute. Excuse me. How did all this lead into the Symington [Stuart Symington] investigation which began in early '62? Symington made an investigation of the whole stockpile at the request of the President.

POZEN: I'm glad you mentioned that. What probably happened, John, was that

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Fred learned that there were people on the Hill with some of this information and that there was going to be an investigation or that there were some people who would like to have the thing investigated, and was worried about the consequences of it and just had these kind of examples of where the stockpile wasn't

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working properly at all, where things weren't being done properly and so on. That this is probably -- I just, I'm not coherent on this too much, but I think this probably was a precursor to the Symington hearings. And I think it was -- with Dutton, the kind of stuff Dutton developed showed that there was a reason to have such an investigation.

STEWART: But you weren't that intimately involved to, for example, determine whether it may be potentially embarrassing to as many Democrats as Republicans? Because I think Symington hearings obviously had great political overtones.

POZEN: Oh, sure. I felt at the time, that there was.... I'm not sure I was in favor of an investigation. I was certainly in favor of looking into the matter carefully. I think that the Symington investigation was forced on us more than anything else.

STEWART: Oh really? I thought it was the other way around.

POZEN: Well, maybe not.

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STEWART: I'm not that sure of it, but....

POZEN: I don't know. I know that Dutton and others probably were pretty upset about the kind of things they found, and I was. This was the beginning of my whole series of suspicions about hanky panky in the minerals area, which still exists, probably, will exist whenever this is read.

STEWART: What about this, as I mentioned before, this National Fuels and Energy Study

that Congress Authorized in the fall of 1961? And again, nothing was ever done about this. It was a yearlong study. Were you involved in that?

POZEN: No. Only in maybe pushing the paper around a little bit. It should have obviously related -- I mean, it should have been a logical follow up to the work we were doing on tax reform and tax reformation related to minerals, but nothing ever was done. I think that's a good, the teaching class of the case kind of thing. It's a good example of where the plus

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and the minus of a Fred Dutton having the flexibility to go to anybody, you know, and raise these points.... and the minuses is that the follow-up just wasn't there. Freddy was doing other things and left and so on and so forth, and nothing ever happened. And it was just bruised. In government, this is what most career government people depend on, for good or for bad, is that the policy makers aren't going to be around very long and if you just wait long enough, it's going to go away. I don't know if that's very fair, but I think that there's much to that.

STEWART: But this was, at least ostensibly, an attempt to come up with the one grand policy for oil and gas?

POZEN: Right. Never happened. In fact, it was just a series of sort of leaping from the frying pan into the fire. We made some proposals, Secretary

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Udall made some proposals on substantially revising the residual oil program -- I don't know if we've covered this or not -- and Mike Feldman was the person who was primarily responsible from the White House for reviewing this kind of thing. Curious, why should Mike have been the guy? He didn't know anything about it. He was simply a political broker and a lawyer at the time. That's just how it was handled.

When the residual oil thing came up, Tony Boyle [W. A. Boyle] and the United Mine Workers raised the roof, saying, "This is going to put thousands of miners out of work." Well, the fact of the matter is that the United Mine Workers, that their big problem is automation, and they just had to have some kind of whipping boy to hold responsible for the fact that mines were closing all the time and fewer and fewer miners were doing more work. The availability of cheaper residual fuel oil wasn't the thing, and most of the time in areas that burned coal you

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couldn't get it anyway. So, I mean, it wasn't a competing fuel. But that's not the way it was presented, and Tony -- I just remember several meetings in Mike's office where great

shouting, I mean literally, shoutings and screamings, "If. . . ." I remember once where Boyle left Feldman's office and said he was going down to see the President, downstairs to see the President. God, I mean, you know, Stewart just sat there with mouth open. It was one of these things where, rather than talking about a coherent fuels policy and a query, "What is the relationship of coal to residual fuel oil, to crude oil, to atomic power, and so on? What is the function of government in this respect?" It was just Udall made a proposal, a fairly fractionated proposal, Feldman sort of weighed the pluses and the minuses, and we did away with it. The first time we tried it, which was 1962, the United Mine Workers prevailed. We tried it

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again a year later, in essence decontrolling residual fuel oil, and we prevailed. In fact, the program was junked. Now one can import residual fuel oil in any quantities you want.

But, again, it was just handled on a political broker basis. Mike, as I say, wasn't a resource person. There was nobody in the White House who was, when I think about it. As I told you, I think Ted was the closest to that, and Ted had no -- or Lee White, I suppose. Lee had some power, training in the power area in TVA [Tennessee Valley Authority.] But there was nobody on that staff who knew a hell of a lot about it, or who was very sympathetic.

STEWART: Of course, this could raise a lot of questions as far as the organization of the White House staff vis-a-vis the departments, as to whether there should be, or whether there has to be, someone. But that's sort of. . .

POZEN: Well. . . .

STEWART: Go ahead, if you want to.

POZEN: No. I mean, that's a. . .

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STEWART: Well, I was just going to say it's a little off the subject here.

POZEN: No, it's not off the subject at all. I think the White House staff under President Kennedy it was a phenomenon that it's really worth talking about. I know I have talked about it at length, but, when you think of it, it was a most audacious group of people, who had little respect for anyone, who offended people like crazy, and, queer, I mean, but had this freshness which was very appealing; but, it didn't have the coherency and the substantive involvement that really made for big changes. I wonder if -- I mean, if you're raising the point whether any President can have that staff, I don't know.

STEWART: Because their orientation was, or because their tendency was strictly to be that of a political broker or. . . .

POZEN: Somewhat. That's right. I think that.... Well, there was a patronizing aspect. It was very unpleasant really. I mean this was the

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function that I served with Stewart, but that in some ways sort of a liaison between the Ralph Dungs and the Feldmans, Whites, and Sorensens. I mean, I could deal with them. But, as a Westerner, Stewart felt, with some justification, that he wasn't accepted. He felt that his turn of mind was not appreciated, and he felt -- I guess you'd put it -- a sort of inferiority complex because he had gone to a small college in Arizona, and he felt that he was looked down upon because of this. I don't know if you want to get involved in this at all, but it's a rather fascinating subject.

STEWART: Yes, go ahead.

POZEN: And, what's the word I really want? It's, well, I guess patronizing. I mean, they were just.... Well, you know, it was incredibly audacious. I mean, Sorensen

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had much more power than the Secretary of the Interior or the Secretary of HUD or HEW or HUD and so on. And Kennedy, of course, just abused the Cabinet System, it seems to me, didn't use it properly at all and abused it. These people were setting policy, very often without benefit of, a Senate confirmation and a real substantive scope. The Budget Bureau, of course, became very important in this regard. So really at times one wondered who the Secretary of the Interior was. Was it Elmer Staats or Stewart Udall? It would be an interesting study to see the, I mean, to make some kind of objective judgements between President Johnson's staff, which obviously lacked the brilliance -- in which obviously the President lacked the brilliance -- and listen, I mean and glitter, and jeweled quality of the Kennedy

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staff -- but query which was more effective and got more done. I wonder.

STEWART: Okay. What about the desalination of water?

POZEN: Well, it's another program that is presently in trouble and was... The real question there was, I'm trying to think organically (I mean vis-a-vis the White House, vis-a-vis President Kennedy, and so on) what happened. I remember vividly Stewart's presentation before the House of Interior Committee. Are you interested in talking about that or...

STEWART: Well, I'm thinking there was a bill in '61, which the President signed in September, which expanded the program somewhat but nowhere near what had been proposed.

POZEN: Correct. Talk about...

STEWART: So what's in this?

POZEN: Alright. Well, I remember that very well. The desalination program was started in the Eisenhower years, and the theory was that it was just a pilot project. And people didn't talk about it in these terms, but

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it raised the philosophical point to what should the function of government be in terms of commercial and industrial research. It's curious because I now represent the Westinghouse Electric Company, but companies like Westinghouse said, "Well, look, the state of the art has been advanced by us, and we know more about it than anybody else, why should the government even get involved?" So there was very much this sentiment on the Hill, and it was a rather minimal program in the Eisenhower years.

Then it turned out that, at least Secretary Udall was told, that you could desalinate water economically. In other words, it might even be useful for municipal and industrial purposes and perhaps even for agricultural purposes. But the problem was that the Chairman of the House Interior Committee, Wayne Aspinall, didn't agree with that and harked back to the original purpose of the Act. In a private discussion with Secretary Udall, he said, "Look, this isn't any -- it was

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never intended to be a question of application. It was just supposed to be a research program and build a few pilot plants and that's it. Now, you're talking about building big plants and doing a job and so on and can you really.... What's all this talk about cheap water? I think this is a lot of hogwash" and so on. It turns out that Wayne Aspinall is probably right, that we were sold by the Office of Saline Water, which was directed by a rather incompetent person at that stage who really didn't know what the scientific facts were, that you couldn't produce desalinated water economically. But, as I say, Secretary Udall was told you could and it was a rather appealing idea, sort of like something out of nothing. So we got the green light from the Budget Bureau. But we ran amuck when we went up to the Hill, particularly on the House side -- the Senate side was no real problem -- where they refused to really.... As I say, I remember we had a full

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dress hearing before the House Interior Committee in which Wayne Aspinall said, "Mr. Secretary, (someone should read the transcript, because maybe I have it all wrong) are you sitting here and trying to tell me that we can produce ten cent water? Which is what it has to be to make sense in irrigation?" And Stewart, being rather adroit, said, "Hell, no." [Phone rings, tape cut off]

[END OF INTERVIEW]

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