

INTERVIEW WITH  
Dr. Arthur S. Flemming  
on  
June 2 and 3, 1988  
for  
Dwight D. Eisenhower Library



Legal Agreement Pertaining to the Oral History Interview of  
ARTHUR S. FLEMMING

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The following interview took place June 2, 1988 at the Capitol Hilton Hotel, Washington, DC. The interviewee is Dr. Arthur S. Flemming. The interviewer is James Leyerzapf.

LEYERZAPF: I mentioned in the letter--that I sent too late, apparently--that I was interested in hearing you talk about the role of ODM in the 1956 Suez Crisis--the various emergency oil reserve plans, and so forth. There hasn't been much written on that, and any memories you might have of that plan, everything surrounding it--the entire crisis for that matter--we would be interested in hearing about.

FLEMMING: As best as I can, I'll try to reconstruct it. It was an interesting period as far as my experience at ODM is concerned. Under the statute that we were working under, ODM had the responsibility of developing plans for an oil lift in the event some of our allies found themselves in a position where their oil supplies were cut off. We had done a great deal of work along that line; we staffed in cooperation with the Department of the Interior, for example, and also the Department of Justice. On the day that hostilities broke out in the Suez, I had an appointment with President Eisenhower to bring him up to date on the oil lift. I'd made my appointment probably several days prior to that time; it just was a coincidence that I had the appointment on the day that hostilities broke out.

When I went into his office, I told him, of course, why I was there and what I planned to discuss with him. He indicated to me that he was probably the worst person in the nation to talk to at that time about that particular issue. His reason for saying that was that during a portion of the day he had done



his best to prevent the outbreak of hostilities, and he shared with me some of his feelings of frustration. For example, I recall his saying that he just couldn't understand why he wasn't able to get his message across to Anthony Eden, to the British. And he said, "Certainly they know I'm one of their best friends." Then, he made this statement: "To the best of my recollection, this is the first time in history when a nation that rests on democratic foundations has committed its forces without the support of its people." He said, "It won't work."

He did go on to discuss the oil lift issue, but he wasn't particularly interested in any details from me as to where we were on the oil plan. He was delighted to know that we had reached the point that we had, and that we were prepared to move if it was necessary to move. And he made it very, very clear to me that he did not want me to move in any way until I heard from him personally. This was the first time, I guess, in my relations with him as director of defense mobilization. I realized I was getting instructions from the commander-in-chief, because he was very emphatic about it. He said, "You'll be put under pressure by some of your colleagues in the Capital to move." He said, "Don't pay any attention to them until you hear from me." It's my recollection that one of the reasons he assigned me that was that he wanted to keep the pressure on Great Britain and France, particularly, to live up to the UN resolution on this whole situation.

I had an advisory body made up of cabinet officers like the secretary of defense, the secretary of state, the secretary of

the interior, and so on. And we had regular meetings of that body, normally attended by the under-secretaries--the secretaries usually didn't show up. But after my meeting with the president I did call a meeting of this advisory board. Most of the secretaries showed up for that meeting as I had indicated what the general item was going to be. He was right; a lot of arguments were advanced as to why we should move very quickly, very promptly. So I, in effect, said to them, "I appreciate your advice but I'm not going to follow that advice until I hear from the president." To the best of my recollection, he was down in Georgia--Augusta. This was probably--let's see, when did hostilities break out?

LEYERZAPF: Mid to late October.

FLEMMING: That's right. He was down there in connection with the Thanksgiving holiday. The White House operator got me and said Jim Hagerty wanted to talk to me. Jim said, "The President wants to talk to you." He came on and said, "I'm ready to go on the lift." He may have said a few additional comments, but basically he was saying, "Implement the plan." Jim Hagerty was still on the line and I said, "Jim, I'll go over to Fred Seaton's office and ask him to call a press conference and we'll have a joint press conference on this." In terms of the implementation, Interior played a very significant role in wanting us to do it in a particular way. Jim's reaction was, "Fine; let's go forward." The plan worked alright. I don't have any recollection of any difficulty with the plan. Actually, when we gave the signal



there were various departments that would implement it. I don't recall any problem with it, but I always valued at that time that I had all I needed to know about President Eisenhower's approach to that issue.

LEYERZAPF: Yes.

FLEMMING: Actually, my experience as director of the Office of Defense Mobilization was, to me, a very liberal education. I had been called back into government service by Charles Wilson, the president of General Electric, soon after he had been appointed director of the Office of Defense Mobilization by President Truman. This office was created by President Truman--actually created initially by executive order.

LEYERZAPF: When was this, roughly 1950?

FLEMMING: Right after, almost immediately after, the outbreak of hostilities in Korea.

LEYERZAPF: I see.

FLEMMING: This was one of the first moves he made. To give you a little background, it comes out of the budget office; they talked with President Truman about the fact that if hostilities broke out in Korea there were going to be a whole series of emergency actions that would have to be taken. They told me that President Truman would respond by saying, "Well, if that

happens I'm going to bring Charley Wilson into the administration and I'm going to delegate authority to him to deal with these situations.

LEYERZAPF: I see.

FLEMMING: That's what happened. He set up this Office of Defense Mobilization, and soon after it was set up I was asked to come to Washington and talk with him and General Clay, who was his right-hand person, about coming back to head up their work in the manpower area.

LEYERZAPF: Yes.

FLEMMING: During World War II I had been government chairman of the Labor Management Committee of the War Manpower Commission and that's why they asked me to come back here. I served in that capacity throughout the remainder of President Truman's administration. So when President Eisenhower was elected, I was the only Republican in a key position in the Office of Defense Mobilization.

LEYERZAPF: I see.

FLEMMING: He designated me as acting director. I had no expectation at all that he would ask me to remain in that post because I assumed that he would reach out for a top industrialist to come in. But after a couple of months he indicated to me that he did want to send my name to the Senate for confirmation for

the post. I recall saying to him at that time that I had assumed that he was going to appoint someone in the field of business and industry. His response was, "No, I thought that one through and I want somebody who understands the government and governmental processes. You do." He said, "To the extent that we need help and assistance from business and industry, we can get it--I can get people to come in and help you with that." So he made it clear when he said to me that he wanted me to serve as a member of the cabinet. Of course, by law, I was a member of the National Security Council; the law setting that up specified the director of ODM as one of the members.

I recognized from the beginning that I was being asked to work with him in an area where he had devoted most of his life. I recognized that the aspects of the total picture that were covered by the Office of Defense Mobilization--namely the non-military aspects of it--were aspects that he focused on originally when he was an aide to General MacArthur when General MacArthur was chief of staff. It was at that time that he had become acquainted with Mr. Baruch--Bernard Baruch--and he had accepted a good deal of his philosophy--Mr. Baruch's philosophy--on mobilizing our non-military resources. But he was very generous with his advice; the relationship was one that I valued very, very highly. I did have to pick up a great deal of information about areas where I had not had experience before, but the opportunity to participate in the meetings of the Security Council and to watch him in action there,



as well as in the meetings of the cabinet, meant a great deal to me. The incident we're talking about is one that has stood out in my mind. I agree with you; I don't think that that particular development has been written about in depth, although I do not follow all of the literature. I'm not a person who can comment on that because I haven't followed everything that was written. I was interested in your observations. I think it was a very interesting period in President Eisenhower's administration.

LEYERZAPP: Can you tell us something about the specifics of the plan, particularly in the area of how you had to deal with private oil producers and so forth? Were there problems, for example?

FLEMMING: The specifics I do not recall; I'd have to read it and refresh my memory. The direct contacts with the producers were handled primarily through Interior. I was not involved in that personally. It was our job to set policy, to work out the basic policies that would govern the way in which the plan would operate. Interior really had a great deal to do with the implementation of the policy. Now, they, in turn, had to deal with Justice on the antitrust aspects of it. There was an antitrust waiver built into the Defense Production Act which could be used under the circumstances that we described. It was my responsibility to decide what the facts were in invoking that particular waiver. Of course, it was done after consultation with Justice and with Interior. The contacts with the industry

were handled to a very considerable degree by Interior.

LEYERZAPF: I see. You mentioned the attorney general's office. Was there any problem in getting that through?

FLEMMING: No--

LEYERZAPF: It seems as though there was a cartel of sorts.

FLEMMING: I'm not at all sure that the Department of Justice was happy about the inclusion of that wavier in the Defense Production Act, but I wasn't involved in this area when the Defense Production Act was passed. I used to talk with some of my friends over there in Justice, and I gathered from that that they weren't too happy about it's inclusion in the Defense Production Act. But it was there, and they recognized that, and they recognized that there were certain factual situations that would trigger it. If they had thought, for example, in this particular instance, that the factual situation did not justify triggering it, I'm sure we would have heard from them. I'm sure the attorney general--at that time it was Mr. Rogers; I'm pretty sure he had succeeded Mr. Brownell by that time--would have expressed himself vigorously to it. But that issue did not arise.

LEYERZAPF: I see.

FLEMMING: They were convinced that the facts of the situation warranted taking the action that we did take.

LEYERZAPF: I found an interesting memorandum from you to the

president that is dated shortly after the first of the year in '57 in which you outlined in a rather detailed fashion a plan for the building--and I believe the subsidization of the building--of a supertanker fleet. Do you recall that particular incident and if it had any relationship to the Suez crisis and the oil plan?

FLEMMING: I don't think so. That would be just prior to my leaving the position. I left around January 20th of '57 for the return to Ohio Wesleyan, and didn't stay there very long until the president asked me to come back as secretary of HEW. But that could very well have been a memorandum dealing with an item that was being considered by the National Security Council. I wanted to get my views before the president, and would have addressed the memorandum to him and that would have become a part of the backup material for a discussion of that item at the meeting of the National Security Council. I do not have a clear recollection as to what precipitated that memorandum.

LEYERZAPF: I found it interesting in the sense--

FLEMMING: And it may be that if I went back and took a look at it and reconstructed the events that took place immediately following the Suez developments, it's possible that there's a relationship with it. That would be worth exploring--I'll put it that way.



LEYERZAPF: It was interesting to me in that you outlined the growing demand for oil and the inability of the existing pipelines to continue to carry the lion's share of it. Then, in turn, you outlined the need for the supertanker fleet. Of course, everyone today--younger people at least--they probably never think of oil being moved in any other way from those countries but by large supertankers.

FLEMMING: See, we were kind of anticipating the oil crises that came along some years later.

LEYERZAPF: Yes. Also, in your role as a member of the NSC do you recall any other key events or issues that came before that body that you still remember and that particularly stood out?

FLEMMING: Yes, one that came up fairly early in the administration was the question, of course, of whether or not we should go to the aid of the French in Indochina. That precipitated a very lively discussion in the National Security Council. There have been some things written about that in more recent years. But I recall the discussion very distinctly and I recall Admiral Radford, for example, feeling that we should go to their aid. I recall that the vice-president joined with Admiral Radford in expressing that point of view. General Ridgway was there. At the time not only the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff was at the National Security Council meeting, but also the chief of staff of the service, depending on what was up for

discussion. He opposed it on the grounds that we should never get involved in guerrilla warfare in that part of the world.

LEYERZAPF: This was Ridgway's position?

FLEMMING: That's right. The memory can play tricks on you, here. I know that was his position and I'm pretty sure he was at the meeting, and [he] expressed that position.

LEYERZAPF: I see.

FLEMMING: But I know that that was a position that the president found to be rather congenial to his way of thinking.

LEYERZAPF: He, too, was skeptical?

FLEMMING: Yes. The way he conducted the Security Council meetings, as well as the cabinet meetings, was that he participated in the discussion in a very vigorous way, but never in such a way as to cut off a discussion and make people feel a decision had been made and there was no point in pursuing it any further. He'd raise arguments; he'd challenge factual statements and things of this kind.

LEYERZAPF: Sounds like kind of a socratic method that he used?

FLEMMING: Yes, you couldn't be sure from his discussion that, if he took the point, where he was going to come out on the issue. Some days you could get a pretty fair idea on the basis of what he was saying fairly early in the discussion, but normally he was very anxious to have everyone express their point of

view, get their point of view on top of the table. He felt that that was the way he would get the best assistance in making a decision. I don't have a clear recollection of where the secretary of state was on that particular discussion; my recollection is that it was a discussion among those with military background-- others did participate, I'm sure--but that's what caught and held my attention: the fact that there was a difference of opinion within the military was fascinating from my point of view.

Finally, after a very long discussion--a couple of hours--the president, in effect, said, "Well, I don't think we should do it." Now, all of his conclusions and decisions got written up in the minutes--those were not discussion minutes of the Security Council; they were actual decisions. You know, you've looked at them. Certain moves were discussed, and the president signed a directive calling departments to follow up on it. But in view of all that transpired in that part of the world after that, that discussion has always fascinated me. I'm told--I can't state this as an authority--that army instruction, in the War College and so on, has been instruction that has always emphasized the undesirability of getting involved in guerrilla activities in various parts of the world. Ridgway's position, and ultimately the president's position, was kind of consistent with this.

LEYERZAPP: I see. Was Radford specific about what kind of action he proposed?

FLEMMING: Well, he probable was fairly specific, but that's faded as far as I'm concerned. Of course, he was a very able person, a person I respected very, very much. He could state his side of a case in a very effective way.

LEYERZAPF: I see.

FLEMMING: It was not a discussion on personalities in any way; people with different points of view argued their cases. It's very typical of Ike--the decision-making processes as far as the president was concerned. Not long before he died, I was visiting him out at Walter Reed. Walter Lippman, in his column, alleged that President Eisenhower's method for dealing with tough issues was to tell three or four people to lock themselves up in a room and come up with a conclusion and then tell him what the conclusion was. This really troubled him, this column. When I sat down, he said, "Now look, before we discuss anything else, did you read this column of Lippman's?" Well, I hadn't read it, so he summarized it for me, and he said, "Do you recall my using that approach to making a decision?" And I said, "Mr. President, I cannot recall a single instance when you did." It would have been very uncharacteristic of him. His decision-making process was, I thought, one of the best examples of consultative management I've ever witnessed, in or out of government.

He followed the same approach in a cabinet meeting as he did in a meeting of the National Security Council. Every item on the agenda was backed up by a staff paper--those of us who

were members of either the cabinet or the Security Council were expected to have read those staff papers. He'd open the discussion--and sometimes very briefly--but then he would do everything he could to facilitate the discussion. In fact, the very first cabinet meeting--maybe the second, but one of the first or second--I recall his saying to the member of the cabinet, "When you come here to attend cabinet meetings, I want to underline the fact that you're coming not just as representatives of your department, but you're coming here as general advisors to me." To use as an illustration, he said, "When I put the foreign policy issue on the agenda, I don't want to just hear from Foster Dulles; if I only wanted to hear from him, I'd ask him to come up to my office and talk about it. But when I put it on the agenda for a cabinet meeting I want to hear from all of you." And at the time, his technique of having the agenda and having a staff paper to back up each item on the agenda was the kind of thing that was clear.

LEYERZAPF: Yes.

FLEMMING: And it was clear he expected us to read those staff papers. But that created an entirely different climate than historically had existed in the cabinet meetings. Historically, people were there just to represent their departments and to protect their turf; or they were just a show-and-tell type of a meeting. But by that kind of an emphasis he changed the nature of the Security Council and cabinet meeting in the evolution



of policy. He would get them to have these discussions and you could see him--he'd weigh the various point of view. Typically, we would know, just as we did in Indochina, right then and there where he was coming out in terms of the conclusion. But at times he would say, "Well, I'm not going to shoot from the hip on this one"--it was a favorite expression--"I'm going to sleep on it and you'll get my decision in the minutes [of the meeting] tomorrow." That would be true of either a cabinet meeting or a Security Council meeting. I also recall how he used the Security Council to keep on top of the defense budget.

I can give you one incident to illustrate it. He had made up his mind, this particular year--and I'm not sure which year it was--that there should be some cuts in the defense budget. He wasn't very happy with what had been presented to him, so he invited the [National] Security chairman and all of the chiefs of staff. He invited all of them to make a presentation of their budget--not a detailed one, but a policy type of presentation. And he asked questions of members of the Security Council as part of it. I happened to go into his office after that particular meeting and he said to me, "What did you think of that meeting?" I said, "Well, it was very revealing, primarily because of the kind of questions you asked." And he said, "Well, I am going to make some cuts, but I didn't want to make the cuts without giving them the opportunity of making a presentation to me personally, so that they couldn't go around saying, 'I didn't understand'"--their probable response.



LEYERZAPF: I see; they'd had their hearing.

FLEMMING: They'd had their day in court; they'd had their hearing. Throughout his administration the defense budget was under control. You see, his concept of the Defense Department, as set in the Office of the Secretary of Defense, was that he, on the advice of the Security Council, gave policy direction to indicate what the national security policy was going to be. And then budgets should be developed to fit the policy. In other words, you don't get the money and then develop a policy after you get the money.

LEYERZAPF: Find something to do with it.

FLEMMING: He was very emphatic about this, and wasn't always happy with the job the secretary of defense had done in forcing the services to conform to the policy, to adjust their budgets to the overall plan. He felt that was the role of the secretary of defense--to work with the services, because he recognized the competitive nature of the services. He recognized that competition had to be brought under control; you just couldn't let the navy do whatever it wants to do, and the army do whatever it wants to do. The whole purpose of setting up Defense was to produce a control from there.

I was very much interested in that because I had been on the first Hoover Commission--that came into existence right after the Department of Defense had been created. President Truman appointed me to that; he had two appointments to make,

a Republican and a Democrat, from within the executive branch. He appointed Jim Forrestal as the Democrat, and I was appointed as the Republican. But we had a lot of vigorous discussions as to the role of the Department of Defense, in the Hoover Commission, and that played a major role in our recommendation. In fact, we had a fascinating discussion as to whether or not we should have a chief of staff for the armed services. Dean Acheson was a member of the first Hoover Commission and he was all out for a chief of staff for the armed services. Mr. Hoover didn't want to have anything to do with that kind of stuff. I've always felt that he, in the back of his mind, having had MacArthur as chief of staff for the armed services--they didn't get along at all. Mr. Forrestal disqualified himself from that discussion because he had a conflict of interest.

One day I was listening to the discussion, and participating in it, and I began to count, and saw that we were split and I probably had a swing vote on it. So I called him up--Mr. Forrestal--and said I would come over and see him. He asked me over to lunch and I sat down and I said, "Look, the counter-proposal here is the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff." I said, "It seems to me that we can accomplish what we want to accomplish in that way--am I right or am I missing something?" And he said, "You're right. I've already asked Ike"--who was then up at Columbia--"to come down and set up the office of chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff." I guess I was the first person who knew that. And he did do that. General Eisenhower came down and set it up. He was the first chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

But he had some very decided convictions as to the role that the secretary of defense should play. In fact, he was to ride herd on the services and be sure that what they were proposing from a policy point of view, and what they were doing in terms of implementing a program, was consistent with the overall national security policy that he'd approved after vigorous debate and discussion within the National Security Council. I wish that he were still around so his voice could be heard on some of the developments that have taken place in the National Security Council and in the Office of the Secretary of Defense.

LEYERZAPF: Pardon me just a moment while I change the tape at this point.

[Interruption]

LEYERZAPF: We were talking about Eisenhower's use of the secretary of defense and how he didn't want him to be an advocate for the services--not a spokesman for their prejudices but, as you said, to ride herd. How effective, in your estimation, was Charles Wilson in that role?

FLEMMING: Not as effective as he could have been. And, I think, probably the same thing might be said as far as Neil McElroy was concerned, who succeeded him. However, I feel that Tom Gates, who was his [Eisenhower's] final secretary of defense, did understand the role, and not only understood it but executed his responsibilities in a very effective way, consistent with that role. I always felt that President Eisenhower

was very happy with the way in which Tom Gates administered that job.

LEYERZAPF: He finally got what he wanted.

FLEMMING: That's my feeling. Of course, the person who could either take issue with me or verify that is Andy Goodpaster because he obviously was working with the president very closely in connection with the president's relationships with all three secretaries of defense. I worked very closely with General Goodpaster as director of the Office of Defense Mobilization. I got to know him very well and developed tremendous respect for him. The relationship between him and the president meant a great deal to me because it made my job much easier. Well, I'll put it this way: I didn't have to trouble the president on some things that I didn't know, but Andy Goodpaster would understand what the president's position was on these particular matters.

LEYERZAPF: So Goodpaster's ability was so high, and his trust--or the trust the president placed in him--so high, you could--

FLEMMING: That's right. And he knew how to articulate the message that he was trying to convey. Tom Gates had been secretary of the navy, had been deputy secretary of defense before he became secretary of defense. In other words, he had a chance to see the system from the inside, and work with the system from the inside. When he finally

got in a top position he had a pretty clear understanding of how he should proceed in the light of the objectives of the position.

LEYERZAPF: The NSC apparatus was fairly complex, at least compared to that under Truman and that under some of the successors.

FLEMMING: It was a little more complex, certainly, than under Truman; I was able to observe it under Truman because I was with Charlie Wilson--at least once I sat in for him at an NSC meeting. The set-up [under Eisenhower] was pretty clean-cut: General Cutler was the staff director and security advisor and he felt it was his responsibility to first of all, get agreements with the president on the agenda--not just for the upcoming meeting but, looking down the road at what items were going to be put on the agenda for Security Council meetings. Then it was his obligation to see to it that in-depth staff papers were prepared for each item that came up for discussion at a National Security Council meeting.

Of course, he had the Planning Board that he used in order to develop those staff papers. Each one of us had a person that we designated as a member of the Planning Board. For example, I designated William Vandall Elliot of Harvard as my representative, and he had a fairly young assistant at that time by the name of Jerry Kieffer. He worked right along with Elliot, so I really had two. Each member of the Council had somebody on the Planning Board. They met once a week, or two or three times a week, in order to hammer out these papers.



The only problem some of us had with that particular process was that we felt that sometimes the Planning Board would feel that they had to find a consensus. In reality, that wasn't their job; their job was to get before us the options so that we could decide which option we wanted to go for and recommend. When they worked on trying to find a consensus, that would tend to cover up, maybe, some of the basic disagreements.

LEYERZAPP: And this happened in some cases?

FLEMMING: Well, in some instances--we had that feeling. It's one of those things that are a little bit intangible. But, it was all set up in this way: Elliot would come in and brief me before every meeting of the Security Council, and he'd brief me on what happened in the Planning Board. If he thought that the consensus did cover up a fundamental disagreement, he'd tell me what that disagreement was--how people lined up on that disagreement so that I could ask questions in the Security Council meeting that would bring that out. So there was a check to that. The members of the Planning Board recognized that, and basically they usually would come up with a paper that provided us with options. That was the important role that they played.

LEYERZAPP: And that would have been what the president wanted, given his style.

FLEMMING: Yes.

LEYERZAPF: Options to come up from the Planning Board?

FLEMMING: Very much, very much so. If it was a tough problem, he wanted to know what the options were and he wanted to hear those options argued and discussed before he made up his mind on the whole thing. Cutler knew that and Cutler did everything he could to make sure that that objective was achieved.

General Cutler was not a professional army person; he was a general in the National Guard. Basically, he was a banker from Boston and I'm not quite sure where he and the president first got to know one another--it may have been in connection with the first campaign; I don't know. But they had a good working relationship. The president had confidence in him. And he had a passion for anonymity; he wouldn't any more deal with the media than fly. He knew that was not the thing to do; he had no visibility at all. I doubt that very many people knew he was there, or anything about the position. Then, of course, there was the--

LEYERZAPF: Operations Coordinating Board?

FLEMMING: Yes, Operations Coordinating Board. That was a board that would implement the intelligence decision. Only the members of the council that had intelligence operations served on that board, so I didn't serve on that board. I knew what they were doing and, of course, we would get



reports from time to time as to what they were doing and what they had done. Allen Dulles, as head of USIA [CIA], sat in the Security Council all the time.

Of course, the only statutory members of the Security Council were the secretary of state, secretary of defense, the vice-president and the director of defense mobilization--those were the only ones named in the statute. But the president invited the head of USIA [CIA], the secretary of the treasury, the attorney general, the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and so on. Just like the cabinet, the president can invite anybody he wants to in the cabinet or the Security Council. So we had a fairly good-sized group around the table. For awhile, the head of civil defense sat in with us.

LEYERZAPP: Val Peterson?

FLEMMING: Yes. The president--I don't know if he played any role at all in the establishment of that concept for it was established by law. But he really had a wonderful idea as to the role it should play. The evolution that's taken place the last few years is just-- And the idea that it would ever become an upper body--I don't think he ever conceived of that possibility.

LEYERZAPP: Yes. I'd like to return just a minute to Bobby Cutler. What is your sense of the kind of talent, or ability, or characteristics Cutler had that Eisenhower favored him so much



for the position and that made him effective in that role? We have the Cutler papers and they consist of about fifty pages; they don't tell us much.

FLEMMING: But that's characteristic of Bobby Cutler!

LEYERZAPF: From what you've said, I suppose so!

FLEMMING: He just didn't talk about himself. He didn't talk about what he was doing. I could sit down with him and I could get him to talk about the Planning Board operation and some of his problems, but not many people could; he was very close-mouthed. In the first place, he was a person of real ability, and he could talk with the president and understand what the president wanted--his objective, what he was driving at. He and Andy Goodpaster could talk back and forth very effectively, as far as I've been able to determine. But here again, Andy's the best witness on that. But he was very orderly in his way of going about doing his business. And he was very meticulous; he would worry people to death in order to get a staff paper in what he thought was good shape. He didn't tolerate sloppy work from a staff point of view at all; he was very intolerant of people who produced sloppy work. Of course, the president would appreciate that.

LEYERZAPF: Yes.

FLEMMING: President Eisenhower, throughout his whole life, had to rely on staff work, and he knew what staff work was

all about, and he knew good staff work and poor staff work. Bobby Cutler could produce good staff work for him. The president would never have to worry about him leaking anything. As I indicated to you earlier, it just wouldn't occur to him to talk to a representative of the media. He would feel that was beyond the pale as far as his job was concerned. Well, you see, obviously, what happened to Henry Kissinger or McGeorge Bundy--

LEYERZAPP: Yes, I see what you mean.

FLEMMING: And yet I think he made a major contribution to making the council function effectively. He understood what President Eisenhower wanted from the council, the role he wanted it to play, and he was able to take that concept of President Eisenhower and implement it in such a way that President Eisenhower was able to achieve what he had in mind for the council.

LEYERZAPP: I see. Cutler would have done this without any real background in national defense strategy or substantive issues.

FLEMMING: I don't know, really, how much background he had. You know, you could go through a National Guard experience and pick up a good deal, depending on how hard you worked at it--it's up to the person in the National Guard. I think he was on active duty at one point, too. So he did have some active duty. But he wasn't a part of the military establishment, in the sense of General Ridgway and people of that caliber,

but he knew the field and he knew the actors in the field, too. When we decided to set up an advisory group to advise on a particular issue, he could do a very good job of reaching out.

LEYERZAPF: So he could identify expertise?

FLEMMING: He could identify expertise very effectively. I developed great respect for him.

LEYERZAPF: That's very interesting because--

FLEMMING: He got along very well with Sherm Adams, which was important.

LEYERZAPF: Cutler did?

FLEMMING: Yes. Sherm Adams didn't spend very much time with the Security Council, just enough so that he knew what was going on. But Cutler was very meticulous in keeping him up-to-date.

LEYERZAPF: I see. You have that relationship.

FLEMMING: That's right. The president invited him to sit in any time he wanted to, and if he knew a hot one was coming up he'd sit in and listen. Of course he would always sit in on cabinet meetings--but that was his area. I think he felt that he had an obligation to the president to make sure that that area wasn't getting off the track in any way. But he had confidence in Cutler and he obviously had confidence in Goodpaster. So he was smart enough to say, "Well,

I'm not going to worry about that area; I've got plenty of things to worry about."

LEYERZAPP: I see.

FLEMMING: Adams was a terrific chief of staff. I think one of the greatest political tragedies I've observed in fifty years is what happened to him. You'd trust him with your last dollar. But he got kind of a blind spot in regard to that one guy. He was attracted by opposites, Adams was. And this fellow that had come from Poland and settled down up there and--

LEYERZAPP: Are we speaking of Bernard Goldfine?

FLEMMING: Yes. He was attracted to people like that; he enjoyed their friendship. But that really broke him. I saw him a few times after that and he was a broken man; he never recovered from it.

LEYERZAPP: It hit him very hard.

FLEMMING: He went back to New Hampshire and built a ski lift, bought into a ski lift and ran a ski lodge. I'll always remember President Eisenhower's funeral at the cathedral. After the funeral services we came out--Mrs. Flemming and I did--and I saw him standing off there by himself. We went over and chatted with him. He was a broad-gauged person; he was a renaissance person. He loved the field of music, sang in the choir here at St. John's Church, sang in the cathedral choir from time

to time, also. That was very hard on President Eisenhower

LEYERZAPF: To have lost--

FLEMMING: Yes. But my point is that Cutler, Adams and Goodpaster all had good interpersonal relationships, which contributed to the success that, I feel, President Eisenhower had in getting his basic concepts in the national security area implemented.

LEYERZAPF: If I remember correctly, Dillon Anderson came into Bobby's job before you left ODM--at least for a short while.

FLEMMING: Well, just as I was leaving. He hadn't been in very long and he was followed by Gray. Dillon didn't stay very long--

LEYERZAPF: No, in fact, Cutler came back for a short term--

FLEMMING: Yes.

LEYERZAPF: --for a very short second term.

FLEMMING: Yes, that's right, then Gray.

LEYERZAPF: That's my recollection.

FLEMMING: Yes, that's right. I knew Dillon--not well, but I knew him. Apparently he didn't feel comfortable with that job--I don't know. I have no evidence one way or another, but the fact that he only stayed a short period of time indicated that.

LEYERZAPF: No evidence of presidential dissatisfaction that

you know of?

FLEMMING: No, I never picked up any. The fact that Bobby came back and kind of put the pieces back together again--I guess probably that's what he did. I was away then. When I came back as secretary of HEW, then I wasn't in the Security Council, but I'd hear about it in cabinet meetings and so on. I think Gordon Gray probably operated in a way somewhat similar to Bobby Cutler's. But here again, I'm not a good witness of that.

LEYERZAPF: He had a long tenure--to the very end.

FLEMMING: Yes, that's right. And that would indicate that kind of a relationship was established. In view of all the attention the National Security Council has received in the last few years, I've really appreciated the opportunity I had in serving on it under President Eisenhower. As I've watched, or observed, Frank Carlucci, it seemed to me he was kind of moving it back. I don't know to what extent he was really familiar with the way it operated under Eisenhower--of course, [in the 1950's] he was just getting started in the foreign service--but he immediately took it out of operations; he issued an order on that right away. But he still thought that in that job he should deal with the media on certain policy matters and his successor, General Powell, seems to feel that he should, also.

LEYERZAPF: Things have changed.

FLEMMING: I think the Cutler approach was better from a number

of points of view, including the matter of the relationship between the president and the secretary of state. It seems to me that during this period national security advisors have played a prominent role in explaining and defending foreign policies, as factors in security policy, through the media. But time and again they've put the president in a position where he's had to choose between their interpretation, their expounding of policy, and the secretary of state's. Obviously, there's been real tension there.

LEYERZAPF: Yes.

FLEMMING: I guess that reached it's climax when Henry Kissinger occupied the national security job. He obviously wanted to be secretary of state, and ultimately he became secretary of state. As I read it, after he became secretary of state he was troubled by the role of the National Security Council. I just don't think that [this] tension is a necessary tension. But the role of the Security Council advisor is basically to make sure that the National Security Council functions effectively as an advisor to the president. Then he doesn't get over into these other areas. Certainly, there was no tension between Bobby Cutler and Foster Dulles--or Herter, who succeeded him as secretary of state. Bobby might fuss at Foster Dulles because his department wasn't producing on time something that Bobby Cutler felt should be over there--

LEYERZAPF: An administrative kind of quarrel; that is all it was.





FLEMMING: Yes, it's purely administrative, not policy. Cutler respected the role of the secretary of state, as the principal advisor to the president.

LEYERZAPF: If you have the time, I'd like to get into your tenure as secretary of HEW, too. When you came into the job at HEW and were there a short while--long enough to see what was going on--what priorities did you feel the administration should undertake? What program or policy areas did you feel needed to be changed, expanded, contracted, whatever?

FLEMMING: Well, first of all, when I went into the job, I wasn't a stranger to many of those areas because during the time that I had served as a member of the U.S. Civil Service Commission many of those programs had been programs that I had related to in terms of their personnel--recruiting problems and so on. See, I had nine years as a member of the Civil Service Commission. We used to have what we called our clients--each commissioner--and one of my first clients, for example, was the Social Security Board. I worked with them in the early stages of the Social Security system. I knew the leaders, I knew the personalities. I'd worked very closely with Mary Switzer, who was the head of Vocational Rehabilitation. She was a career civil servant, but had risen to head up that particular job. I knew a good many of the career people in these various programs, so I didn't feel I was going into a department where I was a stranger.

But the first thing I did was to establish a system of staff meetings very comparable to the president's cabinet meetings-- a staff meeting every Tuesday afternoon made up of people reporting directly to me. We worked by agenda, with staff papers backing up the items on the agenda. I found it worked at that level just as I had observed it at the presidential level. The next thing I did, I established as a policy that I would hold a press conference every other Monday morning without exception, unless I happened to be out of town. I decided that that was sound management policy, from a number of points of view. I'd had regular contact with the press when I was on the Civil Service Commission, and I had regular contact with them when I was director of the defense mobilization. I'd always found it to be very helpful from the standpoint of communicating the objectives I had in mind and what I was doing about it, but also from the standpoint of picking up ideas that I never would've picked up in any other way--from representatives of the media. That was the second thing I did. The third thing I did was to invite, to meet with me, the leaders in the various areas--various program areas for which we had responsibility--to spend a day with them to talk. For example, I invited in for one day leaders in the field of elementary and secondary education, just to talk with me for an entire day. It was not structured--

LEYERZAPF: I see--kind of a constituency.

FLEMMING: Yes, that's right. It was not structured; I didn't ask for speeches and so on. I said, "What do you think this

department should be doing that it isn't doing and how effectively do you think it's doing the things that it has undertaken?"

I did the same thing on higher education, and I did the same thing over in the health field, for the public health service constituency and the constituency of the National Institutes of Health. I did the same thing with the Food and Drug [Administration]--both the consumers and the providers in the pharmaceutical industry.

LEYERZAPF: Representatives spoke to you?

FLEMMING: That's right. That gave me, after a period of a few months--ninety days or so--a pretty good idea of what people regarded as "hot issues." For example, in the Social Security area Congress had only one or two years prior to that expanded social insurance to include disability, so the major problem was implementing it. When they first passed it, they only made people fifty and above eligible for the disability benefits. And one of the first issues called to my attention was that people thought that didn't make sense--to have an age requirement on the disability program. I remember talking to the president about that. He agreed; he said, "It doesn't make sense. It's a problem for a family where the wage earner is fifty and above but it's the same problem if the person is thirty." So we went to Congress and asked that they remove that, and they did that very quickly.

I very quickly realized, although I guess I realized even



before I took office, that the major issue in that whole area was the issue of the health care of older persons. There was a good deal of agitation at that time on behalf of what was called the Forand Bill. Congressman Forand of Rhode Island was sponsoring it, and a good many groups were supporting it, and it was a bill that was really advocating what we now call Medicare.

I had a very interesting experience with the president on this one. There were those who felt that we should handle the Medicare issue as a social insurance issue, just as we'd handled retirement, survivorship and disability. Frankly, my own leanings were in that particular direction. But the conservative Republican approach was contrary to that. They said, "No, we shouldn't expand social insurance; we ought to deal with this, to the extent where we deal with it, out of general revenues." But I had not moved to bring the issue to a head in the first few months I was in. But one day I got a call from Ann Whitman. She said the president had just been talking with a gentleman by the name of Burroughs, who was in the insurance business in New Hampshire. He was one of President Eisenhower's early supporters in the 'fifties.

LEYERZAPF: This probably would've been Bob Burroughs? Robert Burroughs?

FLEMMING: That's right. I think that's right. And she said that he had been talking with the president, and that the president

would like me to talk with him. I said, "OK, I'd be glad to talk with him." So he came over, and he immediately went to work to convince me that we should handle health care for older persons through social insurance. So I listened to him for ten minutes or so and I said, "Is this what you were talking to the president about?" He said, "Yes." I thanked him, but I didn't go beyond that. Then I called Ann [Whitman], because, as you know, he [the president] had a habit of dictating a memo every now and then on a conversation--

LEYERZAPF: Yes, we have those.

FLEMMING: You've got plenty of those. I asked her what she knew about this conversation. Now, I'm not sure whether she said there was a memo or she knew what the president said; after all, she knew Burroughs very well because he had been coming in and out for a long period of time. I guess I put it to her: "Did they talk about health care for older people?" She said, "Yes." I said, "All right, you and Tom Stephens better get me in fairly quickly because I've been operating, maybe, on a misunderstanding as to what he's interested in." So they did and I went in and I was with him alone. I said, "Mr. Burroughs has talked to me about the desirability of moving in this direction." He said, "Yes, I'd like to send something up to Congress along this line."

LEYERZAPF: On that principle?

FLEMMING: Yes. He said, "Work out a pretty good-sized deductible--you know, like these automobile policies." (As he often did, he'd be walking up and down on this one.) Then he shared with me an experience that Mrs. Eisenhower's family had gone through with the illness of her mother. She had a chronic illness, extended over a period of two years, which required around-the-clock nursing care. He said it had virtually wrecked them financially.

LEYERZAPF: Struck close to home.

FLEMMING: Well, that's it, you see. I said, "Thank you very much. We'll go to work." So I went back and got two or three of the key people in and I said, "Now this is the assignment we've got." And they looked at me as though maybe I'd been daydreaming. They were delighted to get it, but they'd never expected to get it from a Republican administration. We went to work, and in a couple of weeks, maybe three, he got a question at one of his press conferences on this. And he answered in the same way he talked to me. I felt a lot better because I'm always aware of the fact that when you're just in a one-to-one conversation you may hear what you want to hear and not hear something that you don't want to hear--that I may have heard the favorable side of this and missed some of the qualifications that he'd put in. But no, it was the same story he'd told me.

Well, then, everything broke loose, the American Medical Association went to work, and, of course, they could talk to



Doc Snyder very easily--and they did. The result was that, maybe a week or ten days after that press conference, he sent for me--the president sent for me. He said, "Arthur, I'm sorry but I'm going to have to change signals on you." He said, "They have called my attention to the fact that in October of '52, in an address in San Francisco, when I was campaigning for the first term, I said I would not use the Social Security mechanism for this purpose. As you know, one of my principles is that when I make a commitment during a campaign, I'm going to live up to it. But I still want to get something up on the Hill on this issue; this is a major issue." He said, "Work out a federal-state program that will be financed out of general revenues." And he said, "Make it liberal." Those were the words he used.

We went back to the drawing boards and we developed a plan that covered the care of eyes, teeth, loss of hearing, prescription drugs, a lot of things that are still not in the medicare program. It was the most liberal package that has ever been put together and sent up to Capitol Hill. The director of the budget was Maury Stans, who climbed the walls when he saw it. I said, "Maury, if you don't like this, talk to the president; I'm working under instructions." Maury and I didn't see eye-to-eye on a good many things, but we had a sense of humor--both of us.

Then I went up and testified before the Ways and Means Committee on this new package. Wilbur Mills, when I finished, said, "Does this have the approval of the director of the budget?"

I said, "Mr. Chairman, when I opened my testimony, I told you it had the approval of the President of the United States." He said, "I didn't ask you that question." I said, "OK, no, it doesn't have the approval of the director of the budget." I said, "He and I work for the same person, and it does have his approval." (Of course, that was a favorite trick up there.)

Then when I went over to the Senate side, the older Harry Byrd, who was chairman of the Finance Committee in those days, his high blood pressure was evident right away when I put it up to him because he couldn't imagine that Dwight Eisenhower would propose anything as drastic as this. But that's the story on it. What happened, of course, is that in the 'sixty campaign this became a major issue.

[Interruption]



This interview took place June 3, 1988, at the Key Bridge Marriot Hotel, Arlington, Virginia. The interviewee is Dr. Arthur S. Flemming, Secretary of HEW under Eisenhower. The interviewer is James Leyerzapf, of the Eisenhower Library.

DR. LEYERZAPF: The last comment I captured was your comment about it being an issue in the 1960 campaign--the health insurance proposal. Then the part you had told us about concerning the different positions of Kennedy and Nixon--that I lost. And the impact that might have had on the election. That's where it was left.

DR. FLEMMING: Well, in the 1960 campaign Senator Kennedy took a strong position in favor of dealing with health care for older persons through the Social Security system. Vice-President Nixon stayed with the position that we had hammered out and presented to the Congress. Historically, Republican candidates will normally pick up sixty percent or more of the vote of people sixty-five and above. In 1960 Mr. Nixon did not pick up that high a percentage--I forget just what the percentage was, but it dropped below sixty percent. If you'll recall, that was a close election. Mr. Nixon always felt that that was one of the factors that led to his defeat. But I always felt, personally, on the basis of the conversations that I've already identified, that President Eisenhower would have felt very comfortable with a program that did utilize the Social Security system. However, I respected his policy of not doing something that he said in the campaign he wasn't going to do.

DR. LEYERZAPF: As it was, at least six or seven years before.

FLEMMING: That's right. I don't know the history of how that got into that campaign speech in San Francisco in '52. It would be interesting to find out just how much discussion there had been about it at that time.

LEYERZAPP: Were there any other factors--key factors--that you saw in that campaign that contributed to Nixon's loss--any other issues, or problems with campaign organization?

FLEMMING: Well, I was rather close to the campaign. In fact, I was on Mr. Nixon's plane for the last thirty, forty days of the campaign doing staff work for him on the health, education and welfare areas. As you recall, he had made a commitment that he would appear in every state in the Union. Well, I think he regretted having made that commitment before the campaign was over.

On the Sunday before the election we were in Los Angeles in the morning, and we were scheduled to go to Anchorage for a meeting that evening. Alaska was the last state that he had not covered. Then, when we finished up in Anchorage, we had an engagement Monday morning in Milwaukee. He'd asked for a memorandum on an issue. I prepared it and went in to give it to him. Just about everybody else was asleep by then but he was having a bite to eat, and he invited me to join him. And he began to talk a little bit about the campaign. One of his comments was that people had been critical of him because he hadn't, as they put it, asked President Eisenhower

to become as involved in the campaign as some people thought President Eisenhower should've been. And he was commenting particularly on this address that President Eisenhower had made up in Pittsburgh about a week or so before. That address had had a very positive impact on the campaign; the poll curve moved up in a definite way. He said to me, "I've been hesitant about asking him to become deeply involved--after all, he's the President of the United States." Then he said, "Maybe he's worried about his health." That's about all he said about it, but I could tell it was on his mind. Then he said, "This is going to be a close one; it can go either way. If we win, we're in for four exciting years; if we lose, we're all going to have to make some new plans"--or something to that effect.

The day after the election I was in President Eisenhower's office, in the Oval Office--I forget what brought me there but for some reason I had business there. When we finished discussing that particular item, he said to me, "Arthur, tell me, who was in charge of that campaign?" And I said, "Well, that's a little difficult to answer. There were times when it was clear that Bob Finch was in charge; at other times Len Hall seemed to be more in the driver's seat; and then there were other times when Fred Seaton seemed to be caught up [unintelligible]."

He said, "Well, I'll never understand why I wasn't asked to participate more than I was in the campaign. There's nothing that I wanted more than to turn this position over to Dick Nixon." I've often cited that as the classic illustration

of a breakdown in communications between two persons. If they'd had a conversation on the degree of participation of the president in the campaign, I think it would have resulted in a greater degree of participation on the part of the president. That could've affected the outcome of the election.

LEYERZAPF: Yes, it was very close.

FLEMMING: It was a close election. President Eisenhower was very popular in the country. There was that lingering feeling that he wasn't too enthusiastic about Mr. Nixon--growing out of that famous press conference when he said, "Well, give me a week and I'll answer your question." In terms of the positive side, I found it very easy, as the secretary of HEW, to campaign for Mr. Nixon. I had discovered as a result of my association with him in the cabinet and the Security Council, that [on] the issues that confronted you in the health, education, and welfare area he took a very moderate, forward-looking position on those issues.

Of course, some of the things he did when he was finally elected president bore out that kind of a judgment. In 1972 he took the lead in persuading Congress to index Social Security benefits, and he recommended a family support program which would've put an income floor under our entire population. Congress wasn't willing to go as far as he wanted to go so they settled for SSI (Supplemental Security Income Program): aid to the aged, blind and disabled where there is an income floor. He approved the last across-the-board increase in Social

Security benefits; it was an across-the-board increase of twenty percent; that's the last one that has ever been enacted. So, my feeling regarding him based on my association with him in the cabinet was borne out once he did become president.

Going back to the HEW days, what I was saying about Medicare and Social Security and so on kind of grew out of your question as to some of the areas that I became involved in while I was secretary. I could move from the Social Security area over to the field of education. When I took office, Congress was in the process of completing action on the National Defense Education Act. As you know, that was the first legislation in the field of higher education that Congress had passed since the Civil War--ever since the Land Grant Act. So I did have the responsibility of working with my associates in implementing that act.

The person who developed the concept for that act was Elliot Richardson. He was then the assistant secretary of HEW, and had responsibility for congressional liason and for planning. Today, those would be two separate jobs. The secretary he worked under before I came in was Marion Folsom--who was the second secretary of HEW--who had been the treasurer of Eastman-Kodak and one of the founders of the Committee on Economic Development. He was one of the architects of the Social Security system. But the opportunity to take an act of that kind and implement it, get it under way, I regarded as a very exciting opportunity. That led to a very interesting development in terms of my relationships



with the president in the field of education. Elliot reached the point where he felt that we should seek additional legislation building on the National Defense Education Act. He worked with the Commission on Education and other persons within the department in developing some proposed legislation.

It made good sense to me and I took the initiative in talking with the people over at the Budget Bureau about it--the legislative reference people--and some of the staff people at the White House. I didn't find a great deal of enthusiasm in the Budget Bureau, or on the part of a couple of staff people at the White House, for this proposal. But having touched all of the bases, I went in and talked with General Persons, who by that time was the chief of staff for the president, and told him what the proposal was, told him what we had done in terms of consulting different people. I just said, I thought that the time had come to give the president an opportunity to react to it. He said he agreed with me and said, "He happens to be in right now; why don't we go in and chat with him about it and see how he feels about it?"

So we went in. I didn't have any paper at that time; I just outlined it, orally, what we had in mind. I noted right away that the president wasn't too enthusiastic about it. He drew on some of his experiences at Columbia University to indicate why he was a little bit apprehensive about the federal government going further and getting involved in the field of education. But we had a very interesting discussion on it. Finally, he said, "Well, let's discuss it in cabinet tomorrow"

(this was on Thursday afternoon). General Persons said to him, "You don't mean tomorrow; you mean a week from tomorrow." "No," he said, "I mean tomorrow." He said, "Arthur's right; if we're going to send something up we ought to sent it up pretty quick." General Persons said, "Well, your rule is that a paper goes out to the cabinet before they're asked to discuss it." He said, "I know, but we'll just make an exception."

We had a paper all ready; Elliot Richardson had prepared one. So at the cabinet meeting the next day this was fairly high up on the agenda. The president introduced it simply by saying that I had some ideas he thought the cabinet should know about and react to. I presented it, and after I presented it there was a very vigorous debate; the cabinet was sharply divided; it was [unintelligible]. Secretary Benson normally would oppose any further involvement on the part of the federal government in the field of education, or in any other areas as far as that was concerned. Secretary McElroy, who was then secretary of defense, wasn't enthusiastic about it. Secretary Seaton was not enthusiastic about it. But Secretary Mitchell, the secretary of labor, was very positive in his reaction. And as the discussion proceeded the vice-president--Mr. Nixon--took a positive position on it.

After about two hours of discussion the president said, "Well, I think we'd better set something up with the Hill." Then he said to me, "You come over to the Legislative Leaders meeting next Tuesday to see if you can persuade Joe Martin and Charlie Halleck [unintelligible]." There was a twinkle

in his eye when he said that because he knew I'd have some kind of difficulty along that line. Brad Patterson, the assistant cabinet secretary, took very full notes on that discussion. I understand they're out at Abilene.

LEYERZAPF: Yes, we have those.

FLEMMING: They could be consulted. Also, Fred Greenstein in his book, Eisenhower: The Hidden Hand President, uses this as one of his case histories to illustrate how President Eisenhower dealt with the cabinet. I've read that, and it's a good summary of that particular incident. It is a good illustration of the collegial approach that President Eisenhower took.

I was secretary right after Brown versus Board of Education. So some of the issues of implementation of Brown versus Board of Education came up. In 1956 I was in the cabinet--still as director of the Office of Defense Mobilization--and at a number of cabinet meetings we discussed what kinds of legislative recommendations we would make as a result of Brown versus Board of Education. For example, one of the recommendations that was put on top of the table was the recommendation that we have an independent, bipartisan commission on civil rights.

LEYERZAPF: Do you recall who originated that proposal?

FLEMMING: I don't recall just who originated it. It became a part of the group discussion--who injected it into the group discussion initially, I'm not sure. But I'm very clear that the president picked it up very quickly and said he liked that



idea, said he felt that the time had come to have a bipartisan independent body that would get the facts up on top of the table. At that point, we were probably focusing a great deal on voting rights issues. Some of my colleagues, in the discussion, said to him, "You don't need legislation; you could create this body by executive order." I remember his saying, "But I couldn't give them authority to subpoena witnesses or put them under oath." The reaction went, "You're right, you couldn't." He said, "Well, they need that if they're going to get the facts on top of the table." That was his constant theme; he kept coming back to it.

Of course, I recall that with great interest because President Nixon asked me to become chairman of the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights for him, and I served as chairman under Nixon, President Ford, President Carter, and one year under President Reagan. I've often referred to that department's [commission's] history in order to underline the role of the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights. Unfortunately, the independent, bipartisan character of the commission has been undermined the last few years. It's going to be necessary to try to bring it back to the original concept that President Eisenhower had in mind.

As I think back now, I realize that--in connection with the National Defense Education Act implementation--we were really paving the way for the federal civil rights legislation of the 'sixties, in terms of the role of the federal government in setting standards in the field of education. And I had some situations that I had to confront; for example, in that



early period there was the southern revolt against Brown versus Board of Education. Take in Virginia: in some of the counties the effort was to take public funds and move them over to the private schools that were set up for the purpose of evading Brown versus Board of Education. I recall that that issue was presented to me at one of my press conferences. I said, "Well, there will be no federal funds going into that particular jurisdiction as long as that process is underway." That was kind of a quick decision, but my decision stuck, or stayed in place, so that I was dealing with some of those very early issues. I was not actually in the government when the president dealt with the Little Rock situation; that was during the period I was out.

LEYERZAPF: At Ohio Wesleyan--

FLEMMING: Yes, back at Ohio Wesleyan. I've always admired and respected the way in which he handled that. There are many, many leaders in the civil rights community who have come to have increasing respect for what he did there because there has been a tendency to ignore some of the laws and some of the court decisions--sort of a doctrine of non-acquiescence that has grown up in recent years. But it's an important fact to realize that he had no hesitancy at all in determining what his responsibilities were--the Court had issued an order. It was up to him to see to it that that order was implemented; he was very clear-cut about that.

Another area that occupied a fair amount of my time was

the whole food and drug area. It was very fascinating to me because at that time it was really the only consumer-oriented agency in the government. Of course, it had a long history going all the way back to Theodore Roosevelt as president. The commissioner of Food and Drug reported directly to me, keeping me up to date on the issues, and he participated, of course, in our staff meetings.

One of the issues that we dealt with that received a fair amount of attention related to the cranberry industry. It was on the books, what is always referred to as the Delaney Clause which says that if research concludes that a particular substance operates in such a way as to indicate that it has carcinogenic qualities in terms of its impact on either animals or human beings, then that substance is not to be used. Well, in connection with the cranberry industry, it was a chemical that was used as a weed killer. Research had demonstrated that if it was used up to one week after the harvest there was no damage; if it was used beyond that particular period, it would find it's way into the berry and [then] it was a carcinogen.

The Food and Drug people had been working on testing berries to determine whether or not they could detect the presence of this particular chemical. In other words, where they thought they could detect that the rule had been violated and it had been used beyond the one-year [week] period. And they had succeeded in developing a test that would tell them whether or not it was present in the berry. They first applied it

in the state of Oregon. Cranberry bogs are found primarily in Oregon, Wisconsin, New Jersey, Massachusetts--those four states. As a result of their testing, and as a result of what they found in a portion of the crop, they moved to withhold some of the crop from the market.

Well, that story was written up in the Northwest, in Oregon. On a particular Friday afternoon, while I was being briefed for a press conference the following Monday, I was told about this. And I was told that in all probability I'd get a question at the press conference as to what my attitude was. So, I said, "Well, I've supported what has happened and the Delaney Clause is clear; what the people have done in Oregon is clearly what should be done: it is to protect the consumer." The discussion didn't go very much beyond that.

By Monday morning, the industry was aware of the fact that this would undoubtedly be a part of my press conference. They were putting some pressure on for certain types of reaction to the situation. Some pressure was even coming from the Department of Agriculture's assistant who was in a position to have talked with the industry. The question did come up, if I had indicated support for what had happened. On Friday we set into motion a plan for testing the crop, throughout the country, so that we could give some assurances that at least a portion of the crop had not been contaminated in this way. I explained this at the press conference. So I finally got a question: "What would be your advice to the consumer in terms of purchasing

cranberries?" I said, "Well, my advice would be to buy the lots that had been tested--that would have assured them of the fact that it was free of this carcinogen." This was only a few weeks prior to Thanksgiving in 'fifty-nine which was the peak period for sales.

So that became the lead story, and it set off a vigorous controversy. The Delaney Clause was the basic issue. I immediately decided I would set a hearing on this--a public hearing--because I sensed that those who were opposed to it would probably not have much difficulty in getting their story out. But those who favored something of this kind [unintelligible]. But I also saw that this would give them all a platform so that the media would get the story from both sides.

So I did set a public hearing, but then after a very few days, I gave the industry the opportunity they wanted to go after it. But I did bring to the surface the people in the public health field who were concerned about this, who favored the Delaney Clause--they expressed their points of view. I've always remembered the two Senators from Oregon who were in support of me when it happened. That was Senator Neuberger and Wayne Morse. When I was handling this, I had no pressure at all from the White House.

LEYERZAPP: None from the White House.

FLEMMING: I was permitted to handle it. Mr. Nixon went to Wisconsin during this period and publicly consumed cranberries.

He didn't take direct issue with me, but that was going to help the industry. No, he permitted me to handle this. Some years ago I picked up in a bookstore some autobiographical notes of Rachel Carson. It was not an autobiography; these were notes that someone had brought together after her death.

LEYERZAPF: I see.

FLEMMING: One of the notes was built around the fact that she came to this hearing. I didn't know that; I didn't know she was there. And she came into the hearing as a skeptic. She felt this was some kind of a political ploy. But she sat through the hearing, listening to our reactions, and went out convinced that we had made a determination based on our concern for the consumer. It was a very interesting little note.

LEYERZAPF: Yes, it is.

FLEMMING: Now of course, that immediately did set into motion efforts to bring about an amendment to the Delaney Clause. Dr. Kistiakowsky was the president's science advisor at that time. He set up a panel to take a look at the Delaney Clause; they weren't able to agree on how it could be amended. That's been tried time and again since then. The Delaney Clause is still there; it's never been amended but they still talk about it periodically. Of course, I spent a good deal of time on the Hill explaining the action that we took. I had one of the top people from the Cancer Institute at NIH stay with me



as my professional advisor in the area. But I think it's a good illustration of the role that HEW can play in protecting the consumer.

Of course, that also leads me to say that I spent a great deal of time with the public health service people, and especially with NIH--the National Institutes of Health. They were kind of in a cross-fire at that point. Soon after I took office Congress completed action on the appropriation bill and they raised the appropriation for NIH--my recollection is from 300 million to 400 million, in that order of magnitude. The Budget Bureau moved immediately to impound, so to speak, or to put in the "president's reserve" as they called it in those days, fifty million of that. The surgeon general and the director of NIH came to me, personally, [and argued] against that. That was one of the first appeals that I took to the president. I was convinced NIH was right and could spend the money in a very effective way.

LEYERZAPF: I'd better change tapes, because we're getting very close--

[Interruption]

LEYERZAPF: We're going again.

FLEMMING: But that having been one of the first issues that confronted me, I made up my mind that that was probably going to be a continuing issue as long as I was there. The Budget

Bureau people would always be skeptical about--opposed to the increase. The program was popular on the Hill; they were willing to put in the increase. Out there [NIH] they have what they call "study committees" for each one of the institutes. They're people from outside government who come in and evaluate the proposals for grants. They're the keys to the whole operation. So I spent some time going out and sitting in on some of those study committee meetings so I'd get the feel of it--how they went about their work.

Then also during that period, when I took office they did not have authority to make direct grants to colleges and universities. They wanted to get the law amended in order to make that possible. I supported them on that, and we got it through.

One Saturday morning I was sitting in my office after the Congress had completed that action, when I had a call from Jerry Morgan, the counsel to the president. He said, "Are you interested in this bill?" I said, "Interested in it? I've been working on it for about a year!" "Well," he said, "you better come over and talk to the president; he's directed me to write a veto message." "Veto?" I said. He said, "Yes." I said, "OK, I'm on my way." And so I went over, and I was sitting on the outside there for a few minutes, and Jerry then explained to me what was troubling him. It went back again to some experience at Columbia. Well, I said to Jerry, "Great Scott, we can handle that." I said, "If it becomes law, I'll send a directive to the Surgeon General to tell him to handle



it in this particular way."

So when I went in to see the president I went in alone and I said, "I understand you're concerned about this aspect of it. Here's a way I can handle it." I was saying the best defense is an offense in this case and I laid it out. He said, "All right, if you do it that way, I'll sign it." It got reversed. I've often thought if I'd been off someplace that weekend-- (Because we were right up against the ten-day deadline.) It had to be acted on either that day or by Monday or something of that kind. I always believed that when the president was in his office you should be in your office, because you could never tell what might come up. And I've often cited that as an illustration.

But I developed great respect for the Public Health Service--the commissioner's office part of it--and developed great respect for the Institutes of Health. They continue to grow and expand.

But one of the interesting issues that came up during that time was whether or not we should go all out in terms of making an investment in the whole area of chemotherapy. Within the professional world it was a debatable proposition. There were those who said, "No, that won't pay dividends commensurate with the investment that's got to be made." Others said it would. I sided with those who said, "Let's go ahead on it." I've always been happy we made this discussion because it has been-- It's not a cure, but, for example, when I first went on the job I was out there and I visited the clinic at NIH.

They took me into the children's area and the children there had leukemia. They said, "None of them will live longer than three or four months." Well, as a result of chemotherapy, children who develop leukemia and are treated with chemotherapy may live a normal lifespan. And it's helpful for adults.

LEYERZAPF: Was the question whether or not NIH would use the funds to do research themselves in chemotherapy?

FLEMMING: Yes, that's right. And make a very heavy--go all out so to speak, on it. It was an important question. I happen to have a daughter who is a nurse in the field of oncology [and] who has actually set up a homecare program in oncology. Of course, today they can use chemotherapy in the home as a result of advances in technology. That was one of the, I thought, exciting opportunities--

LEYERZAPF: Yes, very satisfying.

FLEMMING: Well, you can sum it all up with this kind of a story: Mary Switzer was the head of Vocational Rehabilitation; she was a career civil servant who had moved up in the ranks to become head of Vocational Rehabilitation. And I had known her from my civil service days. Soon after the president nominated me for the HEW job I ran into her at a convention some place, and she came up to me and said, "Arthur, welcome to the most exciting department in the government!" And she said it with very real and genuine enthusiasm. Well, after the election

in 'sixty we made the rounds of all the regional offices and talked to them about the future. I told my story and I just said, "Mary Switzer was right; this is the most exciting department in the executive branch!" Although they have taken some things away from them in the meantime, I think it still is.

LEYERZAPP: In mentioning Mary Switzer, that brings me to another question I wanted to ask of you. Inasmuch as so many of the people in HEW went back to the FSA, to Truman, to Roosevelt, and perhaps had Democratic--what some might call a liberal philosophy towards things--did that present problems for you in administering the office?

FLEMMING: Not at all. That's an interesting issue. At the beginning of President Eisenhower's first term, in the early cabinet meetings a good many of my colleagues would complain about the fact that they had to depend on top career people who had been serving for twenty years under Democratic administrations. After all, when he came into office the Democrats had been in office for twenty years. I always observed with interest how he handled those complaints--the president. He'd listen, and he didn't try to cut them off or anything of that kind. But he'd go right on to the next item. He paid no aid or comfort to them at all on that.

I never asked him many questions about it, but I attributed that to the fact that he knew and understood the career service. First of all, he'd been a part of the career service himself,



but the career military service works very closely with the career civil service, whether it's the army, the navy, [or] air force. He had all kinds of experiences. And also, of course, his brother Milton had been a part of the career service--it had been a part of his life--and as you know, there was a very close association there.

Of course, they would be specific, they would name names. Well, I knew the people they were talking about. I'd been around there and I knew they were strong people and I knew that they were the kind of people that understood the career service and the role of a career civil servant. In about six months these same cabinet officers began to brag about these same people, and, in effect, began to say to their colleagues, "Don't try to rob me of this one, or you're going to have a fight on your hands; she's indispensable."

Now, you see, this is quite in contrast to the situation we've had in recent years when Jimmy Carter ran for his first term. Part of his platform was to attack the bureaucracies, to attack the career civil servant. Of course, this has been characteristic of Reagan his entire career. He did it when he ran the first time, he did it when he ran the second time, and he keeps doing it.

LEYERZAPF: Last night I heard him on television.

FLEMMING: He got into it over in Moscow and he let Gorbachev off the hook by saying it's the bureaucracy which gets you

into trouble. He's got that built into his approach to government. Keep in mind also that President Eisenhower, at the beginning of his administration, had Phil Young; he named Phil Young as chairman of the Civil Service Commission. And he had him sit with the cabinet. When people began to gripe about the problems of the career civil service, the chairman of the Commission was right there. They listened to him and he would either educate them and tell them that they did not understand this or that, or he would go back and go to work on it. So President Eisenhower made a very real contribution to the strengthening of the career service.

My experience, not only in HEW but on the Civil Service Commission and in the other jobs I've been in, [is,] if you'll take the career civil servant into camp, share with them what your objectives are and what you want to achieve, he regards it then as his mission to see to it that what you want to achieve is achieved. I mean, he may or may not agree with your objective, but he doesn't think that's relevant as far as what he does.

LEYERZAPF: He's wholly professional.

FLEMMING: That's right. Because of the approach that they've taken towards the career service in the last few years, whoever comes in as president is going to be facing some real problems because we've had a lot of early retirements, and the service has not recruited young people--top young people--because they've read about these attacks on the service, so it isn't a challenge



to them. As it was, I feel that during the Eisenhower Administration a good many young people were challenged by the opportunities for service in the public sector. And that was certainly true of Kennedy, and during the period of the 'sixties. But we've lost that in the last few years. Now it will take a similar period of time to repair that kind of damage. Now President Eisenhower, in my judgement, made a tremendous contribution to the service.

Of course, I got other opportunities to see how he approached that type of issue because I served on his Advisory Committee on Government Organization throughout the eight years. You have undoubtedly identified the President's Advisory Committee on Government Organization. He set that up before he was inaugurated for his first term and that was [unintelligible] Nelson Rockefeller as chairman, Milton Eisenhower and myself--the three of us. When Nelson became governor I then became chairman and Don Price of Harvard became the third member. That was a very informal kind of relationship, partly because Milton was there. If we had an idea that we wanted to talk with him [the president] about on reorganization, typically we'd have breakfast and throw the idea around. If we found he had an interest, then we'd put the staff to work--the budgeting staff. If he had some ideas, why, he'd send for us and try out ideas on us.

The first assignment we got was to develop a reorganization plan for HEW. And Milton and Nelson said to me, "Look, you're from Ohio, you know Bob Taft and Bob Taft's the key person on this. You take this one on." Bob Taft was majority leader.

The president had already identified Oveta Hobby as the person he wanted to appoint as the secretary. So Oveta and

a fellow from the Budget Bureau and I went to work on that reorganization plan. I had some interesting contact with Senator Taft on it. I remember one Saturday afternoon Oveta and I and a Budget Bureau guy went up. His first statement to me was, "The president wants to get this through fast." I said, "Yes, we made a commitment during the campaign; he wants to fulfill it." He said, "I'm committed to seeing that he gets it just as fast as we can get it through"--he sounded very encouraging. Then he said, "What are you going to call it?" I said, "Well, the only thing I've heard of so far is the Department of Welfare." He said, "That's all right, but it will give me a problem with some of my colleagues up here." Finally, he said, "Why don't we call it Health, Education and Welfare? That's long, but it tells the story." So Oveta and I said, "Fine with us, we'll check it out with the president." The president said, "Sure, it's OK with me." So I've often told the story about Bob Taft naming the department.

The second thing that he [Taft] said was, "I'd like a position in the office of the secretary that would be occupied by someone who members of the medical profession [and] the nursing profession would feel comfortable coming in and talking to." He said, "I don't want this person to be in the line; I don't want him to be the boss of the Public Health Service or the Food and Drug [Administration]." And he said, "How about an assistant to the secretary who would have to be confirmed by the Senate?" I said, "Well, I don't know of any other situation where an

assistant to the secretary is confirmed by the Senate, but if the law calls for it, no problem." So we set it up like that, and it stayed that way until near the end of LBJ's administration. It was that way when I was secretary.

LEYERZAPF: Who was in that position when you were secretary?

FLEMMING: I had a Dr. Craig; he was the head of the neuro-surgical department at Mayo's. He died before the end of the administration. Ironically, he died of a brain tumor. And he was someone who had saved the lives of all kinds of persons. One of his patients was Johnson--you remember, he was Secretary of Defense under Truman.

LEYERZAPF: Louis B. Johnson.

FLEMMING: Louis B. Johnson. His first one was Forrestal, and then, of course, Johnson succeeded him [Forrestal]. Craig operated on him and he lived a good many years after that. Then I always had somebody on detail from the Public Health Service in the office, also. And usually, the person I had was out of their engineering side, not their medical side. And that worked very well. Of course, Elliot [Richardson] was there, and he later went back as secretary under Nixon. And by that time--

LEYERZAPF: You're speaking of Elliot Richardson?

FLEMMING: Yes. By that time, the job had become assistant secretary; the Surgeon General and others reported through



the assistant secretary. Elliot Richardson has said to me a number of times that he thinks our setup was preferred to the setup that you've got at the present time. I think so, because I think--not only in HHS but all over--we've got too many assistant secretaries. That's a layer of people that are between the secretary and the people who are doing the work--the line operators.

LEYERZAPF: I see.

FLEMMING: I'd feel very uncomfortable not having my Surgeon General reporting directly to me, or the head of Food and Drug reporting directly. If they're out there, I don't want that sifted through somebody. Essentially, he doesn't have operating responsibilities--that assistant secretary--he's just another staff person.

LEYERZAPF: You mentioned assistant secretaries, and I had wanted to ask you before we finish about Rufus Miles, who I believe was assistant secretary for administration?

FLEMMING: I appointed him as assistant secretary for administration. That job, at that time, called for the appointment of a career person, but the appointment had to be approved by the president. But it did not call for Senate confirmation. I recall sending over Rufus' nomination to the White House, and I got a call from Jerry Persons. He said, "Some people aren't too happy with this nomination." I said, "Why?" "Well," he said, "we don't think too much of his political credentials." I said,



"His political credentials are irrelevant. The law calls for this to be a career appointee." And I said, "I know him, I've known him for a good many years, and I have no hesitancy at all in certifying that he is very well-qualified for this job." He said, "OK." That's the last I heard of it. He got approved. But he's a fine example of a career civil servant.

LEYERZAPP: He mentioned in a book he wrote on HEW awhile back, that in administering HEW, HEW is less like a pyramid than an hourglass in the sense that even back then it had the second largest budget other than the Department of Defense, and because of that, Congress, the people on the Hill, lobbies, were quite often involved, or trying to get involved, in administration, and it made it a difficult administrative job. Is that an accurate perception, your having been in that position?

FLEMMING: Well, I wouldn't reach that conclusion, that it made it a difficult administrative job. In a way, it made it a very attractive administrative job because you realized that you were dealing with programs that involved people in depth, and people were very much interested in how the programs operated, how they developed, and that meant, yes, the representatives of the people up on Capitol Hill probably had a real interest because back home their constituents were talking about these programs. They were talking about the inadequacies, the things that needed to be done to improve them, or talking about the way they were being administered. To me that is kind

of an ideal situation--administering programs which are designed to serve people, and you're trying to do it within a democratic frame of reference. I never regarded that as something that added to your frustrations; I just thought it was something that kind of added to the challenge.

Now, my first successor was Ribicoff, Abe Ribicoff. I was pleased when Kennedy appointed him, thinking in terms of the future of the department. He was his first cabinet selection. He'd been governor of Connecticut; as far as I knew he'd done a good job as governor. I felt, here's a man who is obviously close to the president, and if he wants to advocate in behalf of the programs he'll have an open door. Mr. Ribicoff very quickly got in the frame of mind where he was frustrated. When he left--he was there less than two years when he was elected senator--when he was about to leave, Time quoted him as saying, "It's the department of dirty air, dirty water and dirty looks." From there on out he was on the committee in the Senate that handled nominations of new secretaries. And he would always tell the nominee that this was an impossible job that he was being asked to undertake. He never got over that feeling of frustration.

Another former secretary who would agree completely with my analysis was Wilbur Cohen. He died a few months ago, but he and I in recent years have worked very closely with one another on Social Security issues and health care issues. But he would agree with Mary Switzer that it is the most exciting

department in government. I guess if you talk with different secretaries, you probably get a different response. I'm not sure how happy Oveta Hobby was in the position. She stayed about two years. I knew her during the days when she was in charge of the WACs. I was on the Civil Service Commission and worked with her on some of her personnel problems. And then she also was on one of the major advisory committees to the first Hoover Commission--I was on that as I was [on] the second one. So I knew her very well and respected her a great deal. After she left the job she never really came back into the public sector at all. But Marion Polson, I think, did react positively to the job. Did anybody interview him before his death?

LEYERZAPP: I can't answer that; I don't recall if we have an interview with him or not.

FLEMMING: I hope somebody did because he was a very unique person. He was a real progressive leader in the field of business. He was one of the founders of the Committee on Economic Development, he was in on the ground floor of the Social Security system--helped to develop the concept. Very quiet. He started out in the Eisenhower Administration as under-secretary of the treasury, and when Oveta Hobby left he moved over and became secretary of HEW. He did an excellent job. He had a slight stroke; that was what precipitated his resignation. The president then asked me to come back in. I still think it's a very exciting



place. The kind of situations, I guess, that some people regard as frustrations I felt were challenges to demonstrate how our system could be made to work.

LEYERZAPP: It seems as though it was a matter of attitude that one brought to the position, to some extent.

FLEMMING: To some extent I think that's true. I'd been fortunate; I'd been a part of the system. I had nine years on the Civil Service Commission, and that gives you a bird's-eye view, you know. Particularly, when I was put in charge of the war program I was dealing with people topside and that led to my being made a member of the War Manpower Commission and that led to my becoming underchairman of the Labor-Management Committee. So I developed a bird's-eye view of the system that people don't get, I guess, if they're just in one department for a period of time.

LEYERZAPP: I have a copy of a document that I brought along that I'd like your reaction to. It's very intriguing. It's a memorandum that you wrote to the President shortly after you took over as head of HEW.

[Dr. Flemming was shown a 1958 document in which he offered to provide to the president information on civil rights problems that arose in connection with administering HEW programs. See Box 15 of the Administration Series, Ann Whitman File, for the original document dated Aug. 14, 1958.]

FLEMMING: Whose notation is that?

LEYERZAPF: That would be Eisenhower's.

FLEMMING: Is that somebody's signature? No, it's not.

LEYERZAPF: It's administrative. Part of it didn't xerox, apparently. I was wondering if anything came of that proposal on your part? I found it very interesting.

FLEMMING: Well, in the first place I do not have a recollection of a reaction from him. I'm sure I had one because he was meticulous in responding. Probably, the reaction was a personal conversation. The Advisory Committee on Government Organization was very active then; at times, we'd have breakfast with him about an organization problem, and if he had something on his mind in connection with HEW he would say, "By the way--"

LEYERZAPF: I was just wondering if an informal reporting system was maintained for him, as that document suggested, on civil rights?

FLEMMING: Personally, I've forgotten about the memorandum, but this laid the basis-- If you noticed, the schools that are identified here--Arlington, Norfolk, Charlottesville--are all Virginia schools. Actually, the issue that I dealt with in a press conference involved either Prince William or--

LEYERZAPF: Prince Edward County?

FLEMMING: Prince Edward, sure. See, I had enough confidence

in-- I certainly had the feeling that when I said there were going to be no federal funds for these schools, I had enough confidence in making that distinction in the fact that I would be supported.

LEYERZAPF: Eisenhower was fully supportive?

FLEMMING: That's right. I obviously didn't discuss that specific situation with him, [but] I knew his basic attitude on it. That's a very interesting document.

LEYERZAPF: You may keep that if you wish; that's a xerox copy.

FLEMMING: Have you run across the name of Jerry Kieffer?

LEYERZAPF: Yes, we have his papers on microfilm.

FLEMMING: He's the fellow who could tell you what follow-up there was on this. I'll ask Jerry. Jerry was meticulous in keeping files. You've got his files; you've got his papers.

LEYERZAPF: We have them on microfilm which suggests-- I believe that the original body of papers might be at another institution. Maybe his alma mater if it's a major university.

FLEMMING: He might have put them out at Oregon; Oregon's put a good deal of emphasis on collecting papers of public officials.

LEYERZAPF: I didn't realize that.

FLEMMING: He was with me at the University of Oregon, when



I was president there. As a rule--and I'm sure you've run up against it--it was the instruction to Tom Stephens [that when] a cabinet officer wants to see me [the president], he's to get on the schedule in twenty-four hours. Have you ever picked that one up?

LEYERZAPF: I wasn't familiar with that. No, I hadn't picked that up.

FLEMMING: I'm sure I'm right on that because that's the way it worked, unless he was out of town or something of that kind. I used to hear some of my colleagues complain that they didn't have enough contact with the president. "Great Scott," I said, "we see him every week at cabinet meetings; and we can put any item on the agenda we think ought to be on." I said, "You can get on his schedule; tell Tom Stephens." I always suspected they really didn't want too close contact with him when they made that complaint, because it was not a valid complaint at all.

LEYERZAPF: He was wholly available.

FLEMMING: Yes. Of course, I was fortunate the first term; I'd see him every Thursday at the National Security Council meeting, and Fridays at cabinet. Then, I'd see him in between at the Advisory Committee on Government Organization. I wasn't cut off at all, and I knew that I could go in to see him. But you see, when you saw him regularly in those group situations you didn't feel the need for a lot of one-on-one.

LEYERZAPF: Thank you very much.

