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In accordance with the provisions of Chapter 21 of Title 44, United States Code and subject to the terms and conditions hereinafter set forth, I, Arthur B. Krim of New York, New York do hereby give, donate and convey to the United States of America all my rights, title and interest in the transcripts of the personal interviews conducted on October 8, 1981, May 17, 1982, June 29, 1982, November 9, 1982, April 7, 1983 and October 13, 1983 in New York, New York, and prepared for deposit in the Lyndon Baines Johnson Library.

This assignment is subject to the following terms and conditions:

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(2) During my lifetime, I retain all copyright in the material given to the United States by the terms of this instrument. Thereafter, the copyright in the transcripts shall pass to the United States Government. During my lifetime, researchers who have my written authorization may publish brief "fair use" quotations from the transcripts without my express consent in each case.

(3) During my lifetime, copies of the interview transcripts may not be provided to researchers except upon my written authorization. Thereafter, copies of the transcripts may be provided by the library to researchers upon request.

(4) During my lifetime, copies of the interview transcripts may not be deposited in or loaned to institutions other than the Lyndon Baines Johnson Library. Thereafter, copies of the transcripts may be deposited in or loaned to other institutions.

Signed by Arthur B. Krim on May 1, 1984

Accepted by Robert M. Warner, Archivist of the United States, on May 22, 1984

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ACCESSION NUMBER 85-09

Arthur Krim: Addendum to Interview III

Received by the Lyndon B. Johnson Oral History Project: March 18, 1984

7 p.m., New York, Friday, March 29, 1968. I had just come back home from the office and was entering my bedroom. The telephone rang. The White House. The President.

Would I arrange to have private polls taken to see where he stood vis-a-vis [Eugene] McCarthy and [Robert] Kennedy in Indiana, Nebraska, Oregon and California? These were the primaries that loomed ahead. He wanted the arrangements made over the weekend. He mentioned Oliver Quayle, who was in fact then conducting some polls for us. However, the President said, he did not want the interviews started until Monday.

I told him that I had already commissioned such a poll in California and that I believed the actual interviewing was already under way. He said, even if it was, we might go back after Monday to see if there were any changes.

Obviously something significant was going to happen over the weekend. I did not ask what it would be. I said I would get things under way that evening.

He then asked what we were doing over the weekend. He said he would like Mathilde and me to come down and spend the weekend with him. Mathilde had entered the bedroom while I was talking. I told her of the invitation. She acquiesced. I then told the President that we would be down. I said I would come during the morning, that I had some things to do with some of the staff at the White House and at the Committee, and that Mathilde would be down late in the afternoon, because she had some things which she first had to do in Long Island. He expressed his pleasure that we would be coming down and that he would see me in the morning. That ended the conversation.

I turned to Mathilde and said "Well, he's running, that's very clear."

As far back as November, 1965, I had had a talk with the President in which he had said he would not run in 1968. It was one evening at the Ranch in Texas. The President was recuperating from his operation. Mathilde and I were about to leave for New York. The President had been expressing his deep concern about the problems of the Democratic National Committee. He was worried about the vast debt, about the fact that he could get no accurate information about it, about his feeling that the operating budget was wasteful and nonproductive. He said he felt as if the debt were a personal one, that it had to be paid before he left the presidency, that "if something happened to him" it was an unfair burden for his successor to have to carry. At his request I undertook to make a complete analysis of the problem, to try to suggest some approaches. I expressed the view that a strong, viable Committee would be important to him in 1968. He passed this off as irrelevant, since he would not be running in 1968. This was for me the first time the disclaimer was stated so bluntly. I gave it little thought at the time. I put it down to post-operative fatigue, to an uninhibited but not too serious venting of frustration among friends.

Over the ensuing months I learned there had been much such talk before the 1964 Convention. Nevertheless he had subsequently run. This seemed to confirm my conclusion.

Similar conversations occurred periodically over the next two years. For five months, starting in November, 1967, these conversations had been exhausting. On Thanksgiving weekend Mathilde and I were riding with the President. He was as usual at the wheel. He stopped the car at a high point, with a 360° vista of the Hill Country. He said he had just about made his decision. He would not run. We talked for some time. He explained his reasons--the

job too killing, particularly in the light of his and his family's medical history, the difficulty of his governing in the light of the divisions in the country, the honeymoon a new president, any new president, would have, which could break the logjam on the vital issues, and through it all the desire to come back to the land, this land around us, his great love. We were surprised, taken aback by the ring of determination. We remonstrated, protested vigorously. We were troubled but still certain the final decision had not yet been made. Before the ride was over A. W. Moursund joined us. The conversation continued. It was clear A. W. had been through this before. He was noncommittal.

Now the conversations became more frequent.

Lynda was married in December. After the wedding I flew to Texas with the President. A few days later, before I left to return to New York, we talked in his new living room at the Ranch. We covered various matters. A phone call from a Georgia friend interrupted. A favor was asked. The President, preoccupied with world crises, patiently heard him out. When the talk was over, he expressed his distaste for the relentless pressures which needlessly took up so much of his time. Cause and effect, perhaps, but again he turned to the question of withdrawal--again the matter of health, of inability to govern, the need of the country for a honeymoon with a new president--but now he talked of the great misconception that he was drawn to power, that he sought it and needed it. I was one, he said, who from day-to-day contacts over the past two years, knew how false this was--that he was not interested in power, that he constantly shied away from using it--that in fact his was the least political of any administration in recent history, the one in which less was done to build a personal power structure than any other, the one in which there was the least exercise of power to crush those

opposed to him. I agreed. From where I had sat this was certainly a valid statement. He said a final review would be made at the family gathering over Christmas but he doubted his mind would be changed. I still felt he could not mean it. Once again I expressed my deep disagreement.

The President called on Christmas Day, just after his return from the around-the-world trip occasioned by the death of Prime Minister [Harold E.] Holt. I was alone in New York. Mathilde and Daphna had gone overseas to spend the holiday with relatives in Switzerland. He said the family were together at the White House and were thinking of me; why didn't I come down. I said I would be down the next day. I asked about the trip. He was excited about it, felt much had been accomplished, happy about the scope of it, including as it had, visits with so many Asian heads of state, the soldiers in Vietnam, the Pope. He did not sound like a president about to give up voluntarily the mantle of the office.

During Christmas and through New Year's, both at the White House and at the Ranch, there were no talks with me of withdrawal. I began to feel relieved.

On New Year's Day I met with the President again, privately in the new room at the Ranch. I said there was much planning to be done, fund raising to be started, organizational plans to be moved forward, events to be scheduled. I wanted his blessing to move forward on the basis that he was going to be a candidate. He agreed, though cautioning that he had not yet made his decision. We left it on that basis. In my capacity with the Committee, and with the small political task force that had been formed for liaison with the White House, the word to me was "go," with the caution that these activities might be aborted. On this basis I did not think they would be. I was encouraged.

The uncertainties persisted, but they were highly personal and compartmentalized. They did not affect the work that had to be done. They did not affect others with whom I was working, since they were not privy to them.

In December and January there were several confidential meetings at the White House of the President's top advisers in political matters--Clark Clifford, Abe Fortas, Jim Rowe, Marvin Watson, Larry O'Brien and myself. Out of these, certain assignments had been made. Mine, amongst others, were to arrange the fund raising and to help select a top advertising agency or expert for liaison with the media. With the latter, I had experienced difficulties--the ones whom I wanted--Carson, on the Coast, Birnback in New York--had reservations because of Vietnam. As of March, we still had no solution.

On the other hand, the plans for the fund raising had been proceeding and events and solicitations were well under way in California, Texas and New York, all looking toward a campaign chest of some \$15,000,000.

In January, too, Criswell and others had been working on the composition of the delegation in California. One weekend during the month, Jess Unruh and his aide were in the East and were invited to the White House. It was a Sunday afternoon. Criswell and I were with the President--when Unruh was announced, we went to greet him. I had known Unruh for some time. I first met him in 1962 when he came to my office at the suggestion of Ken O'Donnell to set up a liaison for fund raising for President Kennedy in California. In 1967 Unruh had been helpful in setting up a fund-raising dinner for President Johnson in California which had brought together in one place representatives of all of the various elements in the party. This time we sat in one of the main floor rooms of the White House chatting about these past experiences and

other matters until the President arrived. Then the aide, Criswell and I went into the Fish Room and Unruh and the President went into the President's office. They spoke for almost an hour. After the meeting, the President told us that Unruh had said that from his own career viewpoint, he did not feel that he should join the delegation, but he promised the President his support. The President's conclusion was that he was holding back for Kennedy, even though he had said the contrary, and that his expressions of support were lip service.

In February, some five or six weeks prior to the March 29 call, we had spent a weekend at the White House which was the most exhausting of all. For two days the President again expressed his determination to withdraw. He was adamant. He told us that he had almost made the move the night of the State of the Union Message. He showed us the statement that had been prepared. He showed us a similar statement that had been prepared in 1964. He asked me to work with Mrs. Johnson on improving the statement. Over the weekend I tried for a few minutes, then gave it up because my heart was not in it. Both Mrs. Johnson and he felt that if the move was going to be made it should be made by the end of March, which was when President Truman had made his withdrawal statement in 1952--to give other candidates enough time to prepare.

It was a most depressing weekend. Again we protested as vigorously as we could. Sunday morning we stayed in the President's bedroom, talking for two hours about nothing else; first, the President and I, then we were joined by Mrs. Johnson and Mathilde. In the afternoon we visited Lynda's and Chuck's new home. At day's end the conversation finally shifted to messages from the Middle East, political matters. Once again, despite the vehemence, we were

still not certain. Would he actually withdraw, or was he asking us to unburden frustrations, knowing we would respect his confidence?

Then the New Hampshire primary, and on March 16 the Robert Kennedy announcement.

The night before the Kennedy announcement, Sunday [Friday], March 15, we were in the President's bedroom. It was near midnight. He was being given a massage. He showed us his projected speech the next morning to the International Monetary Conference. One phrase caught our eye. It said that a small increase, possibly 30,000 troops, would be needed in Vietnam. Mathilde and I urged him not to include this. No matter how small, it was still escalation. Once again it would paint him the war candidate. Could it militarily be so important that he had to perpetuate this false picture of himself? He argued this was infinitesimal compared to what the military had wanted. I felt, despite this argument, he accepted the point--that no matter how infinitesimal, it was still escalation. The next day the statement was in fact not made. There was no further talk on this particular occasion about withdrawal. I felt some hope.

He spoke to the Monetary Conference as Robert Kennedy announced. Mathilde and I watched the announcement in our White House bedroom. Immediately it was over we rushed to the helicopter to join the President on a trip to Texas. In the helicopter we spoke briefly of what Kennedy had said. He told us of his speech. Nothing much more was said on this the next two days at the Ranch. The President was introspective throughout the weekend. Sunday night there was some work on a speech to be delivered Monday in the Midwest. It was a reaffirmation of the Vietnam policy but he accepted to express more forcefully the thought that his was the true policy for peace, for lasting peace. We began to hope that if he had thought of withdrawing, the enlarged challenge of McCarthy, and now Kennedy, would persuade him to run.

The events and conversations with the President over the next ten days seemed at times to bear out this hope, and, at others, to dim it.

Early in the week he suggested that Jake Jacobsen and I visit with all of the cabinet officers, other than the Secretaries of State and War [Defense], to solicit their suggestions for the campaign, particularly in fund raising. At different times during the week we met with most of them--C. R. Smith, [Stewart] Udall, [Alan] Boyd, [Robert] Weaver, [Joseph W.] Barr for [Henry] Fowler, [Willard] Wirtz--and in each case we were able to report to the President that they were all ready to roll up their sleeves for him--even Udall who stated he was all out to work for the President because he did not approve of the step which his good friend Bobby Kennedy had taken.

Also, early in the week, I was in the President's bedroom when he talked to Walter Reuther. Reuther was an important key to the Michigan delegation. It had been suggested that the Vice President contact Reuther to be sure he stayed with the President. That morning the Vice President called to say he could not get through to Reuther. The President called and reached him immediately. I listened to the President's end of the conversation. It was impassioned. The conversation must have lasted fully thirty minutes. The President reviewed his history with Reuther, with the UAW, what he had done for the working man, the progress in housing, education, welfare. The most Reuther would say was that he was for the President, but that he could not speak for his board, and he would have to be guided by what his board did. He mentioned some of his board who might try to swing support to Kennedy.

After the conversation the President expressed his disgust with this equivocation from somebody from whom he thought he was entitled to support. He called the Vice President and

told him to contact all his friends on the UAW board. He asked me to follow up with the Vice President which I did in a telephone talk later in the day. The Vice President was confident of the outcome. I reported this back to the President.

On Thursday, March 21, we had a luncheon meeting scheduled at the 21 Club in New York. This was to be the start of the 1968 campaign fund-raising drive. Some twenty of the leading New York friends and supporters of the President had been invited. John Bailey, chairman of the Democratic National Committee, and John Criswell, treasurer, were coming from Washington. So, too, was the Postmaster General, Lawrence O'Brien who, it was anticipated, would head up the President's campaign. I had asked the President if he would agree to have Marvin Watson come and he had approved--a good sign. Even more, Marvin Watson, who had been his appointments secretary and constantly at his side, had, since the weekend of the sixteenth, been assigned the task of coordinating the political campaign. He had moved to new quarters away from the President and had been busy with telephoning and meetings, firming up delegations for the contest ahead.

Just before the luncheon, I spoke with the President on the telephone. He wanted me to talk to Larry O'Brien. He said O'Brien was under strong pressure from Kennedy. He felt it would be very harmful if Larry were to resign and move to Kennedy. He pointed out that it was he and not John Kennedy who had elevated O'Brien to the cabinet. He said he had not been able to get a clear statement of loyalty out of Larry. I said I would talk to Larry.

The luncheon was a great success. The pledges privately made came to well over \$2,000,000 from this small group alone. Several who had had qualms about deserting another

friend, Nelson Rockefeller, felt reassured when word came through during the luncheon that Rockefeller had just issued a statement withdrawing from the race.

Now Larry O'Brien was very careful to avoid a total commitment in his remarks to the luncheon group. He spoke of his loyalty, that he would never, as a cabinet member, do anything but support the President. He did not close the door to the possibility of supporting Kennedy--by resigning from the cabinet. The group, other than Criswell and Watson, who knew the background, did not catch the subtlety--their spirit was enthusiastic.

After the luncheon, I had a talk with Larry O'Brien. I pointed out the historic implications of any break. I referred to the sad experience of Jim Farley when he broke with President Roosevelt. I stressed what the President had done for him. Larry countered with the statement that I had no idea of the kind of pressure that was being brought to persuade him. I knew his long history with the Kennedys. Now they were drawing on this. He said he would not be a disloyal cabinet officer. He implied that he would stick with the President--that that was his intention. He did not button it up unreservedly.

By the time I got back to the office, the President was on the phone. I told him of the success of the luncheon, also of the ambiguity regarding Larry O'Brien. He said that Marvin Watson had already told him of the luncheon. He expressed his pleasure--also his concern about O'Brien.

On Friday, March 22, I attended a luncheon meeting in Washington of a group that had been hastily convened to take charge of the campaign. Several Texans, who had not previously been active on the national scene were present, particularly Cecil Burney, who appeared to be acting as coordinator. His presence was obviously of the President's doing. Others present

included Larry O'Brien, Jim Rowe, John Criswell, Bob Burkhardt and several others. The tenor of the meeting was pessimistic. The primary that loomed immediately ahead was the one in Wisconsin and all preliminary reports were on the down side. At one point, Jim Rowe blurted out that if we lose Wisconsin, there goes the ball game. Others were more realistic. They anticipated a loss in Wisconsin, but that we should not exaggerate its importance or permit its importance to be exaggerated.

On Saturday morning, March 23, I was with the President in his bedroom. I told him that all the reports that I had from every corner of the country indicated that the party leadership was desperate for him to make some dramatic de-escalation move in Vietnam. I told him that he was being painted more and more as a war candidate. He told me that Abe Fortas had just had a call from his friend [Richard] Cudahy, the state chairman in Wisconsin, more or less to the same effect. He called Abe and told him of our talk. He said that more and more it appeared that he was going to be the Barry Goldwater of 1964, the war candidate of 1968. He asked Abe to meet with me so that I could give him the full weight of what I had picked up on the political circuit. It was arranged that I would have lunch with Abe at his home.

At lunch I went into great detail about the political realities as I viewed them. I told Abe that I was not trying to evaluate the military situation--obviously I was not competent to do so. I told him, however, that unless something were done to reverse the trend of escalation in Vietnam, the President would be faced with mounting political difficulties. I went into chapter and verse, reciting what party leaders and supporters were reporting from all parts of the country. Abe expressed sympathetic understanding of the problem and assured me that something was in the offing which he felt would reverse the trend.

On Tuesday morning, March 26, I called Abe and told him matters were getting worse--that the reports from Wisconsin were disastrous and that the whole emphasis was on the President as the war candidate. Abe told me that meetings were in progress and that he was confident action would come shortly.

The day before this call, on Monday, March 25, I received a call from the President late in the afternoon. He said he was fed up with the way [Mike] Mansfield was acting. He felt there was no room for the two of them in the government. He said I should contact Charles Engelhard, who was Mansfield's best friend, and more or less express this opinion to him--that it was unfair of Mansfield to expect the President to carry all these burdens and not support him, both in the campaign and in the Senate; that the President was entitled to a majority leader of his own party who would support him, or else it was inevitable that one or the other of them had to go. I told Engelhard to press Mansfield to call the President and ask for an interview in order to clear up this situation. After this, there were several telephone calls on Monday and Tuesday between Engelhard and myself and between Engelhard and Mansfield. Engelhard assured me that Mansfield wanted to support the President, that he had differences of emphasis on Vietnam, but that basically he was for the President and wanted to work with him. After some backing and filling, Mansfield agreed to call to ask for an appointment with the President so as to make this point of view clear to him. On Wednesday, I was advised by Jim Jones that the appointment was made for later that day. Late on Wednesday, I was talking to Jim Jones on another matter and he told me that the President had already been closeted with Mansfield for two hours and that they were still talking. I was hopeful that this kind of a heart-to-heart talk would clear the atmosphere. Later still, Jim told me that when Mansfield left, there was an air of real cordiality

between the two men and I was encouraged. However, the next day when I talked to the President, I asked how did it go--his answer was "just awful"--Mansfield, despite all his lip service professions of friendship and support, could not be relied on to give him any meaningful support or sincere leadership to his program.

It was against this background that I evaluated the call on March 29.

I called Oliver Quayle immediately and asked him to make preliminary arrangements in the three states other than California. I also asked him about the interviews in California. He told me that only the past week the interviews had been started in California, but there were still some interviews to go; he did not have full information. I told him that I would probably be talking with him over the weekend to see whether we would want to start from scratch again in California and, also, whether we would want to finalize the arrangements for the polls in the other states.

The next morning, Saturday, March 30, I arrived at the White House. Our usual room 303 was occupied. I was assigned to room 328. On arrival there was a call from Ashton Gonella, Mrs. Johnson's secretary. There was a question about lunch and I said I was going to have lunch with John Criswell. Mrs. Gonella said that the President and Mrs. Johnson had been invited to a party that evening in Washington at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Frank Ikard and they wondered if Mathilde and I would join them. I said we would. I then visited with some of the White House staff to clear up some matters. As I recall, these included Joe Califano and Marvin Watson. I learned that the President was tied up in various meetings in preparation for a speech which was going to be nationally televised on Sunday night. The importance of Monday for the start of polling was now clear.

At around one o'clock, I walked out of the White House on the way to the Hay-Adams where I was going to have lunch with John Criswell. As I was walking past the garden, I saw the President and Bob McNamara. They were sitting around a luncheon table. Their lunch was finished. I went in to say hello. Just at that moment, the nurse appeared with little Lyn and the President started playing with Lyn. There were pictures taken of the President and Lyn and then of the President, Bob McNamara, Lyn and myself.

The President and Bob McNamara were quite obviously working on the draft of the speech--the papers were on the table. When I walked in they were in earnest conversation about the contents.

The President asked where I was going. I said I had a luncheon date at the Hay-Adams. He said he would see me later in the day.

The afternoon was taken up with various phone calls. I had word periodically that the President would probably not leave with Mrs. Johnson for the Ikard party. I was told to be ready around 6:30, I rather expected that Mathilde would be a little later than that and so I thought I would go over with Mrs. Johnson and the President would come with Mathilde later. As it happened, Mathilde came just as I was about to leave with Mrs. Johnson. She hurriedly made her necessary arrangements and the three of us went over to the party together. It was at a private home about one-half hour drive from the White House.

At the Ikard home, we found a number of the Washington-Texas contingent, including Congressman [George] Mahon, Governor Price Daniel and others. There must have been about forty or fifty couples there. A number of them were folks we had not previously met, but they all

knew about our friendship with the President, our place in Texas, and so there were topics of mutual interest.

At around ten o'clock, the President arrived. After going around the three rooms or so to say hello to everybody present, he sat down for a late dinner. He spent most of the time at his table with Congressman Mahon. I gathered there were some important items which he wanted to get out of Congressman Mahon's committee and there were conversations about these.

The President was very gracious about us. He repeated to a number of the folks at the party there how close we were to him, and how much he appreciated our friendship, how much help we had given him, about our place in Texas, etc. At around 11:30, he signaled that we were to go back to the White House. We left in the President's limousine--just the driver and a Secret Service agent up front, and in the rear, Mrs. Johnson, Mathilde and the President, and I on the jump seat.

As soon as we entered the car the President closed the partition glass that separated the front from the rear, took the draft of his Sunday speech out of his inside pocket, gave it to me and asked me to read it aloud. I began to read. When I came to the part early in the speech that the bombing in the North was to be considerably limited, I looked back at the President. He smiled. Mathilde and I both gave strong indications of approval. He made some jest that he was doing this because we had insisted on it. We said it sounded fine.

I continued to read out loud. While I was reading, the President's eyes were closed, but he was listening, apparently to get the sound of it as spoken by somebody else. Mathilde and Mrs. Johnson were both listening carefully. I do not know whether Mrs. Johnson had read the

speech before, but I gathered she knew its substance but not the final wording, so that she, too, had a special interest in the reading.

The reading took the entire time of the trip back to the White House. As a matter of fact I finished the last sentence just as we entered the White House grounds.

I turned to the President and said that I thought it was a fine speech and I was delighted that he was going to make it. Mathilde and I both felt pleased. We would have hoped that he could have gone the whole way and stopped all the bombing of the North, yet the fact that he was stopping it over so much of the territory was still a great step forward, and to us had a special significance as the key turning point away from more escalation. We felt the speech would bring a lot of political capital to the President. I now understood, or thought I did, why he wanted the polls taken on Monday.

As we stepped out of the limousine, we congratulated the President.

The four of us walked into the White House. As we were going up in the elevator, the President suggested to Mathilde and me that we come into the bedroom with him while he would have his massage. We all got off at the second floor--we went into his bedroom and Mrs. Johnson went into hers. A little later Mrs. Johnson returned in nightdress and robe and got into bed. When she was settled under the covers, the President said "Bird, let Arthur read the rest of the speech, I want him to tell us what he thinks of it."

Mrs. Johnson then handed me a typed statement. Because of past events I immediately recognized it as the statement of withdrawal. Automatically, we expressed our shock. Mathilde and I both said "Oh no, not again. Why do you want to consider this? Why don't you wait for the reaction to the speech?" On our part we felt that the speech would start to reverse

antagonisms against the President, and strengthen his candidacy, and yet he wanted to use this very same action to withdraw from the race.

Now started the debate which we had been through many times before. We again pointed out that he owed it to the country and to himself to finish what he had started, in Vietnam, in the Middle East, in the welfare programs, in the economy, the surtax. We felt that no matter which way the election would go, he would be repudiated and his policies scuttled by his successor. Not only would he not achieve his goals, but he would be unhappy and frustrated. He made many of the usual arguments: first, that he could no longer govern and that any president would have a honeymoon in which he could accomplish more. He pointed out that the media were against him and that in view of both of these realities, even if elected--and he felt he could be elected--he would not be able to manage the country as it had to be managed at this time. He said again, as he had so often in the past, that no president can really govern if he doesn't have the New York Times, the Wall Street Journal, the Washington Post, Time and Newsweek at least neutral, and certainly not, as in his case, actively antagonistic. Also that he did not have the support of the leadership in Congress. He went into some length about the meeting with Mansfield. He had come away completely convinced that Mansfield was against him. He said that Mansfield had said a lot of nice things about friendship, etc., but the very next day had gone out West and attacked him on the basis of his Vietnam policy. He was just completely fed up, trying to do the job with somebody that high up in his own party putting roadblocks constantly in his path--and with respect to the primaries and the election itself, he felt that he would have to go after his friends again for tremendous sums of money and he was just not about to do that. He referred again to the popular misconception that he desperately wanted the presidency, could not

live without it. He said that we knew the contrary was the fact, that he had never wanted to use the power of the presidency, that he fought against using it. He felt that if he were to take any more of this intolerable burden, it would mean for him a much shorter end to his life. He spoke again of the fact that the men in his family for generations back had a tendency to die of heart attacks around the age of sixty, and here he was just approaching that age. He didn't feel well--he felt that anything could happen to him.

And now he added the argument that if he did not take this step his sincerity in making the speech would be questioned. It would be written off as a political gesture. We asked if he thought the North Vietnamese would respond. On this he was very pessimistic--he did not believe so--but his withdrawal as a candidate would let this country and everybody else know that he meant what he said. And if he rid himself of the burden of being a candidate he would be free to devote himself not only to some movement toward peace in Vietnam but he might be able to remove many of the roadblocks to the solution of other pressing problems. He did not believe it possible for him to be both president and candidate.

He asked me to evaluate the statement of withdrawal and to improve upon it. I told him that this was a labor that I could not undertake. We had been through this before.

It was his practice to go over correspondence, memoranda, and other papers from the various departments at night while taking his massage. This night was no exception. Periodically he would interrupt the conversation by showing me memoranda on the political scene. I remember particularly one item off the ticker in which [Robert] Docking, governor of Kansas, expressed a neutral attitude. I thought that this was a plus, because Docking had, in my book, always been a strong Kennedy supporter. The President took it as a real minus, saying that

Docking had promised to support him very recently in conversations with Marvin Watson and there he was straddling the fence. This to him was a straw in the wind of the kind of race that loomed ahead. He kept saying that sure he felt he could win and would win, but look at all that it would take in money and in energy and he felt, as to the latter, his energy should be directed to the country's problems in these next few months and not to the problems of the primaries.

However, showing me these political memoranda, he asked me to follow up on certain of them in a way which was clearly inconsistent with his announced intention to withdraw.

And so, once again, when this exhausting and frustrating evening was over and Mathilde and I went up to the third floor to go to bed, we said to each other that this time, although it appeared more ominous than ever before, we still did not believe that he would go through with it. We noted, particularly, that, although in prior talks over the past few months Mrs. Johnson had been more or less in favor of withdrawal, this was not her attitude on this particular night, now that the crisis time appeared to be near. She had only said, and he had agreed, that if he was going to withdraw, it should be before the end of March, which would mean now. This was again by reference to the date on which Truman had announced his withdrawal and which seemed the proper time to give other candidates a chance to make the race.

When I got up the next morning and called the kitchen for coffee, I found that the President had left word for me to call him when I awoke. I called the President and he suggested that I come down to his bedroom to have coffee with him. I went down to the bedroom, and to my surprise found the President fully clothed and sitting on the edge of the bed. This was unusual--practically all the other times when I would have breakfast with him, he would be in bed in his pajamas and would work, going over all of his papers and remain in bed while we

were talking. This time, he had apparently gotten up early in order to go to church, and to greet Lynda who had come back from the West Coast early that morning. The two of us remained alone in the bedroom while I had my breakfast and we talked about a number of matters. We talked for about an hour--the President obviously avoiding any renewal of the conversation of the night before about his withdrawal. Although he went into various areas of politics, he didn't go back to his intention to make the withdrawal statement that night. We spoke on a number of personal fronts, particularly in reference to the helicopter which I was going to buy from Bell Aircraft for our mutual use. He wanted to be sure that I could make a good deal with Bell, considerably below their list price, and in order to accomplish this without it appearing that Bell was doing a favor for the President, it was necessary for us to buy a helicopter which already had some hours of use. He called Dale Meeks to give him his ideas about how to proceed with the negotiations. He also tried to call Joe Mashman, but Joe was out; he left word for Joe to call him back.

At the end of an hour or so, around 10:30, Horace Busby came into the bedroom. This to me was the signal that the President was most serious about his withdrawal intention. It was clear to me that Horace was there to do some polishing on the withdrawal statement. Just after Horace came in, Luci and Lyn came in and there was some family talk and then the President said to Horace "I want to see you for a few minutes" and he stepped out of the bedroom with him. Again this was a signal to me because the President obviously didn't want to talk to Horace in my presence in a way that would renew the debate of the night before. He had limited time and he wanted to give Horace his instructions, to tell him what he had in mind. He had limited time, because, as I recall, the particular Mass that he wanted to attend was going to take place at

eleven o'clock and time was pressing. After a few minutes of private talk with Horace, he and Luci went off to church. I went back to our bedroom. Mathilde was awake, she was having some coffee. I told her that things looked bad. I told her that the President was off to church but that Horace was downstairs and in my view, he was working on the words of the withdrawal statement. We then went down to the West Room and sat for a time with Mrs. Johnson. We looked at two television programs--one with Max Taylor and one with George Ball. Both of these programs were very favorable to the administration's position and policy in Vietnam and we thought that this was a good augury and an indication of how the President could really fight through to a successful fulfillment of his policies if he would continue to be the President in the next four years. The President came in, back from church, just in time to see the last ten or fifteen minutes of the Ball program. He said he and Luci had paid the Vice President a visit and he had told him of his intentions. When the program was over, we told him briefly about how Taylor and Ball had both been on the positive side and very strongly and lucidly so. He accepted this without comment and then turned to Mrs. Johnson and said "Well, have you worked on a statement for me?" She apparently had done some work. She took out a statement and started to read it. This was a statement which, in effect, said that he would stay out of politics in the ensuing months, that he had no time for party politics, that he would spend no time on the primaries, that the business of the country would take up all of his time and energies, but her statement fell short of a flat statement that he was going to withdraw as a candidate.

He was rather harsh in his reaction, "Well, if nobody is going to help me draw my statement, then I have got to do it for myself" and at that moment Marie Fehmer came in with a statement. He asked to look at it. This was obviously the statement that Horace Busby had

dictated to her. He read it and it was a clear statement of withdrawal, not quite, but almost in the words that were used later that night. He read it once out loud and said "Let's go in and have lunch."

We went in to lunch. At lunch there were Luci, Horace Busby, Mathilde, Mrs. Johnson, the President and myself. There was a lively debate and an air of great sadness. The debate was, in fact, one between Luci, Mathilde and myself on the one hand and Horace Busby on the other. Mrs. Johnson participated only peripherally, but Luci, Mathilde and I were very vehement about the fact that withdrawal by the President would be abject capitulation and beyond that, he would be an unhappy man in the coming four years as the structure which he had so painstakingly built would be torn apart. Horace was the advocate for withdrawal. Horace stressed the point that the President could not govern in the next four years and that there was no way for him to heal the divisiveness in the country and remain president--that by withdrawing he would make a big contribution toward eliminating the divisiveness and that he could accomplish a lot in the next six or seven months and go down in history as a great president.

The President himself said very little during the luncheon--he left the arguing to Horace. When we spoke of the fact that it would either be Nixon or Kennedy, Horace took the position that we should not be too sure. He felt that events might take a different course. Horace was obviously not only doing the President's bidding, but strongly in favor of the withdrawal decision.

After lunch, the President went into his bedroom for a nap.

At this point, Lynda came out of her bedroom where she had been sleeping since her arrival in the morning. She was still in her nightdress. She was crying hysterically. She

apparently had just heard what the President intended to do. She said to me "You must stop him, somebody must stop him." She had just seen Chuck off to Vietnam the night before and now her father was about to abandon Chuck and all the other soldiers in Vietnam. She felt that he was abandoning all of his policies to those who had fought against him--at the sacrifice of all the boys in Vietnam who would be repudiated. I had never seen her so agitated. I told her we were trying our best to persuade her father but we were pessimistic.

At this point Busby came out of the bedroom where he had been for a few moments with the President. He said the President had asked him to talk to Mathilde and me. He said that the President was very anxious that we understand his reasoning. He spoke of the respect the President had for our opinion and his friendship with us; the President knew how distressed we were and he wanted Buzz to go over all of the ground so that we could see his point of view.

We walked down the main hallway and sat just outside the Lincoln bedroom. We talked in hushed tones for the better part of an hour. Buzz took the position that this was the one step which would bring to the President the kind of respect and recognition to which he was entitled. He said that events had reached the point where if the President were to be re-elected--and he believed he would be--he would not be able to govern and solve the problems of the day--whereas the contemplated step of withdrawal would be widely applauded as a sacrifice on his part to bring people together in the country--also that it would give credibility to the proposal to North Vietnam in his speech. He also said that the President would have nine months in which he would not have to spend his time in politics; he could concentrate on the big issues and accomplish a great deal before he left office. He was referring to Vietnam, accommodation with the Russians, the Middle East, and the surtax. He also felt that the chances were very good that

the new president would not be one antagonistic to President Johnson. He did not think it would be either McCarthy or Kennedy. He felt that if the President had withdrawn before March 13, it might very well have been Kennedy, but now he felt that Kennedy had shown his true colors, not hesitating to divide the party, if it could advance his personal ambition, and that just enough time had elapsed to give him the rope with which to hang himself.

We took the position throughout that the withdrawal was a big mistake. We felt that all the things that Buzz said the President was trying to accomplish by withdrawal could be accomplished without it if he were to take the important steps of de-escalation in Vietnam. We said that this would undoubtedly be the course that would be taken by any other president, only then it would appear to be repudiation of the President's policy, whereas the President could himself be the architect of the same policy. We felt the President could change the temper of the country overnight. We felt that there was nobody else to carry on the programs he had started on all fronts. We believed that the chances were almost inevitable that the next president would constantly repudiate the President and make his life miserable. We did not see him as relaxed or fulfilled in retirement, but on the contrary, fretting under constant attack and powerless to answer adequately. We thought that in the long run this might be much more injurious to his health, and to his state of mind, than if he were to continue with the burden and see some fulfillment of his objectives.

Neither of us persuaded the other.

Busby left the slightest crack in the door. He said he was still not positive the President would add the withdrawal statement to the speech. He had been through similar situations in the past where the President had kept his options open to the last minute and then had done the

unexpected. He felt the President had still not made up his mind irrevocably, but it was almost certain that he would withdraw.

Busby then told us that [Anatoly F.] Dobrynin was coming in to see the President at six to be briefed on the contents of the speech--obviously except for any reference to the withdrawal.

We did not want Dobrynin to run into us when he arrived. We decided to leave the White House for a walk while this meeting was taking place. The cherry blossoms were out and we walked among them. They were beautiful but we were depressed and talked about the chaos we felt this move would create in the Democratic Party and in the country. On the path along the Potomac we ran into Warrie Lynn Smith, Lynda's best friend, and her escort. We exchanged pleasantries. Naturally we said nothing of what was about to happen.

At seven we were back at the White House. Jake Jacobsen had called. I called back. It was about a trip to California that we were planning to make the next week to finalize plans for fundraising events in Los Angeles and San Francisco. I stalled. I told Jake I would talk to him on Monday. Late that night I again talked to Jake. He had just heard the broadcast and said he now understood why I had sounded, as he put it, so uncharacteristically low in the earlier conversation. He had been puzzled--now all was clear.

At seven-thirty Marie Fehmer called. The President wondered if Mathilde and I would like to come to the rehearsal for the speech. We walked over to his office. Outside of the technical crew there were Mrs. Johnson, Jim Jones, Larry Temple, and some of George Christian's staff. The President read through the speech. He did not include the withdrawal statement.

I walked back to the Mansion with the President. I said I hoped he had changed his mind. He said he had not. I then said I hated to contemplate the future. He said "Maybe it will be Rockefeller." He thought that was a real possibility and one which he would not find unpalatable. I said that I supposed there was no point in going ahead with the Quayle polls. He said we should go ahead but on a quick national spot basis.

As soon as we got back to the Mansion I called Quayle and gave him these instructions, so that he could be ready to go first thing in the morning.

Between eight and eight-thirty we gathered in the West Room. Mathilde, Lynda, Luci, now joined by Pat who would soon be going overseas, Mrs. Johnson, Buzz and myself. Pat was obviously downcast, as were all in the room. Even Buzz had begun to feel the contagion of depression. Everybody, now including Buzz, said for me to go into the bedroom and give it a last try. Mathilde urged me on. She felt we might always regret not having made this last plea. So, too, did Mrs. Johnson, Lynda, Luci and Pat. At about eight thirty-five Marvin Watson came in. He, too, was in a low mood. He went into the bedroom. I followed. The President was in his bathroom getting the final touches from his barber. He gave some instructions to Marvin about the calls Marvin and his staff were to make the moment the speech went on the air. These were calls to key friends around the country to tell them what was coming at the end of the speech.

The President walked into the bedroom to put on tie and jacket. It was eight-forty. The speech was to start in his office at nine. Only Marvin and I were present. I said "Mr. President you still have time to change your mind. Everybody outside hopes you will." He was not angry,

as well he might have been, having been through this so often over the weekend. He said simply "Arthur, it's done. There can be no change now. I have just ordered it put on the teleprompter."

At that moment Clark Clifford and Walt Rostow entered the bedroom. I walked out and reported that the decision had been made and was irrevocable. A few minutes later Clark and Walt came out. They had just been told the news and expressed their surprise. So, too, did Marny Clifford and Elspeth Rostow who had remained outside the bedroom and were now hearing the news for the first time. Clark said he had told the President that after what he had been through as president, he was entitled to make this decision and that no one was justified in telling him he had to go on carrying the burdens of the presidency.

At about ten to nine the President came out of the bedroom. Together with Clark Clifford he left for his office. Luci, Pat, Lynda and Mrs. Johnson followed.

Marny, Elspeth, Walt, Mathilde and I stayed behind to watch the program. At nine-thirty, after what had been supposed to be a thirty-minute program, and he had not yet reached his withdrawal statement, I said "I hope they cut him off the air." They did not. The die was cast.

The speech was over. We were looking at NBC. [Edwin] Newman came on as commentator. He was at a loss for words. Finally he said something very complimentary about the President--how this act could only be interpreted as an act of great personal sacrifice, of great statesmanship. Was Busby being proven right this soon?

The President came back. He appeared jubilant. He changed into a sports shirt. Friends began to appear. The telephone kept ringing. Some of the calls the President took in our

presence; others in his bedroom. By ten o'clock there must have been over thirty in the room--cabinet members, other close members of the administration.

Some of us now compared notes for the first time. We had never discussed our conversations with anybody else. Now we learned that he had since last November been having similar conversations with George Christian, John Connally, and Marvin Watson. Christian and Connally had encouraged him to make the move. Watson had been opposed. Christian and Watson both said that until he actually made the statement they were not certain he would do so. He had kept everybody guessing until the last moment.

By midnight all had gone except the President and Mrs. Johnson. We went into the bedroom with them. Both the President and Mrs. Johnson got into bed. We talked for ten or fifteen minutes--just the four of us. He told us of some of the telephone calls. He was more than ever convinced he had done the right thing. He mentioned, particularly, the call from [Richard] Daley. Daley had told him he had made a great sacrifice in the interests of the country and that he would be "drafted" in Chicago. He had promised to go to Chicago the next day to speak at a luncheon.

We told him, now that he had made the decision, we wanted him to know how much we hoped it would bring him happiness and fulfillment. I said I did not want to get into fund raising for any other candidate, and that I would want to stay out of the fight looming ahead in the Democratic Party. He said he wanted me to stay out. I was too closely identified with him and anything I did could be misconstrued as violating his promise to stay out of politics in the months ahead. He said there was much to be done before January, and he would want me to work with him.

At twelve-thirty we said goodnight.

At nine the next morning we left for the airport. We went by the President's bedroom to say goodbye. The door was closed. The light was out. We thought the President was still asleep. In three years of frequent visits to the White House this was the first time we could recall him sleeping this late. We left without saying goodbye.

It had been a long weekend.