

Richard W. Reuter Oral History Interview – JFK#1, 6/11/1964
Administrative Information

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Biographical Note

Richard W. Reuter (1918-2005) was the Executive Director of CARE from 1955 to 1962 and the Director of Food for Peace from 1962 to 1965. This interview focuses on John F. Kennedy's [JFK] interest in the use of food surplus, the founding of the Food for Peace Program, and Reuter's professional relationship with JFK, among other topics.

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INTERVIEW WITH DIRECTOR RICHARD W. REUTER

Mr. Newhouse:

This is a tape recorded interview with Mr. Richard W. Reuter, Director of the Food for Peace Program. It will be part of the Oral History Project of the John F. Kennedy Memorial Library. The date is June 11. The place is Mr. Reuter's office in the Executive Office Building. The interviewer is John Newhouse of the staff of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee.

Mr. Reuter, perhaps we can begin by asking how you happened to become Director of the Food for Peace program.

Mr. Reuter:

I actually became Director of Food for Peace on August 1, 1962, succeeding George McGovern, who resigned from the post in July in order to run for the Senate from South Dakota.

Mr. Newhouse:

How did the President happen to choose you?

Mr. Reuter:

I think it would be useful to have just a brief description of the program which might be taken as a follow-up on the more detailed description in George McGovern's report.

Our use of food from so-called surplus stocks had been authorized by P.L. 480 in 1954 when, following the Korean War, we had a growing stockpile problem. The production of our farms was exceeding our ability to sell the produce in the domestic market or move it into normal trade channels in world markets.

(Handwritten initials)

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Under our price support programs, as the price fell below our support level, this food automatically came into government hands through the Commodity Credit Corporation. In the post-war period while we had made food available previously by a series of actions under the foreign aid legislation, the Congress in 1954 codified that program by establishing a unifying law, P.L. 480, which established the national policy to use the surpluses overseas, both through concessional sales arrangements and through donations programs.

I had been serving since the end of the war as an employee of CARE, the international relief organization and when I moved into the White House staff, had been for some fifteen years involved in overseas distribution of food. I had been for the previous eight years the Executive Director of CARE.

The determination had been made by President Kennedy that George McGovern's successor should be a professional in the use of food. I think that this was an interesting expression of the point we had reached in the Kennedy Administration at that time. P.L. 480, since it had been passed in 1954, had to a very large degree been administered as a surplus disposal mechanism. The attitude had been one that reflected the fact that as long as we had the food morally we couldn't destroy it. We had to make the best use we could to meet needs. During the campaign, the then Senator Kennedy had urged a better use of our food resources and one of his first acts on assuming the

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Presidency was the establishment of the Food for Peace office. (To a very large degree I have always felt Food for Peace was a state of mind more than an office.) The legislative authority is still P.L. 480. It is still with a high surplus disposal orientation. But the use of this under a pattern titled Food for Peace changes the emphasis from the negative one of the fact of the surplus to the positive one of the importance of the programming for its use.

Mr. Newhouse:

Is it fair to say that the emphasis shifted to the conduct of the program, and not the legislation itself?

Mr. Reuter:

Yes. Of course, there have been some extensive amendments to P.L. 480. It has been enlarged by providing an opportunity for dollar credit sales through the so-called Title IV provision. There have been increased authorizations for types of activities that could be financed by the local currencies acquired under the local currency sales, Title I. There have been expansions to allow for donation programs utilizing the food in work projects. Where there was provision under Title II originally only for emergency disaster relief under a Section 201, the Congress added a Section 202 which allowed use of donated foods as a support for economic development.

While these features had, it is true, been added, essentially the change has been in administration; and primarily one of attitude. The law itself allowed from the early days considerable freedom in the approach toward the use of this food.

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Mr. Newhouse:

Mr. Reuter, were you interviewed by the President himself prior to becoming Director?

Mr. Reuter:

I think it should be stated that I had been working with George McGovern in the early days when he first had been nominated for this post. As the Director of CARE, we worked quite closely together in the evolution of the programming that he had undertaken in his year and a half of tenure in this post. So that when McGovern had to face this question of whether he should resign this post he was very much devoted to in order to run for the Senate, I had the opportunity of talking with him about this on a number of occasions. I had been recommended for the job by George McGovern; by Secretary Freeman, who had been another member of the Administration with whom I worked closely; by Hubert Humphrey, who had been a long time admirer of CARE, and with whom I had, on a couple of occasions, worked overseas; and by Jim Patton and Murray Lincoln. Jim Patton of the Farmers Union and Murray Lincoln of the Cooperative League both were Vice Presidents of CARE and were very much interested in the development of the Kennedy Administration in this area.

But I had actually never met the President, except in the context of two or three delegations that had met with him on occasions of ceremonial signing of bills or proclamations. I didn't know the President. I guess more accurately, the

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President did not know me. I had a lengthy discussion with Ralph Dungan as an employment interview...that might be the expression. We had a background discussion, after my name was suggested for the post. I had not then realized that the idea had moved as far as it had. There was an interview set with the President for the latter part of July at 11:45 in the morning. At this time, presumably I was to talk over the possibility of joining the President's staff in charge of the Food for Peace program. Benny Goodman had the preceding 15 minute period to report on his visit to Russia. This went on until some 10 minutes after 12:00 and I finally got in at 10 after 12 to meet with the President. We discussed in some depth the program and the possibilities that existed in the program.

Mr. Newhouse:

Was he quite familiar with the program on that occasion?

Mr. Reuter:

It was very encouraging to me in this first interview to find how aware he was of the scope of the program; and more particularly to find his interest especially in the donation phases of it. His attitudes reflected a concern for feeding the hungry; a part of the use of our food which falls under donation. It wasn't until I came out after the interview, which lasted about 20 minutes, that I discovered that the 12:00 noon news had carried the announcement that I had been appointed that morning as the Director for Food for Peace.

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Mr. Newhouse:

You mean your wife knew about the appointment before you did?

Mr. Reuter:

My wife did know about the appointment before I did. And I had thought that this meeting was a decision-making process. This was one of my first exposures to the Office of the President; it is not always possible to have an abstract discussion leading to the answer.

Mr. Newhouse:

Was the President aware of all of the numerous agencies involved in the Food for Peace program?

Mr. Reuter:

Yes, I think in the original determination to set up this office that the inherent conflict in priority of interest between the Department of Agriculture, the Department of State, and the Agency for International Development (then the, I believe, Mutual Security Administration) that the inherent conflict had been enough an issue that the President made the determination, after staff study, to put the coordinator and director of the Food for Peace program as an office in the White House. The discussion on my interview with the President referred often enough to this fact that it was obvious the President was still concerned two years later about the difficulty of getting a coordination among the Departments. Whether he recognized that there were actually ten different Departments that had some part in the Food for

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Peace program, I am not sure.

Mr. Newhouse:

How did he go about imposing his view of the program on the various segments of the bureaucracy that were dealing with it?

Mr. Reuter:

I have the feeling that this was one of the activities which particularly reflected the President's concept of the Special Assistant. The office of the Director of Food for Peace is also ... the person who holds that office of Director ... is a Special Assistant to the President. I was unaware enough when I first came in that I did not recognize that this was a part of the title. I hadn't realized it. Nor did I recognize the importance of that in terms of the machinery of government. It is the post of Special Assistant which has as close as you come to having a line authority and responsibility. The President was evolving an administrative pattern. By the time I joined the staff, a year and a half after the establishment of his administration, I think it had been fairly well firmed up to ~~the~~ use a Special Assistant as an extension of the President in the contacts with the concerned Departments in an area of activity which overlapped different Departmental responsibilities -- when more than one Department had a significant interest in the activity. I had the feeling that my effectiveness was to be in my ability to reflect the administration policy and philosophy into the bureau-

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cracy and at the same time to try to reflect back to the administration (in this case, the President's immediate staff) the factors in programming that were part of the concern of the bureaucracy; to reflect that back so that it would have an impact on the policy-making determination. The President did not want to become involved, as I saw it in my own experience, in any of the detail. His interest was very largely in having an assurance that the program that we were carrying out reflected the kind of general picture and image of the Administration which was being established by the President and the Cabinet.

Mr. Newhouse:

You mentioned other members of the White House staff. I wonder if you would describe your relationship with the White House staff under President Kennedy and your general impressions perhaps of the staff and its operations.

Mr. Reuter:

John, this is relevant due to the fact that I did come in to the Administration as a member of the President's staff, after that staff had in a sense shaken down. Whatever struggle for position and responsibility had existed, had pretty well disappeared by the time I got there. The lines of authority were fairly clear. What became quickly obvious to me was that the President evidenced a determination that there was not to be a Chief of Staff. Each of us in the Special Assistant role related directly to the President.

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Now, practically; this, of course, made a number of problems in administration in terms of those items which were not of enough importance to be directly of a major concern to the President. During our initial interview I had said, "Well, if I do this job properly, Mr. President, you may never hear from me again." And he chuckled at that time and I didn't realize the truth in those words in the way the use of the Food for Peace Director, in any event, evolved. The President's concern was that we reflect the program that he would like to have happen and not bother him short of having a particular problem or a particular development which should be called to the attention of the President. When he did not hear, there was an assumption that the program was running along the pattern.

Now as a result I found a growing advantage of finding a substitute for a staff meeting in the use of the White House mess. I quickly started coming in in the morning at 7:30 and having breakfast at the White House mess where a number of the other members of the executive staff would come in....I think frequently deliberately to share concerns. For it did give an opportunity for a discussion of a problem on an informal basis. Now this was never in any way structured. This was just a happenstance. And if you wanted to try out an idea one of the ways of doing it became around the breakfast table. (I had a little complication with my wife, who felt after twenty years, that she couldn't quite understand what suddenly was wrong with her cooking.)

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But more seriously, the morning session, in an hour or hour and a quarter, gave you a chance for some depth. And then, of course, what was I think a little bit more structured and had some historical background was the use of the round table in the dining facility at the luncheon period. Here over luncheon you had the opportunity of listening to members of the staff discuss problems and comment on the events of the day. But this became for me a meaningful technique for trying out ideas and for understanding other parts of the Administration position. It gave a chance for participation in the policy level discussions that were not necessarily inherent in the operation of your own program. I think this has some validity. I think that this made one of the important feelings of participation for individuals. This gave a chance for a sharing in the total program.

Mr. Newhouse:

I wondered as you were describing this, whether because of the absence of any Chief of Staff and the great responsibility that each staff member had, whether there conceivably would have developed a kind of no man's land for some items of business, which as you say perhaps were not important enough to go to the President but which were pretty difficult to deal with in the absence of a Presidential decision. Did such things arise or could you dispose of them in any other fashion?

Mr. Reuter:

In my own instance, I found that what developed was that you

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set up your own determination of those items that ought to be cleared with representatives of the National Security Council, with people from the Council of Economic Advisers, with the Budget Bureau. It was not routine. In a sense I had to make the determination where there was an area in the use of food which was not being adequately attended to or where there was a broader implication in terms of a total program...that ought to be put in for more general consideration. Now, while this was seemingly without structure, you did not have the feeling that it was happenstance. I think the continuity of participation in the luncheon round table was more than an accident. I got the impression, and certainly my own utilization of this was such, that I almost never had a luncheon outside of the White House unless it were an important function in which I had to take part. Because of the importance of that noon period this was a kind of clearing house.

Mr. Newhouse:

That is very interesting. I wonder how did the President himself manage to sustain, if he did, his original interest in the Food for Peace and the shift in emphasis. He was involved obviously in so many other things. Was he able to sustain this interest?

Mr. Reuter:

I had the distinct impression that he had a very growing interest in this. I'd like to suggest areas of direct and in-

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direct material flowed to the President. There had been a pattern, for instance, of semi-monthly reports to the President on developments of the program. Soon after I came in I asked about this. The President said he certainly did not want a semi-monthly report unless I felt that it would be useful for him to have it; that he would much prefer just having the key facts of the program. The program didn't change that much after it started to hit more of a routine. Those facts that were of importance for his attention, for his awareness, that did not require action, might just as effectively be sent as a memo, not on a stated period but as the event occurred or the fact became known. So we moved to a practice of just an occasional memorandum. I was always impressed by the comment in an occasional meeting in the hall that these were read and the President was aware of them.

But I think the two incidents of some significance were the development, for instance, of the balance of payments problem. The President became very much concerned with the importance of the adverse balance of payments flow in the United States and as this more and more became a subject of discussion at breakfast, at luncheon, and at the sessions, you recognized the degree of importance that this was assuming in the Administration. In one of these sessions, I discovered that P.L. 480 was considered in the basic paper on balance of payments as a negative factor.

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Mr. Newhouse:

I think it might be well to explain why. Some people might not understand that.

Mr. Reuter:

Because of the carry-over of the earlier assumption that what we sent out of the country for local currency, or what we sent out of the country even under donation, tended to replace normal commercial dollar sales. While it might not replace it to the degree of the size of the shipment, nevertheless some part of that might have been completed as a normal commercial sale. And to that degree, you were cutting off your chance of dollar earning. Now my discussions with the representatives of the Budget Bureau (Dave Bell, was initially Director of the Budget, and then Kermit Gordon came in) and with Carl Kaysen, from McGeorge Bundy's staff and with Walter Heller, from the Council of Economic Advisers, who frequently in that period were joining us in the breakfast sessions, my emphasis on the breadth of the development of 480 led to a feeling on their part that I should take part in the meeting of the Cabinet level committee on the review of the balance of payments picture to present this aspect of the use of food. In concert with Secretary Freeman we prepared such a paper. We did an evaluation that indicated a very significant positive effect on America's balance of payments position; that the sale for local currency provided us as much as a quarter of a billion dollars a year in currency that was used to pay bills that otherwise would have to be paid with dollars; that

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the long term credit sales under the Title IV provision provided a slow but mounting source of dollar revenue that would not be available in many of these countries because they just didn't have the dollars on a short term credit basis which was the only other commercial way to operate. I think it is interesting that the report on this reached the President as part of the total balance of payments picture. This was not something the Food for Peace office sent to him as a report on the balance of payments, but came out of the Cabinet level report in terms of the impact of food on our trade and payments balance.

A little less complicated is the situation in regard to the Alliance for Progress in which a program called the Alianza para los Ninos (the Alliance for Children) developed over a year and a half period, a school lunch extension that moved from 3.9 million children receiving school ration under a cooperative program with the countries, to almost 10 million people. This was a major effort to enlarge the impact content of the Alliance -- reaching people in the countries of Latin America. This was an item that the President used on at least two occasions in talks. This was an item that apparently impressed him very much in terms of the food asset but the report came to him through Mr. Moscoso.

I've gone into this much detail because I think that the use of food as an asset was an evolving pattern during this period that was being recognized to an increasing degree by the President

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and was being encouraged. Now where this has an importance is if we think back to the original interview and to the selection of a professional. The professional that was chosen was one in the donation phase of the program. And yet actually some 75% of what has moved under the Food for Peace effort goes out under sales provisions. But I don't think that even within the Administration we really had recognized this as the asset that it is; in terms of an impact on a broader range of problems than exclusively the surplus and the feeding; -- that it did also have an impact on our foreign relations. And so more and more the President's recognition of food use came in the context of some of these other problems with which he had a significant involvement and a deep interest. Vietnam, which was coming in at this period in the latter part of the Administration, was another example of a spot in which food became a major resource and in which the President's interest in this came through a lot of other channels than my own relationship with him.

Mr. Newhouse:

I think you have made it clear that the President was primarily interested in using this surplus food to feed hungry people and to shift the emphasis from a disposal program, which it apparently had been since 1954, to a donation program.

Mr. Reuter:

John, could I just fill in one other comment here I think has an interest and that is the growing feeling I had of the

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President's close staff; the real sense of purpose which was evident in daily meeting with these people. I have in my some 20 years of business experience and non-governmental experience with CARE seldom had an exposure to a group of executives who worked as well together in the sense of their -- I had the strong impression -- of their mutual respect. Now I wanted to mention a little earlier that in many ways here there was the feeling that you could get the job accomplished if you worked together to try to come up with the answer. And I saw this more and more in terms of my operations in Food for Peace. A great deal of the decisions were being worked out in conjunction with members of McGeorge Bundy's staff, or particularly with Kermit Gordon and the members of the Budget Bureau staff, rather than it being the independent relationship with the President which was implied in the chart of organization, if you will.

Mr. Newhouse:

The chart of organization was never really terribly formal or important a document, was it?

Mr. Reuter:

No, I think each person tended to have his own drawing of that chart. I'm not sure I ever really saw one.

But an atmosphere was so frequent that it deserves mention. When the President had had a particularly effective speech the thrill that the staff had -- the enthusiasm that was shown to Ted Sorensen, if he had been working on it, or Lee White, or

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one of the other men, I think it was something that was quite unique in the relationship of a staff. I think that the President had an ability to inspire us in a way that we had a sense of joint dedication to the total goal that was quite unique. I think that this probably had as much to do with the development of the use of food, as did the evolution of the program from the outside influences that came to bear. I found myself much less frequently thinking in terms of Food for Peace as the Food for Peace program itself than as an asset in terms of a total foreign policy impact and a domestic program.

Mr. Newhouse:

Mr. Reuter, what personal contacts did you have with the President?

Mr. Reuter:

These were infrequent. They were mostly the brief query; or the chance meeting as you happen to meet in the hall. (The President was wont to dash around back in the executive section fairly freely and often you would meet him without it having been planned); the group photo with a group of voluntary agencies or a producer's group; or sometimes the formal reception. There were two incidents that I think were specific, however, that might be of special interest.

One was on the occasion of the World Food Congress in June of 1963. Some 1400 delegates from around the world came to Washington for a 2½ week conference sponsored by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations for a consideration of our concern for a freedom from hunger as a world wide

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effort. President Kennedy opened the conference and he took part in the opening ceremonies. I had worked with some of the staff and briefly with the President on the speech. I went with him in the automobile as we picked up the President of India who shared the platform that morning and went to the Interior Department auditorium where the opening session was held. I had been particularly impressed by the fact that the President sat there that morning, interested, but not really involved, in the Congress. This was one of many meetings that he attended. It was one of endless group sessions and I think he felt it was in good hands and he wasn't particularly concerned until the President of India spoke. The Indian President was partially blind and had developed a pattern of speaking without notes as well as without a prepared text. He spoke for some 10 to 12 minutes, as I recall, without any apparent reference points. He spoke with feeling and with some detailed figures of the need. And using his own country as an example, pointed out the inability of people to progress until they had solved this problem of the basic needs for food. As I sat in front of the President and watched him that morning it became very obvious that something happened at that moment.

As the President got up for his own speech he interpolated quite extensively and put a fire into the delivery which made it a moving speech that was referred to continuously during the next two and a half weeks of the Congress. It was, I felt, an

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example of the President's awareness of the subject matter, that he became this concerned. And the prepared text became inadequate for him in the reflection of the depth of the emotion which he expressed. He came alive in that speech. As we went back to the White House it was very evident that the President recognized the electricity that had been evident. He was conscious of his rapport with that mass audience -- many of whom were listening with translations, so that it was hard even to get --- particularly had to get that kind of emotional reaction.

I think one other experience which is one of the great memories in my life was being invited to go with the President to Amherst on that trip just a month before the assassination, when he received an honorary degree from what had been my alma mater. We had been somewhat delayed in take off because of weather and then had to circle the airport for almost an hour while the press plane, which had been even more delayed, got up so that the press could be present for the arrival ceremonies. The President worked on his speech most of the way up. We talked a bit. There were about 10 of us on the plane. We talked about Amherst, and some of the people in the Administration who were Amherst graduates. We discussed the nature of small colleges, and Western Massachusetts. There was obviously a coming home atmosphere for the President. This was an area of the state which had always been a tough one for him in

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political campaigns because it had been largely a Republican section. But as any person in Massachusetts knows this is one of the delightful areas of the state. The ceremonies themselves were fairly routine, I suppose. The President took part in the special convocation in which he was presented a degree. He took part in the dedication of the Robert Frost Memorial Library. There was another speech. The determination was that we would then hasten back to Westover Field for a plane back to Washington. Dr. Plimpton, the President of Amherst, urged the President to come over to his home. He had invited a few of the seniors to meet the President and he hoped that he would have a few minutes to sit with them. I don't think there was any other reason that would have gotten the President on that occasion to have delayed his departure except the fact that this was a group of college seniors. It wasn't the local political leaders or the college board. We sat in President Plimpton's home, the President with his coat off, and in his suspenders, and a scotch in his hand, sat there with those students for 20 to 30 minutes and talked about the nature of political action and public administration. It was a magnificent little insight into the President's real interest in the educational process and the fun he had in this kind of a give and take with this half a dozen young people that were there that day.

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Mr. Newhouse:

It must have been a great moment for them.

Mr. Reuter:

I'm sure it was because even for those of us who had the opportunity of standing in the wings and listening to this, it was a thrilling experience.

Mr. Newhouse:

The President quite deliberately almost turned his back on the rest of the people who were in the house at this time and made it very clear that he was staying because he was going to have a chance to have a bull session, I guess we would have called it, with this group of seniors and it was a legitimate give and take. I was not close enough to hear enough of the conversation to reflect the details, but it was a reflection of the sense of importance in the study of public administration that the President was evidencing. And despite the fact that there was a small crowd of people that had gathered at the airfield to see the President off, he stayed there completely relaxed for that session.

Going back that day, most of the others had stayed for the weekend, and as I recall there were four of us on the plane returning on the flight back to Washington. The President was quite pleased that the day had been a good day. He had enjoyed his discussion. He had enjoyed the ceremonies. It had been a pleasant experience on what turned out, once we got out of the

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fog in Washington, to be beautiful weather. The President was pleased and we sat on either side of the table and he had his feet up on the chair across the aisle in the plane and just talked. It was in a sense, I guess, a continuation of the spirit he had been in those last minutes in President Plimpton's house. One little item that I thought of since and remembered was that this was the time that the issue, I think it was of the Saturday Evening Post, had the Bobby Baker story. And the President was reading this for the first time. It called to his attention in some detail the story which was then a breaking news story. And the President, who, of course, when he had served in the Senate had known Mr. Baker, was reading the story as I might have read a detective thriller. He gave at least two explosions of "Can you imagine that?" "How could he have done this?"

Mr. Newhouse:

Mr. Reuter, some have said that the President intellectualized the business at hand and that his views reflected in his reasoned thinking and conclusions, but lacked in emotional commitment. What was your view based on your experience?

Mr. Reuter:

Well, I'm not competent to make a judgment on that. My relationship to the President was not intimate enough to know. Exclusively in the context of our food program there is no question that the President had an intellectual awareness and

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competence in the total program and the implications of it. I had the feeling that there was also very deep emotional involvement in this question of feeding the hungry. This was clearly evident in our first meeting. It was also clearly evidenced in the course of my almost two years of association. It bothered him that a person would be hungry. This was a humanitarian response, I think, in the case of the Food for Peace program which was a very important element in his devotion to Food for Peace as such.

Mr. Newhouse:

I think that comes out clearly in the conversation that we've had. And on that point, I wonder, since the President was interested in making this a program that would primarily serve the cause of feeding the hungry people, did he tend to bridle at any of the restraints within the P.L. 480 legislation? After all this legislation has not changed dramatically over the years. It is still pretty much what it was when it was passed in 1954.

Mr. Reuter:

John, I think your use of the word, "bridle" is a good one. This was not as much a thoughtful response as an explosive response on two occasions which evidenced a degree of frustration. One was in the context of our apparent preoccupation with the maintenance of normal marketing and particularly with our concern for not interfering with the exports of

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friendly producing nations. The President on two occasions did explode that there should be more concern about our own exports and are we going to be constantly limited in our ability to use this food -- because of a concern that somebody else can't sell it. Why does it take us so long to get a program approved when we are trying to do good? I say this was an explosive thing. At no point in our serious discussion, did this ever become a concern. Secondly, there was a frustration at our inability to utilize local currencies. This, of course, has been a subject which has created frustration for many people connected with this program. But I think the President felt that if we had all those rupees in India, and we had opportunities of accomplishing purposes, why didn't we just get on with it and do it.

He on at least two occasions asked how are the relationships among the Departments in this program. If you recall our earlier comments, this had been a factor of some concern in the early days of the program. There were the difficulties of priorities of the different concerns of the Department of Agriculture, the Agency for International Development, the Department of State. When the President recalled this, I happily was able to say that the spirit of cooperation was such that we were doing very well on it. So that I can't say that this was more than just an awareness of a potential difficulty.

25.

Mr. Newhouse:

Mr. Reuter, did working for President Kennedy as Director of his Food for Peace program work out pretty much the way you thought it would?

Mr. Reuter:

I think it is interesting that when George McGovern and Secretary Freeman had first talked to me about this kind of an assignment, as far as I was able to divulge the position, I talked with a great many people about what I should do. It meant a change in family -- four kids in school. It meant a reduction in pay. It's not easy to think in terms of the re-adjusting. I was disturbed by the fact that no one except those who had particularly spoken to me (Jim Patton and Murray Lincoln) nobody recommended that I should move to Washington and work for the government. Expressed in different ways, it all came back to the same point that you were going to be frustrated, because of an inability to accomplish goals; that as a director of CARE, you have a high degree of flexibility in accomplishing what you think is important. I suppose quite honestly, part of my decision to come was that my background in school and honors work had been in the area of political science. If it was true that you could work in the White House and be frustrated at an inability to accomplish things, then we were in a lot more trouble than my own reactions would matter. I guess a little bit of the challenge was this as an academic

question. I think that it is very clearly my experience that at no time in my service with President Kennedy did I ever have a feeling of frustration. I had great feelings of petty frustrations in terms of a specific moment. I had feelings of inadequacy often. But I somehow had gotten a feeling of the importance of this and a sense of involvement in it, that made my worry an academic question. It wasn't until reviewing some of the experiences in the context of this interview that I recall my initial fear and in thinking back on it find this was an unfounded fear. The thrill comes to one in little ways -- it came to me as I went through a receiving line at a reception for one of the foreign visitors and the President turned to the visitor and said, "This is Dick Reuter, our Food for Peace Director." There was ^alight in his eye and the sense that this was a good program was evident in the expression. This is the kind of an incentive which means a great deal to you. And the occasional implication by a glance that it was a good job gave a sense of accomplishment to the task which was a very rewarding experience.

I would say that a summary of my experience in the Kennedy Administration would highly emphasize a reflection of an overall sense that somehow this was going to be a better world because we had been doing this job, and I did feel a sense of real appreciation to have had an opportunity to have been a part of the group working around President Kennedy.

