

Lucius D. Battle, Oral History Interview – JFK#2, 8/27/1968
Administrative Information

Creator: Lucius D. Battle
Interviewer: Larry J. Hackman
Date of Interview: August 27, 1968
Place of Interview: Washington, D.C.
Length: 36 pages

Biographical Note

Battle worked in the Department of State as special assistant to the Secretary and Executive Secretary (1961-1962), Consul General (1962), and Assistant Secretary of State for Education and Cultural Affairs (1962-1964); he was Ambassador to the United Arab Republic (1964-1967); and chairman of the UNESCO General Conference in Paris (1962). In this interview, Battle discusses the Bureau of Education and Cultural Affairs, including the Inter-Agency Youth Committee and Robert F. Kennedy's involvement in youth affairs, and Battle's efforts to improve the status of the Bureau, among other issues.

Access
Open.

Usage Restrictions

According to the deed of gift signed September 14, 1970, copyright of these materials has been assigned to the United States Government. Restrictions on the use of these materials have expired pursuant to the deed of gift and upon the death of the donor. Users of these materials are advised to determine the copyright status of any document from which they wish to publish.

Copyright

The copyright law of the United States (Title 17, United States Code) governs the making of photocopies or other reproductions of copyrighted material. Under certain conditions specified in the law, libraries and archives are authorized to furnish a photocopy or other reproduction. One of these specified conditions is that the photocopy or reproduction is not to be "used for any purpose other than private study, scholarship, or research." If a user makes a request for, or later uses, a photocopy or reproduction for purposes in excesses of "fair use," that user may be liable for copyright infringement. This institution reserves the right to refuse to accept a copying order if, in its judgment, fulfillment of the order would involve violation of copyright law. The copyright law extends its protection to unpublished works from the moment of creation in a tangible form. Direct your questions concerning copyright to the reference staff.

Transcript of Oral History Interview

These electronic documents were created from transcripts available in the research room of the John F. Kennedy Library. The transcripts were scanned using optical character recognition and the resulting text files were proofread against the original transcripts.

Some formatting changes were made. Page numbers are noted where they would have occurred at the bottoms of the pages of the original transcripts. If researchers have any concerns about accuracy, they are encouraged to visit the Library and consult the transcripts and the interview recordings.

Suggested Citation

Lucius D. Battle, recorded interview by Larry J. Hackman, August 27, 1968, (page number), John F. Kennedy Library Oral History Program.

GENERAL SERVICES ADMINISTRATION
NATIONAL ARCHIVES AND RECORDS SERVICE

Gift of Personal Statement

By Lucius D. Battle

to the

John Fitzgerald Kennedy Library

In accordance with Sec. 507 of the Federal Property and Administrative Services Act of 1949, as amended (44 U.S.C. 397) and regulations issued thereunder (41 CFR 101-10), I, Lucius D. Battle, hereinafter referred to as the donor, hereby give, donate, and convey to the United States of America for eventual deposit in the proposed John Fitzgerald Kennedy Library, and for administration therein by the authorities thereof, a tape and transcript of a personal statement approved by me and prepared for the purpose of deposit in the John Fitzgerald Kennedy Library. The gift of this material is made subject to the following terms and conditions:

1. Title to the material transferred hereunder will pass to the United States as of the date of the delivery of this material into the physical custody of the Archivist of the United States.

2. It is the donor's wish to make the material donated to the United States of America by the terms of the instrument available for research in the John Fitzgerald Kennedy Library. At the same time, it is his wish to guard against the possibility of its contents being used to embarrass, damage, injure, or harass anyone. Therefore, in pursuance of this objective, and in accordance with the provisions of Sec. 507 (f) (3) of the Federal Property and Administrative Services Act of 1949, as amended (44 U.S.C. 397) this material shall not,

for a period of seven (7) years,

be available for examination by anyone except persons who have received my express written authorization to examine it.

This restriction shall not apply to employees and officers of the General Services Administration (including the National Archives and Records Service and the John Fitzgerald Kennedy Library) engaged in performing normal archival work processes.

3. A revision of this stipulation governing access to the material for research may be entered into between the donor and the Archivist of the United States, or his designee, if it appears desirable.

4. The material donated to the United States pursuant to the foregoing shall be kept intact permanently in the John Fitzgerald Kennedy Library.

5. The donor retains to himself for a period of ten (10) years all literary property rights in the material donated to the United States of America by the terms of the instrument. After the expiration of this ten year period, the aforesaid literary property rights will pass to the United States of America.

Signed Lawrence S. Battelle
Date Sept 3, 1970
Accepted James B. Rhoads
Archivist of the United States
Date September 14, 1970

Lucius D. Battle – JFK#2

Table of Contents

<u>Page</u>	<u>Topic</u>
44	Purview of the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs
45, 51	Inter-Agency Youth Committee and Robert F. Kennedy
50	Interactions between the Department of Defense and the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs
54	Inter-Agency Youth Committee before Battle joined
57	Interactions between the Special Group for Counter Insurgency, the CIA, and the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs
62	Participation of ambassadors in Battle's programs
63	Departure of Philip H. Coombs, Battle's predecessor
65	Reorganizing the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs
72	Disagreements with Edward R. Murrow over the U.S. absorbing more African students
74	Battle's interactions with Congress
77	Appropriations in U.S. versus foreign currency
79	Project to save the Abu Simbel temples in Egypt

Second of Three Oral History interviews

with

Lucius D. Battle

August 27, 1968
Washington, D.C.

By Larry J. Hackman

For the John F. Kennedy Library

HACKMAN: Why don't you just start off by explaining how you went to CU [Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs] in '62 from the Executive Secretary spot?

BATTLE: Well, as I recall, Phil Coombs [Philip H. Coombs] got into some difficulties in the Congress—with some other groups also, but primarily with the Congress—and the Department was looking for a replacement. I was on the verge of being reassigned at that stage—at least it was under consideration. There had been various ambassadorships mentioned for me. The possibility of my taking that position came up, and I said it was one that would interest me very greatly. I took the job and, I think in all honesty, had it in one of the best possible periods in which anyone could have been in charge of Educational and Cultural Affairs. The President [John F. Kennedy] and Mrs. Kennedy [Jacqueline Bouvier Kennedy] were deeply interested in the whole subject and so was Bobby Kennedy [Robert F. Kennedy]. So there was, I think, a kind of top level support at a time when there was greater interest in both education and culture than we've had in our country for a long period.

Just before it was about to be announced, I recall that George Ball [George W. Ball] asked me if I wouldn't prefer to be Deputy Under Secretary for Administration, which was also open. And I said that I did not prefer that one, that I much preferred being in charge of Educational and Cultural Affairs and expressed the strong hope that they would let me go on through with that assignment, even though they were having trouble filling the job of Deputy Under Secretary for Administration, a job I have never wanted, and have been approached about two or three times. The Cultural Affairs job suited me superbly well. It represented a kind of merger of my hobbies and my career in a nice sort of way, and I had a great many friends in the educational world and the cultural world and the foundation world. I have had a great many interesting assignments in government over my life, but I think none has been more pleasing to me than that one was.

From the very beginning, Bobby Kennedy took a very special interest in what I was doing. He had come back from a trip to Latin America and the Far East deeply concerned about what he felt to be a failure on the part of the United States to reach the youth of the world. Shortly after I took over that job, we created an Inter-Agency Youth Committee of which I was the chairman. Bobby used to come to virtually all the meetings of that committee. He was a very strong force in what we were doing; very interested; stirred up things and, I thought, very usefully; at times a little difficult, but essentially a very good force for what needed to be done at that particular time.

We tried to interject into all of the going programs—and there were a vast number of them.... For example, the Defense Department had the largest exchange program that existed in government. And under the Military Assistance program, a great many officers and, for that matter, enlisted men from many countries around the world were coming in to the United States for training. But they were getting essentially military training and nothing more. Bobby got very interested in this and urged that we try to—I urged him a little bit on the side, incidentally, that we try to make that program more than just a military training program and inform them of our society, the nature of our government, the way we operated; to see that they came to

[-45-]

Washington, that they were exposed to meetings and conversations with various senior people in government.

He gave very generously of his time. I cannot recall any time I ever asked him to do anything that he didn't do. He was extremely helpful in receiving groups of students, in participating in anything that we asked him to do. And there was never a limit and never any effort to hold back because of schedule. He would call me, and I talked to Bobby Kennedy—it's rather interesting because he was then Attorney General, as you know—but I talked to him several times a week during the two and a half years that I held that job, and I had meetings with him every couple of weeks of one sort or another. And this was a purely sort of peripheral activity for him. It wasn't anything that was in the line of his duties or his required activity. And he was, of course, advising the President on a wide variety of activity. But he always had time for the educational and cultural program, and he gave a very useful boost to the activities that we were engaged in.

The President and Mrs. Kennedy also evidenced a great deal of interest. Mrs. Kennedy rarely involved herself directly in the program, but she would occasionally send me suggestions and ideas and thoughts, either via Tish Baldrige [Letitia Baldrige] or one of the other people around the White House, Arthur Schlesinger [Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr.], or one of the other groups around the White House. And she followed what we did and participated.

The President also. He would occasionally call me—and this was fairly rare before the Kennedy era, for the President to call a lowly assistant secretary. But he called and was interested and would talk and obviously followed what was going on and wanted to know about it. I didn't see a great deal of him during that period, but I saw him on many occasions. I attended a lot of the social functions given at the White House in that period, relative particularly to cultural events and the cultural programs.

[-46-]

HACKMAN: Let me ask you about the Inter-Agency Youth Group. How did this get set up, and who else was on it from the other departments?

BATTLE: Well, it started, actually, shortly before I came into office, but the beginning had not been very satisfactory. The two or three sessions that had been held had been attended both by Sarge Shriver [R. Sargent Shriver, Jr.] and by Bobby Kennedy, and I think there was a general dissatisfaction, on the part of both of them, with the Department of State. The people who were concerned with it at that time did not, in their judgment, have the kind of energy and vigor that they felt the program needed.

I don't even think I had been sworn in when I suddenly found myself chairman of this new and rather large committee. The committee consisted—I was chairman because of the position I held, even though I was not necessarily the senior person present. Ed Murrow [Edward R. Murrow] came fairly frequently; Ed Katzenbach, Nick's [Nicholas deB. Katzenbach] brother, came for the Defense Department. Norman Paul came for the Defense Department, also. I can't think of his name—I saw him recently; worked in the Peace Corps and ran for the Congress in New York.

HACKMAN: Haddad. William Haddad [William Frederick Haddad].

BATTLE: Bill Haddad, yes. And he came for Sarge Shriver, was somewhat less frequent in his attendance than Bob was. And then we brought in various assistant secretaries for geographic areas of the Department at such time as we were considering the problems involving any particular area. There was a great deal of emphasis at that period on Latin America. And I recall that we spent a great deal of time on Latin American and Far East projects.

[-47-]

But I created an office in the Assistant Secretary's office to staff the youth committee. Bobby Kennedy was very interested in finding the people to staff that little group and, in fact,

sent over a couple of people who ended up working for me and who worked with me during that entire period. And one of them is still in it. But I think that shows the details with which Bob followed what went on in that particular activity.

AID [Agency for International Development] was represented, and all the agencies participated rather fully. The meetings were, oh, once every two or three weeks; no less frequent than that, and on occasion more frequently than that.

But Bobby was very active. There were times I had a little trouble getting him to read the papers that were circulated to the committee, and he had a general tendency to sort of react to what he thought were the problems and issues, regardless of the degree of staffing or work that had been done, but he had a very real sense of direction and purpose, and his instincts were remarkably good. And of course this was an area in which he was very, very active, and continued throughout his life to be active. I thoroughly enjoyed my association with him in that period. He would call over and ask—very frequently he would call me about things that were somewhat out of my own area of responsibility, and clearly cut of his, but we would talk about things.

HACKMAN: Can you give me some examples of that?

BATTLE: One thing comes to mind: he had written this book called *Just Friends and Brave Enemies*, I think it is, and he wanted to know what to do with his royalties on that. We talked about how to handle that. He would call over about informational issues where he felt that the line the United States was following on a specific issue.... this really had nothing to do particularly with me; but he would call over and we would talk about this sort of thing. I tried never to play around with other people's business; on the other hand, I gave him a personal opinion when he wanted it. And he did constantly pursue the general range....

[-48-]

In fact, he took comparatively little interest in the cultural things. He wasn't interested in the performing arts, particularly. He didn't care about that. The President and Mrs. Kennedy were much more interested in that than he was. I don't recall that he ever took any particular part in that. It was largely in youth, in exchange programs, in trying to make the military and the AID programs responsible to the political needs of our country at the time; it was in this realm that he was willing to give both time and thought. And he would send over a good deal of correspondence. He got a lot of mail from students and young people all around the world that he would often send over, and with little handwritten notes. It always surprised me that he had time for this.

At the very beginning, because I hadn't known him, really—I had met him, but I didn't really know him—I tried very hard to overcome the very strong belief that he had about the Foreign Service and the Department of State. And I remember in one of my first meetings with him—I'd only been in that job for about ten days, and he'd already sent me three or four papers. And I always had my reactions back to him within twenty-four hours. I would do whatever had to be done, and I'd send it back over there by special messenger. And he said to me once, he said, "You surprise me." And I said, "Why?" He said, "Well, I send

you something, and I get it back in the next mail.” And he said, “The rest of that place you work in takes a month or six weeks, or I never hear. But when I send anything to you I get it right back.” I said, “Well, you're going to continue to.” And we had a very good relationship. He was extremely critical, but he was also very thoughtful and very kind, a complex person, a very interesting personality. I remember when I became Ambassador to Cairo—this was some months after the assassination of President Kennedy—I was having a swearing-in, as we all do, and you make up a list and people are invited. I thought of inviting him to come, and I decided it was rather presumptuous of me to ask the Attorney General—even though I had known him quite well—particularly when the President's death had been only a few months before. But he sent over Nolan [John E. Nolan]—what's his first name?—who worked with him. I can't think of it.

[-49-]

HACKMAN: John Nolan?

BATTLE: John. I couldn't think of it. John Nolan. John came over with a little handwritten note, from Bobby, in effect, saying, “I wasn't invited to your swearing in, but I was coming anyway until a few minutes ago.” And, “I've been called to the Cabinet. But I send John and very good wishes to you,” something along that line. But it was a little handwritten note, which I felt was extremely thoughtful of him.

You know, on the one hand, he was quite capable of beating on you if you deserved it, but he did some very nice things, and had a very thoughtful touch. And he was a person who, I think, developed very strong loyalties and feelings in those around him, as, I am sure, you know better than I.

HACKMAN: What kind of a reaction did you get from the Department of Defense and from the military people on the ideas that you were putting forward on the framework...

BATTLE: Well, initially, very bad. We had a terrible period. Bob called McNamara [Robert S. McNamara], and we had—we went around and around on this with him. The Defense Department, from a legislative point of view, had a legitimate point. They took the position that the programs that they were responsible for were essentially designed to train people in the use of military equipment; that they were possible only where there existed a military assistance arrangement with another country; that their function was to train people in the handling of that equipment that was provided under the military assistance program, either by grant or by sale; that that was the function, period; and that for them to do anything more than that was going beyond what they felt to be the intent of Congress and also was spending money in a way that had not been intended.

[-50-]

Bit by bit they gave in on this and began to develop programs at the various major installations around the country in which the foreign trainees were present. We sent lecturers to them. They arranged, through these various programs, local hospitality and local discussion groups and, more importantly, they, I think, arranged for them to come to Washington as part of their tour in the States. And they would be here for a few days. My recollection—I'm not sure this is accurate, but it isn't far off—is that there were some seventeen thousand individuals a year under the military assistance programs at that particular time; as I said, by far the largest of any of the exchange programs under any program. And about at the end of the time I was in Cultural Affairs, approximately one third of those groups were coming through here and spending a day or two meeting with State Department people, members of the Congress, Bob Kennedy, others who would take part in it.

He was very helpful in getting people to join in and to take time, and on occasion, he would call up and suggest people. He also took a very active interest in the American specialists we sent abroad. We had a program—it still exists although it's been cut back, unfortunately—for sending various people in the field of athletics or politics or culture, writing, whatever, abroad as lecturers. And he tried to help me, both in selecting those people he thought would be good and also in getting some of them to participate, and frequently, without fee.

While he was not particularly interested in performing arts per se, he knew a number of the people in the movie world. I remember he got Gene Kelly, for example, to do a tour for us, free of charge—we paid travel expenses and no more—in which Gene did a lecture on the history of the dance in our society, which showed films, excerpts from a lot of his old pictures. Gene was bilingual in French, and we used him in Africa, French Africa, and he was a great success. He got two or three other people. I don't recall how active a part—but he suggested them. I know Kirk Douglas was one, and there were others that he helped us arrange through personal relationships that he had with the individual concerned. And he got several of them to pitch in; but also, other figures in the realm of sports and other activity.

[-51-]

So he took a very active part in all of this, and there was no particular public knowledge of this. There were occasionally little squibs in the paper that he was interested in, that sort of thing. Of course, he wrote about it, but it was all sort of extracurricular with him, and he didn't appear to have any particular desire to have anyone know he was doing it. We in government knew it, but it was not a public thing at all. It was all done behind the scene and I, as I started to say, quietly, but it wasn't done too quietly. But it was all behind the scenes. But he was very good; he was very active in this.

HACKMAN: You had mentioned that in the Inter-Agency Youth Group that in some cases he had to prod people to action. Can you go into that a little more?

BATTLE: Well, I was thinking, particularly—the two cases that I recall most vividly were the one I mentioned on the military, where he got very

cross with Norman Paul, I guess it was, and Ed Katzenbach; and then subsequently with AID because he felt that they were not using the Manpower Resources program in a way that related to the political needs of the United States at that particular time. And he gave them a couple of bad times at a couple of meetings when he was fairly rough on both of them. A lot of people were very scared of Bobby. I always dealt with him with care. I never felt any fear of him at all, and I thoroughly enjoyed him. It was, for me, a very rewarding relationship.

But he would come all the time. Jim Symington [James W. Symington] used to come to a number of those meetings, too. We would occasionally pick up other people around town that were interested in one or another facet or one or another little direction in which Bob had shown an interest; they would come to meetings.

[-52-]

It was a very vigorous committee, I must say; it was a very vigorous committee and a very active one. It still goes on. I have nothing particularly to do with it now although I follow it in a peripheral kind of way. I think it anticipated, in a very real sense, some of the problems that we have seen both in our own country and in many countries abroad: the student unrest, the role of the young in politics, not only in our country, but elsewhere. He showed, I think at a very early stage, a great awareness of the importance of this and of those things to come that were going to be very difficult for all of us. But he was quite useful.

HACKMAN: Speaking of AID, was the dissatisfaction there across the board, or was it primarily with Latin America? I have heard that he didn't have a great deal of confidence in Moscoso [Teodoro Moscoso], who was handling the Latin American program at that point.

BATTLE: I always had that impression although I also thought that he had been one who'd been instrumental in getting Ted into that job, and I was never sure to what extent there was a problem. I heard these rumors, this gossip. The focus of his interest, originally, in the youth program, came as a result, as I said, of his trip—he talks about this a good deal in his book—therefore, it was centered heavily on Latin America.

I recall a visit I made to Central University in Caracas, Venezuela, where we began to apply—and I remember talking about this in one of the meetings. He showed a particular interest in this case. I had been down to Caracas, and the situation at Central University was very bad indeed. There had been all sorts of student problems. One of the dormitories was called Chicago, and the other was called Stalingrad, which gives you some notion of the lineup of opinion on it. In fact, both of them were small arsenals of equipment, military equipment, hand grenades and what have you. But we had had only one or two American students, badly selected, without any relationship to political needs.

[-53-]

I remember going down there that we were all concerned, and he raised the problem, originally. We selected several students to go down, not with a view towards their course of study, particularly, but with a view—and, actually, I selected them from a group of people who had been rejected by the selection mechanism. I said, “Let us find those who speak the language, who have a real interest in the country and a special reason for wanting to go to that country, and who are outgoing, typically American and who can survive in a situation in which they're going to have a pretty rugged life.” So we selected about four or five, specially selected, tailored, for that particular institution.

This was opposed by a lot of my colleagues in Cultural Affairs at that time because it was selection on the basis of other than academic qualifications or academic pursuit. They were all perfectly good students. They were not, perhaps, Phi Beta Kappas, but they had a special reason—I've forgotten what their course of study was, but it related either to the study of the language or to the study of the country or a special interest in the Caribbean, for example, something of that sort. But they were selected because they were a combination of Spanish-speaking, athletically inclined, outgoing, young people who could fit into that particular situation. They were huge successes. We then began to do this a good deal more. This all started under the youth committee. This is where we sort of changed the direction of some of the selection process to find people who fitted into a political requirement rather than being selected purely on the basis of academic achievement or academic pursuit. That was the kind of thing that we were doing.

HACKMAN: You had talked about, in the very early stages of that committee, before you had come on, that there was some dissatisfaction. Had Alex Johnson [U. Alexis Johnson] been working on that over here or who had been...

[-54-]

BATTLE: Well, Ted Achilles [Theodore Carter Achilles] was working on it, primarily.

HACKMAN: Oh, I didn't realize that.

BATTLE: For a short time it was sort of under the aegis of Alex Johnson, but he had not played a very active role. Ted Achilles had been involved in it, and it was heavily oriented to Latin America at that particular point. Its creation came at a time where the relationships between the Administration and the Department and to an even greater extent, the Administration and CIA, were at their lowest point because of the Bay of Pigs incident. And Bobby showed a very strong feeling that we who were over here were not really—and he was right—in tune with what was happening.

No one denied that the Bay of Pigs was a disaster and that the fault of that was.... Well, the President accepted full responsibility, which I thought in the ultimate sense was certainly right, but there was enough fault to go around in a very real way. I had nothing to do with it, really, at the time it occurred, but I was present enough at the fallout and the

aftermath to have a pretty good sense of what had gone wrong. I was at that period in the Secretariat and not Cultural Affairs.

But it was in that little interval that the emphasis on youth, as it was first called, began. And it was an effort to try to cultivate acquaintance and knowledge and influence on, not necessarily the current government in any given country, but the government after next, as we used to call it. In other words, it was a longer view of the political structure of a country. It was a view toward where power would fall and rest and on what group and in what political context a few years ahead of us. So it was aimed at, not necessarily influence on existing power structures and existing governments, but on, as I said, the government after next, as we used to call it.

[-55-]

HACKMAN: I had heard that Doug Cater [S. Douglass Cater, Jr.] —and I had seen C.D. Jackson's name mentioned as coming down and doing some work on this. Do you remember getting involved with them at all?

BATTLE: No. Doug, perhaps. I don't know. I knew Doug was in and out. I don't think he had actually—he came to government, actually I think, a little bit later.

HACKMAN: I think he just came down for a...

BATTLE: He came down a couple of times on a short term and looked at projects. C.D. Jackson and others came in and looked at—this is before my involvement with it. I don't recall that C.D. Jackson was involved in any way at the time that I was associated with the youth committee. But he and several others, public relations people, came down for sessions that lasted a half day or so, perhaps even longer, on the application of public relations. I remember they got Earl Newson to come here. He volunteered for that. Several of them came down from New York and participated.

And Bobby was instrumental in stirring this up in ways in which the American posture—I don't like the word image, but that word does describe perhaps what we're talking about—how this could be advanced abroad in a more successful manner than it had been up until then. I think he, C.D. Jackson, did participate in one or two but they were not, as I remember it—I may be wrong, and perhaps he had had other involvements; you will undoubtedly want to check this with others—but my recollection is that these were ad hoc momentary studies and queries into specific problems rather than a continuing kind of operating arrangement such as the youth committee became.

[-56-]

HACKMAN: Did Maxwell Taylor [Maxwell D. Taylor] get at all involved after you took this operation over?

BATTLE: Yes, he did, to a degree. The Special Group for CI [Counter Insurgency] was created, and Max Taylor was in that; Averell Harriman [William Averell Harriman], David Bell [David E. Bell], others. I would have to check the membership. I used to appear before that group from time to time. They would have a session on youth once in a while, and I would give them a report on what we were doing. I remember going over with a big black notebook with a program for each country in the world, the responsibility for which rested in the geographic bureaus, but it was coordinated, pulled together, and spurred on by the youth committee and by Educational and Cultural Affairs.

But I would go over and give them a report on a specific country's situation, and they would ask questions. They were interested in certain areas; again, perhaps more in Latin American and the Far East, which were the rather sexy areas at that particular time, and everybody was watching them. They would have me come over and report from time to time. And once in a while Averell and Max and others would get involved in some little facet of it, but this was not, of course, their basic function.

We did work into the CI program, the Counter Insurgency course, a couple of lectures on youth. I used to go over and lecture each class on the subject of the youth program and on ways in which the approach could be related to their projected assignments. And the special group followed that course and also followed the program itself so that in both contexts the youth work would pop up from time to time.

The staff—I had a small staff working on youth. Jerry Sheean, a girl, actually, who was sent to me by Bobby Kennedy, and Marty McLaughlin. They were both referred to me by Bobby, and in both instances they worked out extremely well. He sent over two or three people that he thought I ought to talk with for various reasons. I remember he sent Anne Chamberlain over to see me at one point about working on this. That didn't work. She did not want the kind of job that was involved. She wanted to pop in and out

[-57-]

from time to time; but she didn't want an eight hour day and to be involved regularly and continuously on anything. Very interesting girl. I've known her slightly for some years. But Jerry and Marty both worked out very well, and both had a basic interest and both continued in the youth work—Jerry still does. Marty is gone now, but Jerry is still involved. And that started with Bobby.

HACKMAN: How did the people on your group react to the ideas that the CIA was present as a member of this group? And vice versa, how, did the CIA react?

BATTLE: Well, the CIA took a comparatively minor role in the youth work. I was deeply concerned about a number of things that were going on, at that stage, that pointed to problems ahead of us. The CIA took a very little role in the youth committee per se. They were active in a lot of things that were peripheral to the Educational and Cultural program.

I remember becoming deeply involved—this will have to be very carefully classified, but I'll say it. During the first six weeks that I was an Assistant Secretary for Educational and Cultural Affairs, I would guess that at least fifteen people came to me and said that the African American Institute [AAI] was CIA financed, mixed up in the colleges and universities, that this was going to blow up, and it was only a question of time before this became exposed, became public knowledge.

I recall that I set up an inter-agency meeting of all those concerned, USIA [United States Information Agency] and AID and CIA and the several agencies to analyze what AAI did for us. Did it perform a useful role? And the answer on all sides was yes. Should it be continued? The answer was yes. Had it been—its cover, the fact that CIA had to put money into it... It was not a subversive group, and of course many of these groups were not. Had it been sufficiently exposed to create dangers for us? We concluded that it hadn't, that the exposure of the financing had come primarily within the United States rather than abroad, that while there may be some suspicions, there were very few, very few real exposures that would be a problem. We then

[-58-]

worked out a way by which CIA terminated its relationship with that organization. And the rest of us picked it up by contract—Peace Corps, AID, USIA, Cultural Affairs, all of us, putting money in—by contracting for them to do what other organizations would do. And CIA got out of it. It was very happy to do so. It was, thank God, a blessing. Once the CIA was no longer involved, some of the foundations were willing to come into it. We worked out of the problem in a way that would probably not have been possible for some of the other groups that caused problems later. It did help to keep that organization free of any taint that it was an intelligence gathering group.

I remember that rather deep involvement. There were other similar kinds of things. We talked about applying this more broadly. I remember the American Friends of the Middle East was coming under this similar kind of fire. This was '64. You see, this was several years before the problem really got in the press here and became a major difficulty.

I remember NEA [Bureau of Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs; asked me if I could do the same thing for AFME [American Friends of the Middle East], and I said that I felt that it would be difficult to do, that it wasn't entirely impossible, but that it would take a good deal of work and more money than I could see available at that particular time around town to keep that one going. I agreed to take another look at AFME and see whether it could be financed by contracting for services from government, and that this was a possible direction in which AFME and other groups could go. But unfortunately, I left and nothing ever happened. I went to Cairo and the project sort of died. But AAI came out scot-free and clean of any problem and looking ahead to it, I think, that did it.

HACKMAN: How did CIA usually react? Were they cooperative as in the case of AAI, or were they the other way around?

[-59-]

BATTLE: Well, it varied. There were times when I had problems with them, and

we had very strong differences of opinion. I felt that the risks to many of my programs by any CIA involvement was so great that they were going to absolutely finish the programs if CIA got involved in it. I simply would not permit them to get involved in some ways that they would have liked. I had some strong words with them from time to time, but I wouldn't say they were uncooperative. You know, they, at times, wanted to go over my head to get various things done. I said, "Well, you just go right on over my head anywhere you want to, but as long as I'm in this office, you aren't going to change the policy." I would have resigned first. That settled it.

There were times when we had that kind of problem, but, I think, gradually they came to recognize that I wasn't opposed to CIA, I just believed in controlling its activities and the span of its activities, and that they had to be limited if you were going to protect the Agency from itself. My relations with them have been very good over the last several years. I had some problems in Egypt, but I haven't had any problems here. So I don't really believe that.... I think if you take a firm line and a reasonable point of view that is not inconsistent with the basic purpose that we have on any course, I don't find them at all impossible to deal with.

HACKMAN: Can you remember anything coming up in that area between the Peace Corps people and between the CIA people? Shriver and Haddad?

BATTLE: Yes, yes. I recall a few instances where it did. Sarge and Bill Haddad were very, very firm that the CIA was not to involve itself in the Peace Corps. And it didn't. I remember a couple of times the Agency said to me, "Well, you know, you're more difficult than the Peace Corps." They would try to draw comparisons when I wouldn't let them do something they wanted to do. So Sarge and I, we talked about this a couple of times. We took similar views that if you began to turn this into an intelligence structure that you would, in time, destroy the validity of the program.

[-60-]

And I don't blame CIA for all the problems that existed with these sort of quasi-governmental things. What was wrong was that they were—the Agency—able to get the money, and nobody else could get it. If I'd gone out for direct grants to some of the things that they were able to support it would have been impossible to justify it before the Congress. So we turned to CIA. It was the fault of all of us and not just the fault of CIA. But like anything of this sort, once you begin it, it becomes hard to contain it and the pressure to do more and more and more and more becomes very great.

HACKMAN: Did the President ever get in on any of this, any disputes between CIA and your group, or the Peace Corps, that you know of?

BATTLE: Not that I was directly involved in. I remember one small instance. I had lunch with Dick Helms [Richard Helms] one day and he told me, in respect to a matter I was opposed to, that the President and Bobby were in favor of it. And I said, "Well, I don't care what they think; I expect to be heard." I

don't remember the outcome of it. Whatever it was I considered it rather dangerous. It had to do with the Fulbright [J. William Fulbright] program, but I don't remember what the issue was. I only remember that Dick and Cord Meyer [Cord Meyer, Jr.], with whom I lunched, remarked to me that the President and Bobby Kennedy, they felt, were for it and that Fulbright was aware of it. And I said nevertheless, I did not. And that's all I remember of that. I don't recall the issue or why we were discussing it. I'm sure the President was involved from time to time although I would not necessarily—it would have been taken up through different channels.

HACKMAN: Did Secretary Rusk [Dean Rusk] have any great interest in the operation of this committee or any time to give to it at all?

[-61-]

BATTLE: Yes, to some extent. Bobby never felt he put enough time on it, but he had other things that were more immediate, obviously. I used to brief him from time to time, particularly when he was about to see Bobby on other things. I would always see that he was informed on the youth committee activity which.... And he signed several letters to the field expressing his own support and endorsement for the activity. He followed it in a general way. So did Averell and George McGhee, who for a time was Under Secretary. George and Averell were both in that slot at that particular time. George Ball took no particular part in it. The other two, the other Under Secretary and the Secretary at various times did. Averell and George, more than Dean Rusk.

HACKMAN: What response did you get from the field staffs, the ambassadors and their staffs, on this? Was it a continuing problem?

BATTLE: It varied by ambassador, and it varied by staff. In some instances it was enthusiastic. In others, they paid lip service to a program that obviously had a lot of high level attention back here in Washington. Some of them were very conscientious about it. Others were not. There was always, I think, a bit more going on before we ever began the youth committee than the youth committee recognized. There were many exchange programs that were consistent with what the purposes of the committee were. Some of the ambassadors and some of their staffs could not see what there was new about it. It was a matter of emphasis and approach as much as it was new programs. Some of them participated very vigorously and very enthusiastically; others felt it was not applicable.

In some instances they felt, and they were right, that there were countries in which it was quite dangerous to try to appeal to the youth of the country, that it would be misunderstood by the government in power. It would be considered an effort to challenge their authority and an effort to subvert the youth of that country. This is why I kept arguing throughout all this that we could not have a general rule. We could have an overall policy and a sense of direction, but that in each instance, the activities had to

[-62-]

be tailored to the individual country, to the nature of the government, to the relationship that we had with that country and to what the traffic would bear.

For example, it would have been impossible to do very much in Egypt because we were not permitted the kind of contact... I was rather surprised, during the time I was serving in Egypt, by how little contact I could ever have, for example, with student groups. It was very rare that a foreigner, particularly a foreign ambassador, was invited to lecture at the Cairo University. We could go to the American University with no problem, but to go to any of the Egyptian institutions was very rare indeed. In fact, I think only once, as interested as I was in this activity, only once was I able to get a program on the campus of Cairo University and that was built around the presence of a jazz band, which is rather interesting.

HACKMAN: All right then, going back to something else. You mentioned at the very beginning that Mr. Coombs had some problems with Congress. Was this primarily with Mr. Rooney [John James Rooney] or was it...

BATTLE: Well, it was primarily Rooney, yes. Phil—I'm very fond of Phil. I think his difficulties were congressional and his difficulties were that—he had many good qualities—that he had tried to divorce himself from the operations of the largest operation in the building and the largest program in the building by far. He felt that he could make broad policy and that he did not have responsibility for the operations.

The operations were the thing that there were really causing the problem with the Congress because there were so many difficulties with it that were potentially explosive, that if the operation was not seized upon and redirected and tightened up, this was going to blow up in his face. And that's really what happened with Rooney. While the trouble centered around Rooney, I don't think it was entirely Rooney. But I think really it was Phil Coombs' approach to the problem. He wanted to separate his office from the operations entirely, to have nothing to do with the operations. Well, in theory it may sound all right; in practice it wasn't because he was legally responsible for what went on in the Bureau in an operating sense. And this really was rather defeating.

[-63-]

HACKMAN: Did the move for his departure come from within the Department, or was it from the White House primarily?

BATTLE: I can't honestly tell you that I knew. I remember hearing about it in the beginning, and I didn't even know that—at that stage I had no idea that I would be taking the job. My recollection is that there was a call to George Ball from the Hill and also from the White House. The White House and George Ball got together and decided something had to be done, and it came shortly thereafter. That's my recollection. I couldn't pinpoint it and didn't try and was always very careful. I've said more on this tape about the background of this than I've ever said before, simply because I don't

believe in taking over an office and tearing your predecessor apart. It doesn't do any good and....

But those were the nubs of the problems. Phil was a rather academic fellow in his approach and in his manner, and he tended, I think, to lecture to congressional committees in a way that didn't go over very well. But all these things were part of it. It was a combination of the approach that I mentioned, plus an enormously increased budget request, which had no chance of getting through against a background of an operating program that left a good deal to be desired—as I found out after I got into it myself. The combination of a request for an increase and an operating structure that wasn't really adequate for the arrangement, plus the absence of anyone taking a firm hand with it; I think those were the things that caused the difficulty.

HACKMAN: After he left, I know he continued to write and speak. Did this create any particular problems for you with constituent groups in this field?

[-64-]

BATTLE: No, I refused to let it. The only thing that he did do is he wrote a long sort of last report in which he tried to suggest that a whole series of things that he wanted to do, had been done. In other words, he made no distinction between the direction he wanted to go in and what had been accomplished. To have read it, one would have thought there were no problems at all, and there were a great many problems. I have no argument with what he stated as goal, but to state it as accomplished fact was quite a distortion of truth.

He hung around for quite a little while and worked. I told him that I was going to have to do a number of things that he wasn't going to like, and that it was going to be difficult for him. He stayed for several weeks thereafter as a consultant working on this report and a few other things he was cleaning up. I have not seen much of Phil in the years since. We've always had a perfectly good personal relationship, and I had nothing to do with his departure. I dealt with the program as I saw it, and that was it.

HACKMAN: At the time you came in there was a geographical reorganization going on.

BATTLE: Well, I did that geographic reorganization.

HACKMAN: You put this in after you came in?

BATTLE: Yes, the plan had been developed. Actually, there had been several plans for making the organization conform to the geographic pattern of the rest of the Department. A plan existed. In fact, there'd been plans over the years to do this. But I remember on a Saturday afternoon we had a long session with the staff. It was my first meeting with the staff. I was briefed on this particular plan's development before I came in. I changed it a bit, not drastically, but to some extent rewrote part of it, and then we put it into effect, oh, two or three months later. My recollection is that

the geographic—I came in April or May, and the geographic reorganization took place in the middle of the summer.

[-65-]

HACKMAN: Any particular problems in putting this through, and did it...

BATTLE: Yes. It took time to shake down. There were fewer than I thought there would be. The Bureau had a rather second class status when I took it over. It was not regarded in the Department as a hot assignment, to be assigned to Cultural Affairs. I made up my mind that I was going to get my share of the good people and my share of the space in this building and my share of promotions and my share of anything else that went on around here. And I did.

The Bureau was all in temporary buildings, horrible quarters. And as we reorganized it—I guess the move actually to this building came a little bit later. It seems to me it was about October of that year. But we moved the whole four hundred people over here, and four hundred people had to get out of this building. That caused some rather great strains for me around the building, but I didn't really care. At any rate, the four hundred people got moved out and my four hundred got moved in, and they stayed here as long as I was here. They then gradually began to be moved out again, and they're pretty well out now. I also had a rule that no person over a certain level—I've forgotten what level it was—was to be assigned to my Bureau without my personal permission, and that I had to be informed of any assignment, and I had to see what it was. I kept statistics on promotions. We began to catch up. Very few people got promoted in CU in the early days, and I tried to watch to see how many of our people got promoted to see that—that's the only way you can get.... If it's a graveyard, no good people want to come into it. I got some very good people coming in. It worked out very, very well.

[-66-]

I also felt rather strongly that ambassadors—I remember talking at length to George Ball about this actually before I took CU. If we were able to bring in from the outside ambassadors who've specialized in economics or information or newspaper work, for example, or cultural endeavor, that there's no reason to believe that people from within government, from the career service, who've emphasized those facets of life in their careers, shouldn't be ambassadors too. If you were going to have an Ed Reischauer [Edwin Oldfather Reischauer] coming in from the outside as a man who's essentially a cultural figure, why not from within? We have had many newspaper people or economists who came in as ambassadors; why was it not possible to bring people from USIA, from the economic side and from cultural?

If you ever had any chance of strengthening those functional bureaus of the Department, you had to give them a sense that there was somewhere to go and that they could reach the top even though they were specializing in something a wee bit off beat. If you didn't do that, everybody in this crazy Service would try to specialize in political activity as the only means to obtain an ambassadorship.

I had a hand in a few people getting ambassadorships who were from within the Service. Bill Hanley, for example, now my Deputy, was USIA. We appointed a couple of them. And while I didn't get anybody from CU while I was in there, if I'd been there another year I would have.

But I felt that we had to give the hope of an ambassadorship to a career person specializing in economics, in information, in culture, or administration; that we had to give a hope, not necessarily in the same percentage range.... But it makes no sense for top economists to believe they cannot be ambassadors because they haven't come out of a political bureau. If you want to keep economists in business—and in the years preceding that period every economist was trying to be a generalist. They were all trying to get into political work, and the result was that the economic side of this department....

[-67-]

In the period of the forties, for example, economics was the prime source of creative ideas. The whole direction of the Marshall Plan, for example, came out of the economic side of this building; it didn't come out of the political. Now, the Wriston [Henry M. Wriston] program had gradually destroyed the functional bureaus as major forces of foreign policy. I felt very strongly they had to be reinstated or instituted if they hadn't been instituted as such before and accepted as integral parts of foreign policy with promising careers for the best of the lot. Someone who had emphasized one of these peripheral things must be able to reach the top the same as the political specialists.

HACKMAN: What was Ball's reaction? Did he agree?

BATTLE: He agreed completely. But to agree and then to make something happen were quite different. But we had a few people and then more have happened since then. I don't recall that the Cultural—I suppose I was the only one who has had much to do with Culture that became an ambassador, but there may have been others since. I'd have to really check through it. But my deputy, Art Hummel [Arthur William Hummel, Jr.], became DCM [Deputy Chief of Missions] in the Philippines. He should be an ambassador, and I'm still hoping that he'll get one; perfectly competent in a wide variety of fields, but the fact that he had been in Information and Culture through most of his career was at one stage a handicap to him. But I think the people take a much more relaxed and flexible point of view now than they did a couple of years ago.

HACKMAN: When this reorganization went through and CU was set up on this geographical basis, were there any of the assistant secretaries, the geographical secretaries, who were particularly difficult to deal with?

[-68-]

BATTLE: No. As a matter of fact, most of them welcomed it. There was no problem with them. Most of them were for it. What I wanted to get

accomplished was to tailor the educational and cultural programs of the Department of State into the needs, political and otherwise, of our relationships with an individual specific country; also, to be sure that on a country basis the activities of Peace Corps, of AID, and all the other agencies, were coordinated. There was no one place in government, prior to that reorganization, where you could go and say, “That is the totality of U.S. effort in the manpower, cultural, educational field for Thailand?” for example, or for Egypt or for France or whatever. So what I was trying to get was a country political emphasis—in the best meaning of the word political—where we tailored what we did to what we were trying to accomplish with that country, and that somebody had an overall sense of all that was being done in those fields.

The geographic bureaus welcomed it. There were varying degrees of enthusiasm. There was some considerable opposition within CU, but not much. It seemed to me to be so clearly right that I never believed there would be any real problem with it. And there wasn't. It had been dragging, the decision had been dragging on long before Phil Coombs. It had been argued for years as to whether it ought to be functionally or geographically oriented.

HACKMAN: Speaking of some of the resistance within CU, were there any particular staff changes that you made soon after you came in?

BATTLE: Oh, yes. I brought in a vast number, a lot of people from the outside. I also made a very special effort to integrate the office. I found a number of very, very good Negro professional people who came in, a number of them. But I added the athletic programs for example. Again, Bobby Kennedy was very helpful in that one.

[-69-]

HACKMAN: Is this when he recommended the fellow to come over and...

BATTLE: Yes.

HACKMAN: Do you remember Nick Rodis [Nicholas Rodis]?

BATTLE: Nick Rodis, yes.

HACKMAN: I had wondered if that created any problems?

BATTLE: Not any at all with me. I was afraid it might, but it didn't at all. Nick and I got along fine. He had frictions with some of the other people, but Nick and I got along fine. Nick worked out very well. I went to a party—the last time I saw Nick was at a party of Bobby Kennedy's, a farewell party for Nick Rodis. It was a year ago, maybe.

HACKMAN: Yes.

BATTLE: So on the athletic and the youth thing and on the selection of American specialists to go abroad Bob Kennedy had a very active and continuing role. And it was one that instead of, as a lot of people—and this sounds immodest—but as a lot of people over here might have done, I didn't either resent it or resist it. I considered it a major plus for me to have Bobby Kennedy interested in what I was doing, and I made full use of it. We got along fine. We had no problem. That's not quite accurate. We did have some problems, but basically our relationship was very good. Our difficulties were few compared to our good relationships.

HACKMAN: One of the things that happened soon after you came over to CU was that the Executive order came out on the Fulbright-Hayes Act. I had heard this was delayed for a long period. What were the reasons for that?

[-70-]

BATTLE: Well, this was delayed for a lot of bureaucratic nonsense. I can't answer this without appearing, again, to be critical of Phil Coombs. Phil took the legislative history of the Act, and the Act itself, which had some general language about coordinating all programs, to make him a kind of czar over educational and cultural affairs that would, in effect, let him coordinate—and that was really to direct. The result was that the various agencies had no intention whatever of being directed by the Assistant Secretary of Educational and Cultural Affairs and made it pretty clear to everybody that no amount of Executive orders or anything else was going to make Ed Murrow submit to Phil Coombs' desires, unless Ed Murrow wanted to.

Well, there had been a long harangue. It had gone on for months, and it had gotten down to three or four issues. I called in on the telephone one day right after I took over and I said, "Ed, may I come over and see you?" He said, "Certainly." And I went in to him, and I would say in fifteen minutes we had resolved the problem on the basis of very simple assurances to him that I had no desire whatever to run USIA. It's perfectly ridiculous. I couldn't have done it. Even if I had wanted to I couldn't have gotten by with it, and any jackass should have seen that. What did make sense was that this be coordinated, and it only could be coordinated by the Department of State. But "to coordinate" is not to boss or to run or to make subordinate to you the interests of other agencies. There were also problems with the office of Education although that was less serious.

Ed Murrow and I, I don't think, ever had a cross word, except once, and this was an issue in which the President got involved. But we worked beautifully together. Don Wilson [Donald M. Wilson] and I were just—we were very fast friends, as I was with Ed Murrow. The relationship, if I may say so, between CU and USIA during that period—I did not put up with any bureaucratic arguing, you know. I told Ed that we had to make our organizations work together, and we did. It worked out very well.

[-71-]

We had one real difference of opinion which had to do with the African students that poured out of Moscow and into Hungary and then were coming on in—do you remember this incident?—were then coming into Germany. Ed wanted to, as he in his phrase put it, “Empty Lumumba University” and to give them all grants to come here. I said, “over my dead body.” In the main, they were people who were not well qualified; they were not selected; they couldn't speak English for the most part (a large number of them couldn't); we already had more African students in this country than we were managing well, and I was not going to bring thousands of others in here with no assurance of being able to finance them on a continuing basis and with no chance that they would fit into our society.

Well, everybody disagreed with me. Eugenie Anderson [Eugenie M. Anderson] sent in numerous hot telegrams. Ed Murrow and I and others had real arguments. The President called me about it. But I won. I compromised to the extent that I agreed to send over an individual who could analyze their backgrounds, and any of them who met the same criteria that we had set up for fitting into our educational structure here would be permitted to come. I set aside some money to meet any special requirements.

But in the main, these people—some of them had no passports; they were out of their own countries illegally; they were in bad grace with their own countries; it would have created political problems in a few instances with the country of origin. Most of them should have gone home. Moreover, the European countries, rightly or wrongly, were absorbing the problem—Germany particularly. And I saw no reason for us to walk in and try to take the responsibility for those students when we couldn't possibly have done it well. We hadn't the resources and as it was the middle of the school year, we would have brought in a lot of dissatisfied, unhappy African students.

[-72-]

Ed finally admitted a long time later that I had been right. But he saw it as a major propaganda opportunity. I saw it as an operating problem on the longer term than one immediate short term propaganda victory. President Kennedy called me on the telephone about this, asked me all about it. I gave him my point of view, and I never heard any more from him about it. But he was interested in it; he followed it.

HACKMAN: Did Robert Kennedy get at all involved?

BATTLE: I don't recall that Bobby got in that one. I just don't remember that he did. He may have; he may well have been involved, but I don't recall any specific involvement. I recall briefing the youth committee on the subject after it was all clear. But we had very serious African student problems already in this country. Many of them had been brought here under the Kennedy—do you remember the....What was it called?

HACKMAN: The original...

BATTLE: The original....

HACKMAN: I think in '60 it came up.

BATTLE: Yes, I can't remember the name of the—there was a special name for it. But a great many of them were here, and under-financed, and they were badly selected, many of them. And to bring another few thousand into this country when we weren't able to do well with what we were already doing and didn't have money for that just made no sense to me. We had waiting in each of the African countries, lists of people who were better qualified than the ones.... And the only argument you could make for them was they had gone to Russia. Well, I didn't think that was necessarily an answer. That was the only time that Ed Murrow and I ever really had a cross word. We got along superbly throughout the time that I worked with him. I sat by him at a staff meeting every day, and we were very good friends.

[-73-]

HACKMAN: Any other problems on getting that Executive Order out, then, after this was worked out?

BATTLE: No. We got it out very shortly thereafter and the Bureau of the Budget—they were all rather surprised that it moved so quickly after that. There weren't any basic.... It was a lack of trust rather than there being.... I mean the limits of the Department of State's authority in coordinating programs that are legislatively assigned to other agencies is always limited. It just can't be any other way. That is distinct from an issue of foreign policy because these are operating programs in which HEW and others had official, legal responsibility. To coordinate is to bring together; it is not to try to take over.

HACKMAN: You'd mentioned briefly the relations or problems that Mr. Coombs had with Mr. Rooney in the Congress. What were your early actions in this period? I think you went up in the fall of '62. He testified before the House, and then you went up and testified before the Senate on that budget. Did you make any progress the first time around, or did this have to wait until you cut down the big budget that he had planned the next time?

BATTLE: Well, the next budget—let me make a couple of things clear. I don't recall when I first appeared before either of the.... I just don't remember. I'd have to look it up. I remember the first budget that I was responsible for I argued very strongly that I could not be put in a position of asking for less than my predecessor had asked for, that I was going to ask for the same damn thing. I was going to try to justify it on the grounds of administrative improvements and new policy direction and—we went up. I certainly went to the Bureau of the Budget for exactly what Phil had gone for, and my recollection is we asked for the same from the Congress.

HACKMAN: I can remember in your testimony before the Congress that...

[-74-]

BATTLE: You've read my testimony? [Laughter]

HACKMAN: I looked at part of it. And it's been quite a while since I looked at it, but I can remember.... Let me turn this off. [Interruption]

BATTLE: My recollection is that the original Coombs request was \$62 million for a program that had been running around \$50 million. But he had asked for something like, I think, \$120 million, originally, if I'm not mistaken. By the time it got through the Bureau of the Budget and got up to the Hill it was \$60 odd million. The next time we went in for the same amount, as I recall it; and the next year I think we went in for \$56 million. Actually, we got the program raised a couple of times while I was there; not greatly, but.... We even got a small increase in the cultural presentations program, the only one it ever had in its history. We got a small increase in it. It wasn't large, but it was an increase.

My own relations with the House Appropriations Committee were very good. I remember when I called on John Rooney before I took over the program. I had appeared before him as Executive Secretary. He said, "Luke, why in the world are you taking this Cultural job?" And I said, "Because it's important, and I think it ought to be done and done well, and I'm interested in it." He said, "You know, I'm going to have to be very rough on you." I said, "I'll be ready for you." I said, "You'll know your lesson, but I'll know mine." And he laughed, and I had a good deal to do with him. If I may, again, be immodest, if you look back in that *Congressional Record*, I'm one of the few people in this building who he's ever complimented and left it on the *Record*.

HACKMAN: Yes, I read that.

[-75-]

BATTLE: He actually did it a couple of times. He said, "I do not think this committee will ever give you the vast amounts of money that you ask for, but I think the program's in the best hands it's ever been in." He said that sort of thing a couple of times. So my own relationships with Rooney were very good. They continued to be good in a funny kind of way. It was a tough relationship. But I was ready for him, and I knew my numbers going and coming, and he knew I knew my numbers going and coming.

I would always try to figure out the greatest weaknesses we had, the most horrible case—and there were some horrors—the most unsatisfactory grant; the most unpleasant aspects of it. And then I tried to beat him to the draw. I would either in my opening remarks—and I never prepared them, I spoke informally—I would tell them. I said, "Now, let me share my problems with you," and then I would tell them all the difficulties and then tell them what I had done about it. I found this a rather helpful and useful device.

I remember doing the same thing with the Senate Committee once, and one senator came up to me and said afterward, he said, "Luke, it's very hard for a senator to exercise his

prerogative of indignation when the witness is more indignant than he is.” But I found this to be a very satisfactory technique. I did the best I could when I found something wrong and then could make the case that I tried to correct it. Then I let them have it. I told them the truth, and I told them what I had done about it and threw it on the table. “Here it is,” you know. This worked very well with Rooney.

I always saw that he was never off-guard. For example, the General Accounting Office found some horrors in the program going back several years before and had been over here—at my request, actually—going through the program and had uncovered some things. So I sent him a little handwritten note to Rooney before one of my hearings, and I said, “The GAO is going to have a report, and they're going to deal with the following things. You may wish to question me on them.” So he proceeded, and he looked as though he was a genius for having anticipated all these things, and I was all prepared with what I had done about each one of them, and we both went home free. [Laughter]

[-76-]

HACKMAN: This wasn't the one with the famous singer and his wife, or whatever, actor, was it? I remember reading something about that.

BATTLE: That was Joey Adams. That was before my...

HACKMAN: That's right, Joey Adams.

BATTLE: ...time, although I had to testify on Joey Adams. The Joey Adams case was one of the things that was a bad decision. But he went out on the tour, and everything that could possibly happen happened. It was all over before I ever came in office, but I had to testify on it the next year.

HACKMAN: Did you develop any close relationships with the staffs, with Rooney's staff or with the Senate staff? Or did you find that useful?

BATTLE: To a degree I did. I had a very close relationship with the Senate staff on one area in which they were very interested and in which I was interested. We had the problem of utilization of foreign currency on which, I think, about as much gobbly-gook has been said and written as; any other subject—and that's going pretty far. There was a tendency when I came in—and I knew nothing about foreign currency at that time. I know a good deal about it now, but I didn't when I came in. But I tried, I spent hours working with staff. I made them meet with me once a week for weeks on end to understand the intricacies of foreign currency. It became apparent after a time that what we were doing made very little sense.

[-77-]

The Senate would put a mandate on us to use x percentage of the total appropriation in foreign currencies. But it made no distinction between a foreign currency that we held in

excess supply—and the technical definition of that at that time was three years—it later was reduced to two, I think—more than a three year holding of that currency. It made no distinction between currencies that we held in great excess, which were really like spending wooden nickels, and currencies that we held in short supply or that were freely convertible in the world market. To spend a Japanese yen or a French franc or German deutsche mark was the equivalent of spending dollars; to spend an Egyptian pound or Indonesian whatever it is or Indian rupees was spending wooden nickels. And the trick was to distinguish between those cases when you were really using dollar equivalents and when you were just using what amounted to no holdings at all.

Moreover, we were not, I thought, handling these currencies well. And during the time I was there we shot up enormously in our utilization of foreign currencies, and they were excess currencies. For example—we got by with it for a very long time—we bought tickets in New Delhi or Cairo with local currencies and could find that by routing people if they were.... I think in many countries they had to go through there in order to permit the purchase of the ticket there. But we saved vast amounts of money by purchasing tickets with currencies of the several countries involved and a whole series of other ways. And we were very warmly complimented for the utilization of foreign currencies by both the Senate and the House, particularly the Senate. The relationship with the Senate Committee on that particular issue was very close.

And I had one very great.... You know, you'd find really great people tucked away in this government, frequently unsung. There's a fellow named Ivan Nelson who probably understands more about the technical bureaucratic limits and opportunities, on utilizing foreign currency than any one person in this building or in this government. And I used to spend hours with Ivan Nelson on foreign currency. Well, between us I would guess that we saved the United States government millions of dollars. And I'm not exaggerating. And really, he was the one who—if he could get it through my thick head, then I would do it, you see. But it

[-78-]

required an infinite amount of patience and utilizing someone who understood it. But we did remarkably well for a couple of years. I don't know how it's gone since—in utilizing foreign currency.

One thing that you haven't asked me about that ought to be, because of the interest of the Kennedys, is Abu Simbel.

HACKMAN: Okay.

BATTLE: Have you...

HACKMAN: I don't really have anything on it. I was going to ask...

BATTLE: This is, I think, of some interest because of Mrs. Kennedy's and President Kennedy's involvement in it. You know, these are the ancient monuments, part of the Nubian monuments.

HACKMAN: Right. I was going to ask you in connection with UNESCO [United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural organization] when the UNESCO meetings came up.

BATTLE: Well, since we brought it up, I might just deal with it now. Mrs. Kennedy got very interested in this project and then interested President Kennedy. We went through all sorts of plans for the physical restoration. There was great interest in whether they ought to be lifted on hydraulic lifts, cut up, moved, floated on pontoons as the water came up—there were many plans—covered with some sort of protective coating and then let the water come in and then go down in water tight elevators; all kinds of proposals came along.

[-79-]

The original plans for elevating on hydraulic lifts was astronomically expensive and involved a very heavy use of hard currency. I was never in favor of that project because I felt that it was too risky and that we had no chance whatever of getting any American participation in the project. And we had a mandate from the President and Mrs. Kennedy to try to do something about this. Finally, after a period of time, we were able by the simple use of our own leverage in the situation—we went through the UNESCO Committee—to turn them in a direction involving much less hard currency at a much smaller cost, which is the plan that has finally been worked out, which is sawing it up and moving it up above.

This has been very successful and we have recently, as you know, received the Temple of Dendur which was a gift by the UAR [United Arab Republic] as a result of our contribution. It was difficult to get the temple out of them, incidentally. But they were committed to a temple. That temple has now been received, and I think for the amount of pounds that we put in, we came out very well because the pound has gone down in value, and the temple is worth probably as much as was invested in pounds.

But it was the interest of the Kennedys, really, that gave the impetus for the project. This is one of the very few projects in the cultural field in which there's been a kind of broad international support. I suppose it's the only—it was the first major one of its kind.

HACKMAN: Are you going to have time to go on, or would you....

[END OF INTERVIEW #2]

[-80-]

Lucius D. Battle Oral History Transcript – JFK #2
Name Index

A

Achilles, Theodore Carter, 55
Adams, Joey, 77
Anderson, Eugenie M., 72

B

Ball, George W., 45, 62, 64, 67, 68
Bell, David E., 57

C

Cater, S. Douglass, Jr., 56
Chamberlain, Anne, 57
Coombs, Philip H., 44, 63, 64, 65, 69, 71, 74, 75

D

Douglas, Kirk, 51

F

Fulbright, J. William, 61

H

Haddad, William Frederick, 47, 60
Hanley, Bill, 67
Harriman, William Averell, 57, 62
Helms, Richard, 61
Hummel, Arthur William, Jr., 68

J

Jackson, C.D., 56
Johnson, U. Alexis, 54, 55

K

Katzenbach, Ed, 47, 52
Katzenbach, Nicholas deB., 47
Kelly, Gene, 51
Kennedy, Jacqueline Bouvier, 44, 49, 79, 80
Kennedy, John F., 44, 46, 49, 55, 61, 71, 72, 73,
79, 80
Kennedy, Robert F., 44, 45, 46, 47, 48, 50, 51, 52,
55, 56, 57, 58, 61, 62, 69, 70, 73

M

McGhee, George, 62
McLaughlin, Marty, 57, 58
McNamara, Robert S., 50
Meyer, Cord, Jr., 61
Moscoso, Teodoro, 53
Morrow, Edward R., 47, 71, 72, 73

N

Nelson, Ivan, 78
Newson, Earl, 56
Nolan, John E., 49, 50

P

Paul, Norman, 47, 52

R

Reischauer, Edwin Oldfather, 67
Rodis, Nicholas, 70
Rooney, John James, 63, 74, 75, 76, 77
Rusk, Dean, 61, 62

S

Sheean, Jerry, 57, 58
Shriver, R. Sargent, Jr., 47, 60
Symington, James W., 52

T

Taylor, Maxwell D., 57

W

Wilson, Donald M., 71
Wriston, Henry M., 68