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Interview with Ed King by Brien Williams

Edward 'Ed' L. King

George J. Mitchell Oral History Project
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Edward L. "Ed" King **GMOH# 173**
(*Interviewer: Brien Williams*) November 16, 2009

Brien Williams: This is an oral history interview for the George J. Mitchell Oral History Project at Bowdoin College with Ed King. We are in Ed's home in Chevy Chase, Maryland, and today is Monday, November 16, 2009, and I am Brien Williams. Ed, let me ask you first to give your full name and spelling.

Ed King: It's Edward L. King, K-I-N-G.

BW: And the date and place of your birth?

EK: I was born November the 7th, 1928, I was born the morning that Herbert Hoover was elected president of the United States. I was born at four o'clock and the morning paper said (I still have the paper) across the headlines is "Hoover Elected," my mother kept the paper.

BW: And where were you born?

EK: In Fort Worth, Texas.

BW: And your parents' names.

EK: My father's name was Edgar L. King, and my mother's name was Zula Mae Burch King.

BW: So tell me a little bit about your family background and where you grew up.

EK: Well, as I say, I was born in Fort Worth, I lived there until I was about nine. In that period, [ ] my grandfather in the early part of the Depression had a ranch out in west Texas, which of course he lost in the Depression, so I went out there a few times until they lost the land. So I grew up basically in Fort Worth and the west Texas area around Balmoral, Texas.

Then when I was a young boy I got sent down to Allen Military Academy, in Bryan, Texas, which is next door to Texas A&M [ ], went there for a year, a semester. My mother and father had divorced in 1937, and so my mother went to New York and my father went out to California. I stayed with my grandmother, and essentially was raised by my grandmother until my mother came back to Texas and worked in Houston, and I went to live with her and lived in Houston for a period of time. And then she got a job back in New York, she worked for an interesting guy, a man named W.R. Davis. Davis, before WWII, he was a wildcat oil producer, and he had had a

contract with the German government, the Nazi government, selling oil to them, and once the war started of course his business was gone. And so she worked for him in Houston. She went to work in New York, and I went to New York, and [ ] we lived out in New Jersey so I finished up my high school years in New Jersey.

When I left high school, actually I left early, I joined the army when I was seventeen and went out to the Pacific just at the end of WWII, served in the Philippines very briefly, and then was shipped to Korea and I spent about two-and-a-half years in Korea, in the occupation, getting there in '46 and coming home in 1948. Used the G.I. Bill, went to a small college up in Pennsylvania for one year, Albright College, then went down to Texas University, I ran track and I got a track scholarship at University of Texas, part scholarship, didn't include meals. Went down to Texas University in '49, and was there, had made the team, was running, and went back to my dorm – we had old Quonset huts from Fort Hood, Texas, that had been moved down and placed on the University of Texas campus. And most of us [ ] were veterans, for ten dollars a month you could stay in one of those Quonsets and they would change your sheets once a week, so that was a pretty good deal.

And I was taking a pre-law course. In those times, you took a B.A. degree but you could take pre-law for three years, and then when you finished your B.A. you only had to take one year of law school and you could get your degree in law. So I was taking pre-law, my basic course was history, my B.A. course was European history. And I went back to my dorm and one of my dorm mates, an ex-Navy guy, said, "Hey, you got a letter in there from the [Army] Reserves." And I said, "I don't do anything in the Reserves." But I went back and opened the letter and it was greetings from the president, that I would, within twenty days, report to Fort [Camp] Chaffee, Arkansas.

This was July the 10th. The war had started in Korea on June 25th of 1950, and we had finished our track season in May, I was in really good shape. So I opened the letter and I had twenty days to be in Camp Chaffee, Arkansas—[I] had been recalled to active duty. I had left the army after WWII, out of Camp Stoneman [California], and as I was going in the line to get discharged one of my friends (I was a staff sergeant), one of my friends ahead of me said, "When you get up there at the table they're going to ask you 'Reserves, yes or no.' If you say yes, they're going to process you right through. If you say no, they're probably going to move you over to one side and try to convince you and keep you here."

Well all I wanted to do was get out, so when they said "Reserves, yes or no," I said yes. And that was the last thing I did in the Reserves. Except when I was in college, there was a program put in in 1949, that if you had been a first three-grader, in my case, a staff sergeant, tech sergeant and master sergeant were the first three non-commissioned grades, if you'd been a first three-grader you could get a direct commission as a second lieutenant. So I filled out the papers, put them in in 1949, got called to a board of officers over in New York, out there on the island, passed the course and got a mail order second lieutenant's commission.

So when I got to Camp Chaffee, I said, "Here, I have this commission." And they said, "Fine,

you're now a second lieutenant, and you'll be here about one more day and then you'll be on your way to Camp Stoneman, California." And in Camp Stoneman, California, I was put on a C-54 transport plane, we flew to Hickam Field, refueled, and flew into Tachikawa Air Base just outside of Tokyo, we were taken off on buses, [ ] over to a [ ] [barracks], we had been given full field equipment in Camp Stoneman, I had a carbine that still had cosmoline [grease] in it. And as soon as I got to Camp King, which was just outside of Tokyo, they called [out] our names and all second lieutenants that had just come in, all nine of us, were on our way to Korea.

I went to the 34th Infantry of the 24th Infantry Division, and about a month after I'd been on the University of Texas campus, I was on the Taegu River shooting at the North Koreans. My platoon, I was a platoon leader, the platoon was authorized thirty men, I had thirteen, so we would cover a front that was for thirty riflemen, but I only had thirteen to cover it. So the North Koreans literally walked over us at night time, so basically what we did was we'd shoot a few rounds, throw a few hand grenades, and run like hell. We did that for about a week-and-a-half, then I got shrapnel on this leg and was evacuated back to Japan. Got out of Osaka Army Hospital and stayed there for a little while, while I recuperated, and then got reassigned.

Meantime, the 34th Infantry had been shot to pieces at Taegu and they were being reformed in Japan, and I was sent back to the 34th where we retrained and picked up some fresh recruits from the States, and we went back to Korea for another go. And I finally finished that in 1952, in early winter of 1952 and came home. And by that time I had almost seven years in the Army [and was married]. [ ] It didn't seem very wise to go out and start going back to college again, so I stayed in, applied for a regular commission and got that, and became a career Army officer, and retired in 1969.

BW: I've talked to a lot of WWII veterans that then got called up again to go fight another war.

EK: I was a WWII vet, that's what we all did, a lot got called. I remember [p/o] after the war they formed what they called the New Regular Army, [ ] just like these poor [Volunteer Army] kids they're shipping off to Afghanistan now, you enlisted [ ] to get the G.I. Bill. If you enlisted you got one year of college G.I. Bill for every year that you were enlisted, well, everybody [poor] that wanted to go to college enlisted in the Army, just like these kids [today] that haven't got any money and can't go to college, they're enlisting in the volunteer Army now.

So one of the kids, when I got there [in Korea in 1950], one of the kids in my platoon said one day, "Hey lieutenant, I didn't come in the Army for this fighting stuff, I came in the Army to go to college." I said, "Hey kid, twenty days ago I was *in* college, and here I am with you."

BW: So where were you when you left the Army?

EK: When I left the Army I was in Joint Chiefs of Staff, I was the Latin American [expert], actually my job was the military secretary of the Inter-American Defense Board, executive secretary to the Joint Mexican-U.S. Defense Commission, executive secretary to the U.S.-

Brazilian Defense Commission, and the U.S.-Canadian Joint Border Commission. Basically [ ], I was working for the chairman of the Joint Chiefs as a Latin American [expert], because I'd been to the language school in Monterey in 1960, I spoke Spanish, and I'd been five years in Spain as a military advisor to the Spanish army, so I had a good background in that. So when I came back [ ] from Europe, I was in Europe twice, I was assigned to the Chief of Army Intelligence, who was a General Yarborough. General Yarborough was the creator of the Green Berets, and a favorite of President Kennedy's, so he would go up to Kennedy's redoubt up there in Hyannis Port, and he had a lot of good political connections. I worked basically for him, though I had two other generals, I'd also [ ] [worked for] a Navy admiral and an Air Force general. The three of them were the U.S. delegation to the Inter-American Defense Board. I was their military secretary, and as such had to write their stuff for what they were going to present and so forth, so I had a little experience in doing the legislative stuff.

I left in '69, because I [p/o] didn't want to go to Vietnam [ ] and get more people killed [ ] [like] I had done in Korea, because I had done that in 1951 in Korea. And the ground we would take, we'd go out and take a hill in the morning, you'd get three wounded, maybe somebody got killed, most times they didn't, you'd get two or three wounded and take the hill, and then you'd pull off, because the hill was being negotiated at Panmunjom. And then maybe after a week they'd decide, no, we need that hill, you go back and take it again. We did that all through the fall of 1951, September, October, November. I took one hill three times, had six people wounded doing it. One of them was a real good kid, lost his arm. So I didn't want to do that again, that's basically what we were doing [again by 1970 in Vietnam].

And when my tour in JCS ended in 1969 I was supposed to go to [work for] a general I had worked for [before, when he was as a] colonel—[he] was then running the MACV in Vietnam, and he said come on over, because you got to get your ticket punched, if you're going to [try to] get promoted to general you got to get your [career] ticket punched, and in the career military you [have] got to be in the last war if you're going to get promoted. It's hard for the civilian population to understand, but it's a business like any other business, and you've got a career, you put thirty years in it or twenty, you don't want to miss your [career] ticket punch so you go. But you don't want to go four or five times, which is what we're doing now.

Anyway, I didn't want to do it again [fight for something I didn't believe had any serious threat to our true national security], and my heart wasn't in it, and so I decided it was a good time to retire, and I did. [ ] Then, well I wrote a book, saying why I didn't think it [Vietnam] was a good idea, which didn't endear me to anybody, particularly John McCain. I was doing consulting work, I don't know if you remember, there was a senator from Pennsylvania named Joe [Clark]– God, I should remember his name. Anyway, he was setting up a foundation called the Coalition for National Defense [*sic*: Priorities] and Military Policy, and I became executive director, it was a non-governmental thing, I became executive director of it. We essentially were doing work not against the Vietnam War but for a reevaluation of military spending, and a better use of military manpower, that was the thrust – Joe Clark – that's what Joe wanted to do. So I became his executive director and as such did a lot of testifying before the Congress, before both the House and the Senate, and therefore got involved to some degree in legislative stuff.

And as a result of that, the fellow [Charlie Ferris] who was Senator Mansfield's floor man for the Democratic Policy Committee got me to do some work [writing floor statements] for Mansfield. And he brought me in one day and said, "I want you to meet Senator Mansfield."

(*Telephone interruption - taping paused*)

EK: So anyway, I did some work [a detailed floor statement, pointing our how the Germans were overcharging us to defend them] for Mansfield. Mansfield was trying at that point to reduce the forces in Europe because the Germans were just ripping us off right and left, they were making us pay for, if we knocked a tree down on maneuvers, we had to pay for the tree. That's an example, there were lots of other things, we were paying way more than we should have for [the use of old military] barracks. Anyway, he was trying to reduce the forces, and I had just come out of a job in NATO, and so Charlie said, "Well can you go in and talk to the senator?" I went in and talked to Mansfield. Mansfield said, "Can you do me a paper on how we could do this?" Well I did that, and he put it in the record and we got some votes on it. In fact, we actually won on the first vote because five Republicans weren't there. But then they sent out planes real fast and brought them in on the second vote and we lost by two votes. But we had a lot of fun with it [and scared the Germans enough, they quit some of their charges and rip-offs].

Anyway, Mansfield said okay, he kept me on as kind of a consultant, so I worked for him for about a year and a half, as a consultant, not on his staff. Then [Bill] Hathaway [D-Maine] was getting ready to run for reelection in '7[6], and he was looking for an administrative assistant so I went over and interviewed with him and he hired me, and I became his AA and that got me into the Maine circle. So then I worked with the campaign, because in those days you had a state campaign guy and the AA ran all the offices out of the main [Washington] office. I ran the five offices in Maine and our office here, and got to know a lot of the Maine politicians as a result of it.

When the Central American stuff started, I had had a background in that with my job in [the] Inter-American Defense Board, so I knew a lot of the majors, lieutenant colonels and colonels down in Central America that were involved in all the war that was going on down there, and the Democrats of course were – this was just before Carter. When Carter got elected we were starting to do the Central American [human rights] stuff. [ ] I [was] doing a lot of work [on] the Central American issue basically as a consultant. I went down on my own and, well, I got hired by some other [non-governmental] people, [and] did [investigative] work there. So that got me the entree for Robert Byrd, because Byrd was looking for somebody to do Central America and he brought me on in the Pol—, not in the [Democratic] Policy Committee, he brought me on first [as a consultant] – well it's pretty involved, I'm taking too much of your time here, because there's a lot of history here.

I [had earlier] started working with [Senator] Paul Tsongas, because he was on Foreign Relations and he wanted to do something on the Central American stuff that Reagan was pushing, because

I was a Democrat and we were after Reagan's scalp. [p/o] Tsongas wanted to do something, find some answers, and so I was the answer man supposedly. So I'd go down there a lot and stayed there a lot, and the reason I was knowledgeable was because I had a job for a year with the *Washington Times* as their Central American correspondent. [p/o]

Anyway, I got to know a lot of people, I had a lot of contacts, and my Spanish is fluent, and so I would go down, and Tsongas brought me on [his staff] as kind of his eyes and ears in Central America. And I told him, "Look, if I go back down, Ollie North has got the CIA on my case, because they don't want me down there doing things that they don't want to happen." Because I was in the middle of the Contra thing, and I knew a lot of the Contras, and they were inefficient and they weren't doing anything that Reagan was saying they were doing. So I was going down and writing reports on what they *weren't* doing, which was not endearing me to Ollie North by any means, because he was over in the NSC manipulating the thing, and he would sic these guys on me and they would tail me, these agency guys, and then they in turn would tip off the Salvadorian and Guatemalan, their contacts, who would just as soon shoot you as look at you. So I told Tsongas, "Look, I got to have some kind of a card so they aren't going to shoot me, so put me on the Senate payroll and give me a Senate I.D. card so it makes it too expensive for them to kill [me], it'll cost them too much [bad publicity]." And he did, and that's how I went to work for Paul Tsongas.

And I worked for him for a year, well almost two years, till he retired, and in doing that, that brought me to Byrd's attention because I was feeding Tsongas [and he] was feeding to Byrd and the Democratic [Policy Committee] – and Byrd didn't like the issue, he hated the Central American issue, and he wanted somebody who could tell him what he thought [was going on] – anyway, I got hired to work for Byrd as a consultant on Central America. And we [i.e. the Democrats] were trying to figure how were we going to do this, and Reagan was doing the military [side], they're going to invade Texas, you know, the tanks are going to come – [this was supposed to be a battle against a Communist threat to America, etc., etc.]. Well I went down and looked at the tanks, [ ] there were five Russian tanks, none of them ran, they were all busted up, they were old T-34s from the Korean War. So we wrote that up and did a good job on it [i.e., shooting down the Reagan administration military scare tactic].

But [while I was down there] I met [President Oscar] Arias in Costa Rica, and Arias had just been elected and he was looking for a way to do something politically to stop the Americans [from] keeping a war going – Reagan's influence – down in Central America. So I convinced Byrd and [Senator] Jim Sasser from Tennessee that what we needed to do was work with Arias and do a political game on them, rather than playing [their game of military force]. See, what we were doing as Democrats, we were saying, 'oh, we've got to get more troops,' same game as they're playing now [in Afghanistan], you got to have more troops, we got to have more money. I said, "Let's don't play that game [anymore], let's play a political [– not military –] game saying it's got to be [settled by] a democratically elected government," and the people [in Central America] at that point, the presidents in Central America, were up to here (*gestures*) with all this war, because it was getting their people killed.

So when we [i.e. Democrats] played the political game with Arias, he went to the U.N. with it (and he got the Nobel Peace Prize as a result of it), but we got a different slant going and Reagan then was up against the wall because [p/o] [Congress wouldn't] finance the Contras, that was the military angle [and the Central American presidents were for a political settlement]. And Byrd liked that, so Byrd brought me in and put me on the Democratic Policy Committee. So I was in the Policy Committee when Byrd told us [one] morning, look, "I'm going to take over Appropriations because I can send more money to West Virginia out of Appropriations [p/o] [than I can] here in the leadership job." And that then was – the question was – who's going to be leader?

Nobody thought Mitchell had a prayer, but the young guys, Daschle being one of them, they were sick and tired of having the old bulls tell them what to do, so they put Mitchell up as their candidate. And I forget who was, I can't remember [ ] who was the old boys' candidate?

BW: Well, it was [Daniel] Inouye and Bennett Johnston.

EK: Bennett Johnston, that was it, Johnston was going to be it, the word was out, Johnston was the [man], because Inouye, they liked him but he wasn't pushy enough. Johnston, you're right, I can't remember. And so Daschle and a [senator] from Colorado, the senator from Colorado, and Mondale backed Mitchell, and he got the two votes, he won by two votes, [I believe].

BW: Senator Hart?

EK: [p/o].

BW: He was the Colorado senator.

EK: No, it wasn't Hart, it was the guy before Hart. Liberal, he only had one term. Just like Hathaway was, 'cause [his AA] and I were good friends, the one-termers. I'm sorry to take so much of your time, but you asked me so I'm telling you. That's how I got into it.

BW: No, this is perfect, right. Let me just ask you a couple of questions from what you've said. For the record, what was the title of the book that you wrote?

EK: *The Death of the Army: A Pre-Mortem*, it came out in 1972. Essentially what I was saying was pretty much what I'm saying to you. And what I had testified about before the House Armed Services, the Senate Armed Services, House Foreign Affairs, Senate Foreign Relations, I made the pitch that we are wasting a lot of money on forces that basically, well I used [an expression], 'tooth to tail,' that the tail was huge because American boys have got to have everything when they go to fight. Now it's American boys and girls but in those days it was just boys, and that we were putting so much money in the [logistic] tail and [few] up front [were] doing [much] shooting, and [as a result] we had very little fire power up front except for heavy artillery and air strikes, and we're basically in that same problem now [in Afghanistan]. And by

doing that, when you started killing [hundreds of]Vietnamese civilians [p/o] like happened in Vietnam – [p/o] with artillery [and air strikes] [ ] they're not going to come and love you if you keep blowing them up. So that was the argument we were making, was reduce the amount of money going into unnecessary Defense expenditure [and increase the better use of manpower, with less generals running over-sized headquarters].

BW: I think it was Tim Wirth who was the senator.

EK: Wirth, that's exactly it, Tim Wirth. You got a great memory.

BW: And the other question was, did you ever get the law degree?

EK: No, no, I never went back to school. Well, I did go back to school, yes. [General] Max Taylor came in as chief of staff of the Army, everybody in the Army had to speak a foreign language and have a college degree, preferably have a master's degree. I had[n't] a college degree – I spoke two foreign languages but I didn't have a college degree. So I then went to school for eight years, night courses. In those days it wasn't as easy, there were no computers. What you had to do, [p/o], you had to take extension courses [by mail], and you'd take the extension courses and you'd go take an exam [at the college], and I did all those things for eight years. I went to, oh gosh, I've got credits from University of Georgia, University of Southern Methodist, University of Texas, I mean I got credits from all over the place.

Only one school in the country in those days – now they all play on it, I mean it's a big deal because it's a lot of money – but the only one that was smart enough to do it back in 1950s and early '60s was a little college in Omaha, Omaha University, and they would take all this collection of credits and they would give you certain credits for your military experience to get you enough credits to get you in, and you had to [be] within two semesters of graduation. And the Army would give you six months, they called it the Bootstrap Program, to be off active duty, they wouldn't pay your housing allowance, they'd just pay your salary, while you went to wherever, whoever would accept you, and the only one that would accept you [then] was Omaha University.

So I went there in September of 1959, one semester was nine semester hours, October - November, finished up the 15th of December, it was called the blitz course, and you literally worked, you were going to school all day long and you were studying all night long. Then you got to go home for Christmas, and you came back the day after New Year's and you did the other semester till June, and then you got a degree. So that was my degree out of Omaha University, I got a bachelor's degree there. So then I had the bachelor's and I had the language, but I didn't have the master's. And I got shipped to Spain so I enrolled in the University of Madrid and I went to night school, and whenever I could sneak away from the office, take a class in the day, and got what they call a *licenciatura*, which is a master's degree in Hispanic, or Latin American studies.

BW: Was that during Franco's era?

EK: Yes, oh yes.

BW: So you were advising Franco's forces.

EK: I was advising Franco's infantry regiments [as a member of the U.S. Military Advisor Group, Spain (JUSMG)], which we were supplying the equipment for under the agreement that was signed by our President [Eisenhower]. See, what we did, we had a lot of tanks and [WWII military equipment] so we shipped him a whole bunch of WWII [equipment], and it was all over Spain, because that's how he [Franco] reinforced his army. In return, we got the five bases so we could [p/o] refuel the B-47s on their way to Moscow, to 'shake the rubble,' as Mansfield used to say. [By the time the bombers] got [ ] there [ ] to really shake the rubble [of Moscow] up because the rockets [would] have already done it. But the bombers have got to get there too, because the Air Force has got to get some money and you've got to have some bombers because you got to have an air force. But anyway, we got [four] bases, Guadalajara and Morón, Torrejon and we got the navy base down at Rota, which we still have, which the Navy still uses.

But our job in the Military Assistance Advisory Group for Spain, of which I was a military advisor to the Spanish infantry, who told me the first day on the job – the general I was advising: "There's nothing that the Spanish infantry needs to learn from the American Army, but you're welcome to come to anything you wish to come to and we're always glad to have you here." So I went to a lot of things. We traveled around Spain [ ] and looked at all this junk [U.S.] equipment [because it wasn't supposed to leave Spain for Morocco, and JUSMG had to keep count of it all].

BW: There are so many different directions we could still go in with this, this is an incredible-

EK: Yes, well I don't want to keep wasting your time with all this stuff.

BW: This isn't wasting time, but I mean it's an incredible career that you're talking about.

EK: I've had a lot of interests and a lot of fun, yes, that's right. Anyway, when I came with Mitchell, that was my entree – well, when he took over he cleaned house, like everybody does, and he put in a new director of the [Policy Committee]. I was not, at that point [on the committee] – I was still working for Byrd as a consultant on Latin American policy, paid out of the Democratic Policy Committee, so the question was—mine was—having been there before twice out of work—because I'd worked for Proxmire, after Mansfield I went with Proxmire, and then from Proxmire to Hathaway, Hathaway to Tsongas, Tsongas to Byrd, Byrd – and I [ ] [didn't know whether Mitchell would keep me on]?

So I called up Bill Hathaway, and I said, "[Senator], I'm still paying a mortgage, I've got a divorce settlement, I got all kinds of problems, and I'd like to stay on the payroll for the Democratic Policy Committee. Can you put in a good word for me with Mitchell?" And he said, "Sure." So I guess he must have. Anyway, I got [word] from Martha Pope, and Martha

said look, "Don't play this thing too heavy," just sit tight and we'll look after you – she didn't say we'll look after you, she said, "Just don't over politicize your game over there in the Policy Committee, just sit tight." And they brought me on, Mitchell brought me on. So that's how we started.

BW: Were you unique in that sense, or were several other of the -?

EK: [*significant revision:*] I was unique to him at that point only because I was current on issues in Central America. Maine politics are Maine oriented. I tried to get Hathaway to hire a defense guy one time, he said, "What do I want a defense guy for, I don't do anything on defense?" I said "But, you got to help Bath Iron Works." "Oh yeah," he said, "hire him."

[*significant revision:*] When Mitchell became leader he needed somebody to help transition him into the day-to-day Central American stuff because by that time it was big, it was high level, Reagan was putting a lot of effort in it, and the Ollie North thing with Contras was there. So that's what I did, I transisted. I'd been doing the staff work on a presidential election in Nicaragua for – a woman.

BW: Chamorro?

EK: Chamorro, yes, I knew her pretty well—can't remember her name but I knew her well—and she liked me and I could call her up and talk to her, because I'd known her husband. So what I could do was get the word from her, and Mitchell could then play it [p/o]. That's basically what I did, was [help] transist him into the [current] Central American [issues], and at the same time we were trying to cut the money for the Contras (Democrats, when I say "we"). He now was majority leader so he was leading that effort, and he said, he told me in the beginning, look, "I'm going to make [Senator] Dodd my point man, do whatever you can to help Dodd [keep] this thing moving." So I went with Chris [Dodd] most of the time, we'd go down and do a lot of stuff with [President] Arias. And we got it to a point where we could really make the case that this [i.e. the Contra funding] was a waste of money. And [ ] Dodd did.

Remember [Eugene] Hasenfus, that got captured [by the Sandanistas]? Well I set the release up for Hasenfus, I went down and saw [Victor] Tinoco, who was the foreign minister then, he was [a] friend of mine [ ]. And I told Victor, "Look, if you'll spring this guy and let Dodd get the credit [you will look good]– if you keep him, you're going to have us [i.e. the U.S.] down your throat and you're going to have to do something, so get rid of him, he's a liability to you." Tinoco couldn't have agreed more, he convinced [President] Ortega. We set it up, Dodd went down, we went to the prison, we met Hasenfus, we did the whole thing, got a big [P.R.] session, here's Ortega, here's Dodd, here's Hasenfus, lots of press, lots of television, and we sprung him and brought him up, and Dodd took the credit, and the Policy Committee and the Democrat side took the credit, and papers picked it up and [there] it was [a big coup for Dodd and the Democratic leadership].

And so [then] we really had the administration [ ] by the nose, and Mitchell had them right

[where he wanted it]. Mitchell, he was one of the most underrated partisans that I've ever seen, because this guy goes for the jugular, but he does it with a smile, and he does it so nicely [and smoothly] that nobody knows it. And the reason I'm saying this, because you want to put this in at some point in your interview, is we had a meeting then, when it became obvious that they [the Reagan administration] couldn't get the money, they couldn't pass it in the Senate because Mitchell had them by the nose, that the administration then called for the Agreement on Central America, and [Secretary] Jim Baker drafted that. And Mitchell said, "Tell Dodd to write up as tough a line as he wants," and so Dodd['s staff and I] [p/o] wrote the [agreement], and we wrote a real strangling piece of legislation.

And Mitchell had a meeting with [Secretary] Baker, it was Mitchell, Baker, Dodd, and the guy who was the [State Department] assistant secretary [for Latin America, Elliot Abrams], who was a[n important right wing] Republican type [p/o], he was there, and we showed them the agreement. And I'll never forget this, you'll want me to put this in, Baker looked at it, he read it, and he looked at it [again], it was about a three-page [paper], [p/o] and he looked over at Mitchell and he said, "George, you're not giving me very much here." And Mitchell, bland as [ ] always said, "[Jim], we don't have to give you anything because you haven't got any money." He just stuck it right to him because we'd cut off all the funding for the Contras, and in that document that we had drafted up, it just wiped the Contras out, there was no more Contras.

BW: You said a moment ago that Mitchell really didn't have much interest in Central America -

EK: Not [a lot I knew of] until [p/o] he got to be majority leader, yes, he [had background] interest [not particularly on the Contra issue]. What I'm saying is he kept me, I think, because I could [help] transist him, because I'd been working it then for four, almost five years. [And because he's a loyal man and wanted to keep me employed].

BW: But it's curious because of course he played such a role in the Iran-Contra hearings in '87, so that he would have been attuned to these issues.

EK: Yes, oh he knew it, yes, but he didn't really have any on-the-ground in Central America experience, [with Arias,] Chamorro, and all those people, he had to work with but he didn't know them, and so that's where I was kind of [useful].

BW: Did he do any travel to Central America?

EK: Yes. His first trip was [traditional—to Canada; I didn't go, Martha went. And his next trip was to Mexico and I went with him on that one. And he took Jim Sasser because they were buddies, and he and Sasser went down, we were flying down, I gave him a brief on what we had to do down there, I had set it up. And we got to Mexico City, they [embassy staff] picked him up, took him over to the ambassador's house, [p/o]. Anyway, he was up at the ambassador's house, we [went to the defense minister's party that evening]. Next morning we're going to the president's house in Los Pinos to a breakfast but [at] one o'clock, my phone rings in the room,

it's the press secretary and she says, "Have things broken loose in Mexico City yet?" I'd just gone to bed—I went to bed about eleven o'clock—and I said, "Not that I know of." She said, "Well we just invaded Panama about a half hour ago, and the Agency's telling us that there's going to be riots in Mexico City, all over Latin America, and particularly in Mexico City. So two things: Mitchell's got to be back up here because things are coming [up in the Senate that] we've invaded Panama; and two, it's not going to be safe in Mexico City."

So I get up and go get the air crew, [tell] the colonel that was the head of the [Air Force] aircraft that we had [to leave at once], and said, "We got to go, man, we're out of here." And he said, "No, I can't, [my crew has] to have seven hours on the ground [p/o] before I can fly again, and I've only had [a few] hours, I can't go." I said, "Bullshit, you're going, no matter what, call the Air Force and tell them that the majority leader is going to Washington and you're going to take him out of here." Well, [ ] I called immediately then up to the ambassador's residence, they had just gotten the word of the invasion and they'd gotten him up, he and Sasser, and we got the cars and raced out to the military airfield, moved the plane over and loaded up and came to Washington.

I tell you that just to show you how they [i.e. the administration] used to blind side him. Here he is, he's majority leader of the U.S. Senate, and they know he's going to Mexico City, we'd announced it a week in advance, more than a week, and yet they hung him out there, letting him go down to Mexico and be there when they jumped into Panama. And he was furious, which he should have been. It was just terrible. He didn't show it [anger], because Mitchell never showed it, but you knew inside, man, he was unhappy because he sat in the plane, he and Sasser were sitting there with [ ] long faces and they were sleepy and they were not happy campers.

BW: When you came over from Byrd's policy committee to Mitchell, did a lot of Byrd's people come over with you, or not?

EK: No, not many, most of Byrd's people, they [gradually] got rid of them. See, what happened, nobody moved, we all kept the same offices over in the Hart Building, but Byrd's [policy committee] crew, et cetera, most of them, they moved out. In fact, I think we only kept, they sent two people over from Mitchell's office, you'll probably get involved with one of them, and then they sent [over] the domestic [policy Maine office] people, mostly all of them came over and took over, the health care, [etc.], from the Maine office, [ ] they [ ] moved them into the [Hart 619], so it basically became essentially a Mitchell operation.

BW: And you were in room 712 of Hart.

EK: Yes.

BW: And was that all foreign, all of you in there were -?

EK: 712 under Byrd was [ ] Foreign and Defense. I did [foreign policy], first it was [run by] Dick McCall, Dick moved over to work for John Kerry, I took over [ ] in Foreign Policy. Let's

see, Dick D'Amato was Byrd's defense guy and foreign policy guy. [But] Dick [had] moved over to Appropriations with Byrd, and we had a guy [Scott Harris] from Rand who was working with Dick, he stayed for a while, he was kept. And I'm trying to think of the woman they sent over from, was moved over from the Maine office.

BW: Wendy Decker?

EK: No, Wendy was a Byrd person, Wendy [p/o] ran the office, she was the office manager and she would set up [CODEL] the trips, and she did it for Byrd and so she stayed. She and I were the only two Byrd people in that office that stayed.

BW: And what about Sarah Sewall?

EK: That's the one I'm trying to think of, Sarah was the one that was sent over from the Maine office.

BW: Right, right. So while you were there, and I think that was from '89 to '94.

EK: Yes, I was there till Mitchell left.

BW: Were you doing other international issues, or were you still pretty much focused on Central America?

EK: Oh no, once he cut the Contras off that was the end of [the] Central America [issue] with Mitchell. With Mitchell, for foreign policy, the way we worked was essentially, [take each issue as it camp up]. In the beginning he saw how I operated, and I learned what I shouldn't do with him, and he knew that I wasn't going to cause him any problems because Hathaway had told him that, and he saw that [p/o]. We never talked much because Mitchell was not a staff talker [p/o], he didn't want [much] to do with us. That was the last [thing] he wanted to deal with was his damn staff, except for his immediate staff, Martha, Bob Rozen, [and other] people in the inner office, [like John Hilley]. And even in the State office, he'd go over there, but Mitchell was a very individual senator, and he knew where he wanted to go and one of the first things he told the people in the Policy Committee [p/o], "You do the policy, I do the politics." That was one of his first [meetings], one of the few times he ever met with us.

He didn't like to do it [i.e. staff meetings], he didn't do it. He'd send [Senator] Daschle over to pump us up and do all the goody-goody [morale] things, but Mitchell didn't. He made Daschle the assistant Policy Committee director, Daschle then tried to move his people in, there became a conflict within the Policy Committee because the Policy Committee people, the old Byrd people didn't like it, and the Mitchell people didn't like it, and so the old Byrd people and the Mitchell people would oppose the Daschle crowd. So [Daschle] sent an assistant director over to run the committee and that's where the internal stuff went on. Mitchell never got involved in that, but at a point he brought in, I guess it was after about six or eight months of that internal stuff, which I'm sure he knew about [p/o]. He brought in — what was her name [Monica Healy]? She

became staff director, she was a Mitchell person, not from the Maine staff but somebody he had known along the way that he liked and he trusted. He put her in as staff director.

BW: Of the Policy Committee.

EK: Of the Policy Committee, and [she moved the] guy that Daschle had put in there, [made him [her] assistant [p/o].

BW: Well, we can add that to the transcript.

EK: Yes, she got in. Now, whether Mitchell was involved in that, I do not know. I just know that suddenly she was appointed as the staff director. [p/o] I was the oldest guy around there. And so I said to her, "Look, this is what's going on here. You got a bunch of [young staffers] and they're all playing [importance] games, and you're going to have to sit on them, and so anything I can do to help you, I'll help you." And so we worked that way, and she got it pretty well organized, at least a Daschle takeover didn't [continue]. It stayed a Mitchell operation, with a few [ ] Byrd people [p/o], so it became basically a Mitchell operation.

BW: And just for the record, how many different, the Policy Committee, it was international and -?

EK: There was a domestic [section], domestic was health, [labor, etc.] [ ], everything except foreign policy and defense. Foreign policy and defense we did upstairs in [Hart] 712, and 619 [and 419] was all the rest of it. And two [ ] or three of those people were old Byrd people and the rest were all Mitchell people. And two of the old Byrd people left, or got moved, I never knew why they left, and the Mitchell people were moved in from the Mitchell staff, essentially.

BW: So 712 was big enough for both.

EK: 712 had three spaces, a back space that Sarah went into, a middle space that Dick D'Amato had, but he left and [ ] went with Byrd. That was filled by the guy [Scott Harris (defense)] who went to Rand, whose name I'll think of in a moment, and then I had the corner spot for foreign policy. Wendy [Deker] was out front on the administration, I hired Leah [Titerence] and gave her a desk inside, and she and Wendy would work together. Since [Leah] spoke Arabic and I didn't, [she helped] Mitchell, with Israeli-Palestinian issues. [p/o].

[*section of responses and questions omitted*]

BW: So what were some of the other hot issues?

EK: Okay, with Mitchell, the way I always did it was issue to issue, finish this issue, put it in the file cabinet, forget it, move to the next one, because there was always one waiting. Let's take Central America, Central America went away, all right. Along came Haiti, Haiti went away [after Clinton sent troops]. [p/o] Next thing up was Sarajevo, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Kosovo,

those were all sitting there, bumping, and I was [working] those as they came [up]. My job would be to [keep Mitchell informed by memo] – Mitchell didn't want to talk about these, you didn't go in and see George Mitchell and sit there and chat with him.

What you did was, you did your memos, and I've got a whole file of them down in the basement. You did your memo, two pages, maybe three if you had a lot to say. I would do the memos and it would be first of all: the issue. Secondly: where the key senators were playing, my job was to talk to the staff [and find out why]. Third was: options, what you can do? And then fourth was [different options]: option one, option, you know, Op 1, dash, Op 2, dash, Op 3, dash, Op 4, dash, and you'd take that [memo] in to Martha. [Mitchell] had three baskets on his desk: 'In' basket, 'Out' basket, 'Dead letter' basket—we called it the 'deep six' basket. If it went in the deep six basket, it was [that] Mitchell didn't want to deal with [it right away], put it over there and we'll talk about it later – you didn't push it after that. [Into the] 'In' basket, next day or the day after it would be in the 'out' basket, there'd be a check by Op 1 or Op 2 or Op 3. If he had a question, he'd write in the margin, "why is Lieberman doing this?", or, "why is Lieberman saying that?", or, "what is Ted saying?", or, "is Ted on board?" Those kind of things. That'd come back to you, then you got the staff on the phone, you went to see them, you talked to them, and you went back and gave him the answer. On those kind of issues [and questions].

On Bosnia, I remember we worked Bosnia hard. And then when you got the memos thing, then the word would come, then you'd put at the bottom, another thing, you'd put, 'floor statement, yes or no.' If he put yes, then you wrote him a floor statement, and generally he would say yes. And that was a point I'll make to you [p/o] aside. Mitchell was the best weaver and dodger I have ever seen in politics. I mean, this guy was fantastic. I have written him I don't know how many floor statements, I've written a lot of floor statements in my time, and I'd write them up and, and oh, get the MFN [Most Favored Nation], let's [talk about] on MFN. After Bosnia-Herzegovina, all the Yugoslavian stuff, we had Egypt one time, Mubarak was coming to see him, and we met with Mubarak, he and Dole with Mubarak. And I remember he came out of that and said—he rolled his eyes, because Mubarak was a piece of work.

And then when Tiananmen Square took place – I'm jumping around now, but this is [how I remember it at this late date] – Tiananmen Square took place, Mitchell told the press secretary, he called her [p/o] and told her, "I want to do something on China." Well the [policy] issue to do it on was Most Favored Nation status – that was coming up the next year. So I did him a memo before Tiananmen Square, about the status. What I tried to do was, my job was, to keep him ahead of it, so I'd do memos on whatever I thought was coming, or what I was hearing from downtown or around, wherever, that was my job, and [inform] him, "This is what I think's going to come [up], and this is where I think you're going to have to be." And so I'd written him about Most Favored Nation status, he had indicated, yes, he wanted to play in it, [ ] not where he wanted to [act] but that he wanted to play.

Then Tiananmen Square came and he got the press secretary on the phone in the morning, must have been about one or two o'clock in the morning, he was living down there on 2nd Street [N.E.], and said he wanted to make a floor statement first thing the next morning on Tiananmen

Square, and he wanted to make it about Most Favored Nation status. He wanted to connect them. So she called me and got me up [p/o]: "He wants a floor statement [on Tiananmen Square and MFN] first thing in the morning." So okay, so I got up, went down to the Hart Building, got my computer going and started thinking about what to say, and put together a pretty balanced floor statement for him, not knowing where he was at that point. [p/o].

And of course my job, whenever there was a foreign policy issue, if I had written the memos, I went with him and sat in the chair next to him, with all the stuff [ ], in a folder, to feed him [anything he needed on facts and figures, data, etc.] what most senators want to do. Not George Mitchell, you did not [hand] him [anything about] foreign policy, I don't know about the rest of it, but in my case, he didn't want it. And if he wanted something, he'd look around and look at you, if the issue was up he'd look at you, and you'd pull it out and [give] it to him, that's how we worked. He wouldn't say, 'give me the paper on…,' if Helms over there is saying so-and-so, when Helms would be saying it, he'd look over, which was to say, give me whatever you got that'll shoot Helms down. I'd pull out what I had and hand it to him. But you didn't hand it to him [openly] like this, you handed it to him [inauspiciously] like that, because one thing George Mitchell did not like was for anybody to think that the staff was telling him anything. It was out of George Mitchell's head, and generally it was. [He would have memorized all the details, and didn't even need to look at the written statement. He was really good at extemporaneous winging-it].

That's why I said, [he's the] best weaver and dodger I've ever seen, because he would stand there with a bland face, and he would just be cutting them up from side to side, and it just drove Bush Forty-one crazy, because he looked so anti-partisan, and he was totally partisan, and he was just slashing them. And yet, he was coming across to the gallery and, all those press types, he was coming across as cool George, and yet he wasn't cool, he was hot as hell, he was mad. But it didn't show.

And then the other thing that used to impress me, was that he'd take the floor statement which, I put everything I could think of in there – they weren't good floor statements, they were okay – he'd look at the lead paragraph, you'd have it on the [desk], you'd put it there for him, on a folder, and he'd come in, come down, "How are you this morning?" "Good, Senator." Sit down, look at the floor statement, put it back on the [desk], the majority leader's desk, and then he'd stand up. When he stood up, of course he took the floor, because the majority leader immediately takes the floor, and he would start, and he would use the first maybe three, four lines of the [statement's first] paragraph to roll in, and then he'd wing it. And he would wing it and just, *pffft-pffft-pffft*. He'd seen the floor statement earlier, but that was the first time he probably really read it. I mean, maybe he had, I don't know. [But he knew exactly what he intended to say and the political effect he wanted].

The way we worked – I'll go back on MFN, because that was one that I spent a lot of time on – he told me, "I want a bill," after we went into it. He was really angry about that, he said, "They're murderers." He did that first day, that first morning, then I was over in the office and he came out and he said, "I want a bill on MFN." And I said, I think I asked him, I didn't ask

him much but I think I asked him, "Which way do you want to go?" He said, "Go to [the] House and talk to Nancy [Pelosi] and see where she wants to go." Pelosi, because she was running – out of San Francisco – she was doing a lot of the MFN stuff, she was kind of running it. Nobody in the House was much interested in it, 'they're shooting some Chinese', who in the hell cared. But she had an issue on it because in her district, that was hot, and so she was leading on MFN, which was still a low key issue, because Bush was all for China, had been the ambassador, and the general, the NSC [National Security Council] guy, General – I'll think of him [Brent Scowcroft].

Anyway, they were all pro-China, until Tiananmen, then they had to walk [rather than talk]. Remember they [ ] went over and drank the champagne with Dien after Tiananmen, and that gave us an opening, we tore them up on that one. I forget who it was, I think it was, it was Bush Forty-one's Foreign Policy guy, NSC guy [Brent Scowcroft]. Well then we (*unintelligible*), so I went over to see Pelosi, and Pelosi wanted to do human rights. Well, my readings and talk [with staff] was that human rights was okay, yes, we had to do that, but we had some trade issues we needed to bang [on], and she wasn't against trade but she wanted to do some trade [but human rights first]: we wanted to do nuclear, we wanted to do [intellectual property rights].

BW: Proprietary trademark.

EK: Trademark, well on communication stuff, they were copying it right and left, paying no royalties, so we wanted to get that in there. So there really were five things to put in. So I drafted up a bill, took it over to Nancy [Pelosi] and to her [staff] person, and we sat down and tried to manipulate it around, and then [I] put a memo on it telling him [Mitchell] what the background was, what Nancy [Pelosi] wanted [p/o] – she wanted to lead with human rights – saying I didn't think we ought to lead with human rights, thought we ought to lead with trade. And I looked up a system of trade priorities under the Tax Act of '58. There was a proviso that if things were being dumped, you could put gradually [increasing] scheduled [import tariff] taxes on those items that were being dumped on the economy, so I was proposing that we put, and he bought that, he thought that was a good idea.

So we put that up front, we did the nuclear stuff, we did the [human rights] and we put the trade [and intellectual property] in there. And Mitchell looked at the bill, sent it back, I gave him all the play on who was talking about it, who was going to go with us, who was going to oppose us. And he said, "Write me a good floor statement." And I said, "Well when do you want it?" He said, "Tomorrow morning." Well, this time, it's late in the evening. So I wrote the floor statement that night, came home, slept [ ] for a while, went back, ran it off again, went over it and got it ready. He was living down on 2nd Street. And the way we worked was, I would put it in a big brown envelope, go down there, five thirty, six [a.m.], open the screen door, put it under his door, go back to the office in Hart, sit there a few minutes. Whenever he got through reading it, he'd have his coffee, he'd call and say, "Okay." I'd go back down, it'd be shoved out from under the door, I'd get it, go back, he'd have written in what he wanted, then I'd retype it in the heavy print, in the big print, for the floor statement. And then he would go to the floor with it and wing it. The guy was incredible. But that's how we worked.

BW: How different was the winged version from the written version?

EK: Only in the flow of the way he'd present it, pretty much the same stuff, the facts would be basically the same, but it would be the flow of how he did it, how he put it, how he spun it. It would be the way, the [political] edge of it would be sharper, he'd cut better with it. Mine would be more fact type stuff. He'd take the facts and he'd cut better with them when he was weaving and dodging [with the opposition].

BW: The politics.

EK: The politics, yes. [He was incredibly good as a speaker in working in all the political angles.

End of CD One
CD Two

BW: I'm curious, the memo form that you described, was that something that was presented to you, this is the way you send information to the Senator, or did you devise that on your own?

EK: [p/o] I was told, he doesn't want to meet [with staff much], Martha said, he doesn't want a bunch of you people in there talking to him, make it up in memo form, so I devised my own memo, I think everybody had their own form. Mine was just like I told you, it would be "To-From-Re" – to Senator Mitchell, from Ed King, re: MFN – and then the stuff, and at the bottom the options and, "do you want a floor statement?"

BW: The thing that stuck out, as you described the sections, was the one where you accounted for other Democrats and their positions. So you must have been doing a lot of surveying.

EK: Yes, well I spent most of my time on the telephone, or walking around the Capitol or the Hart Building or the Dirksen Building or over in the Russell Building talking to the staffers. And I didn't always walk around to do it, so I'd have meetings in [Room] 111, up next to the speaker's [*sic*: leader's], his office, right off the speaker's office, it had a long table and chairs, and I'd have the woman that worked for Martha, a good friend of mine [p/o]. I'd call her and say, "Hey, get me 111, I got to get together with some people," and then she would, that's where the majority leader meets with all foreign dignitaries, it's a very fancy room, got the glass [chandeliers] and all that stuff. But then I'd have a meeting over there and I'd get the people that I knew were playing with him, [ ] and I'd get the people I knew, like Joe Lieberman['s staffer] who was [never sure where his boss wanted to be and might change position and] pull the rug out in front of you last minute always. I'd get them in there so we could all sit at the table [and talk], and then I would [listen and] play fair and square up at the head of the table.

(*Telephone interruption*)

Yes, so I would get periodic meetings and get people in that I knew were on the issue. And in the beginning, I tried something, when Mitchell first took over the Policy Committee. See, under Byrd it was, Byrd was very anti-Reagan [p/o]. He liked him, but he thought he was totally off the reservation with what he was doing, Byrd didn't agree with any of that. So it was very partisan in the Policy Committee against Republicans' issues, and Republicans. So [ ] when Mitchell came in, he didn't say how he wanted to do it. I started by having a Republican, I knew Dole's guy, Al Lehyn, Al and I drank martinis together; we were not friends but we respected each other. So when I had a couple of meetings, I brought Al in, I said, "Come on over, sit in." And of course that outraged the Mitchell office people, because they were of that time of: 'Republicans, are all bastards and we cut them off at the knees any time we can.'

So I had Al in a couple of times, and I got a lot of flak for that and so I stopped doing it, and just did it with Democrats. And I think Mitchell probably would have been with his [staff], he didn't want to bring them in there either, so I was [ ] off base. But I wanted to get a feel for how far you could go to open it up to the other side, and that was too much. So what we'd do is get all the Democrat [staffers] in [ ], not all, I'd get the key [senators' staffers], the ones that I thought were going to torpedo us, and the ones that I knew were going to support us, put them all in a room and then play Mr. Fair at the head of the table and let them go at it, and then write up what came out of that, as I saw it.

BW: I was interviewing Senator Simpson the other day -

EK: Oh, he's an interesting guy, yes.

BW: And he was talking about the role of whip, which is to do the same kind of thing. So did you confer with Alan Cranston or Wendell Ford much?

EK: No, because I was [just staff], I'm just a [senior] staffer. I'd talk to [Ford] and Cranston's [senior staffers], I didn't talk [directly] to the senators [unless told to, or they asked me for answers], I didn't play at the senators' table, I wasn't that important, I'd [work] with the [senior] staff people, whoever his foreign policy person was, that's who I got feed from and let them get it from the senator. I never went to the senators, because that was not my role, and Mitchell would not have supported it, he'd of gotten rid of me in a minute if he thought I was getting [a big head]. You know, these staffers, they come in, these thirty-year-olds, they all want to be important. Well I'd been around for [over] ten years, I knew that that didn't matter, it didn't matter who you talked to. You just wanted to have the idea of what the senator was [thinking], and if he had anything [personal] to say, he'd go to the majority leader and tell him.

What I tried to do, I felt my role was to get from the [senior] staff what they were getting from their senator, feed that into Mitchell so that when Cranston came to Mitchell, Mitchell could sit there and say, "Yes, okay, I understand." He had a background on what Cranston was gonna come at him [with]. So that's how I always tried to play it with the staff, where it was going, and sometimes, like on MFN, because that was a good one, I wrote the first bill and then he, it was his bill, it was a Mitchell bill, we put it up, we got good votes. In fact, Clinton had just come in,

and they were like this crowd that's in there now, they didn't know where the hell to go. They were like Carter, bring them in from the outside and they don't know what to do and they're flailing around [at first].

And so we ran the first MFN in '87, and I've got the executive order that Clinton signed, up there on my wall at my desk with the pen, because Mitchell gave me the pen. And Clinton got on it and did an executive order, which in effect tightened up the MFN agreement and delayed our approval of it, which is what Mitchell wanted to do at that point. But then Bob Rubin came in as the economic advisor, and Mitchell had Rubin over to the leader's office to talk about MFN, and it became obvious to Mitchell, and for me too, I was sitting at the end of the table, that Rubin was not going where we wanted to go, that he thought we were going to hurt economic [growth], we were going to cost companies money by being sticky about MFN. He wanted MFN left alone, open it up, let the Chinese come in here and submerge us. That's Bob Rubin, because remember, Bob Rubin is [ ] a Wall Streeter.

Well, Mitchell got that, and saw that. And so I put on the memo, I had to write the second bill, we had to do a second bill, "How do you want to go?" "You write it and I'll take a look at it." I wrote another tough one, and got Nancy Pelosi [to agree], Nancy wanted to stick it to them and so she agreed, and we wrote a tough bill and I sent it in to him, here's your bill. He agreed to it, and his comment back was, 'get cosponsors,' which was always one of the things. I always did [try to get] cosponsors on any of his bills, [ ] I started trying to get cosponsors. Well, on [this] one [un]like [ ] the other bill, [which] was easy, we picked up twenty-eight just like that. On this one, I got about five liberal Democrats, maybe six, and then nobody was calling back. Because you'd call around, "Hey, when's your boss going to get on?" Nobody's calling back.

So [ ] I'm getting the message that something's, somebody – now this is not Mitchell, Mitchell doesn't know about this – but one of Kennedy's people that I used to [know] [p/o] was down in the NSC as a director of the NSC [staff] under [Anthony Lake]. So I called Nancy and I said, "Hey, I'm going to come down, invite me down to lunch because I want to come talk to you." She says, "Okay, come down." So I went down to have lunch with her, and I said to her, "Look, I'm getting a feeling that there's something going on on MFN, and I think it's coming out of here. And would you find out if Clinton is going to change on this, because I'm getting it from State and I'm getting it from a lot of sources, I'm not getting any cosponsors, and what I'm getting out of State's lukewarm." Because I called State daily, I talked to all the bureau people over there almost every day. And I said, "If you guys are changing your positions on this, if the president's going to change on this, let me know. I don't want to know what the change [is], just let me know, because I don't want George Mitchell left hanging out there swinging in the wind if you guys are going to switch off on us on MFN, and it looks to me like that's what you're doing." She said, "Okay," she said, "no, we're not, I'll let you know." Never heard a word. [p/o].

BW: Nancy's last name? We can add it later [Soderberg, staff director, NSC].

EK: [p/o].

BW: Well, what was the final resolution?

EK: When I wrote to Mitchell I said, "I think things are changing, I think you ought to [check with Secretary Christopher], do you want me to continue looking for cosponsors? I think things have changed, and I think you ought to begin taking a lower profile." I did that in a memo to him. And he didn't say yes or no, he just let that go by, but I know he got it. And then I asked him, "Do you want me to rechange the bill?" And he said, "No, leave it alone." And then it went into the 'deep six' box. All I tried to do was tip him off, and he probably already knew it, but I tipped him off as far as I [could], from the staff level, that this was changing, and that he [needed] to go downtown and talk to Clinton and talk to the secretary of state and make sure [what was going on]. And I think he did, I think he made the calls, because very shortly thereafter he said, "We're going to go down and have breakfast with the secretary of state and I want you to come." "Yessir." So we went down and had breakfast and he put that right to [Secretary Christopher] [p/o]. Anyway, Mitchell obviously had read the memo, because he asked him right up front, as soon as the breakfast started, "Are you people on this?"

BW: Christopher?

EK: Yes, Christopher, Warren Christopher. But I'm just trying to describe to you how we did, how we worked at the staff level. I did not have contact at the top levels, unless he told me to do it.

BW: Right, right. Other issues that you dealt with?

EK: Well, after MFN, let's see, what came next. We were still doing Bosnia, that was still boiling. We were doing Middle East. He was working Ireland all that time [p/o].

BW: Talk about that a little bit, because of course he's so associated with Ireland after he left the Congress.

EK: Yes. Well he took Martha into that. What I did on Ireland was, I basically would keep the same format, I would talk around, go to the Irish, talk to the Irish embassy, talk to State, play with Kennedy's crowd, because he was the leader in the Senate on the Irish, on the IRA. He wanted to bring [Gerry] Adams over. My contacts were saying, it's not going to play well, it's going to open the door for the Republicans, they're going to attack us. I wrote a memo to that effect. He said, talk to Kennedy's people, I did, they were all for it, and I wrote him back and said, "Kennedy's people are for it, so are Leahy's people, but I think it's going to cost." So my recommendation would be, keep hands off of it.

Kennedy went to see him, and he had Adams in, Republicans came right after us, but he didn't seem to mind, he didn't care. He would [receive] [Ian] Paisley, Paisley would come, he'd sit – and this is interesting because they all would come, Paisley would come, Adams would come. Who was the Catholic – they'd all come. I sat through those ad nauseam meetings, and Mitchell

would sit there with that Mitchell face, he's a great negotiator, just listen to them as they'd just dump on him all over the place, and 'yes, oh yes, hmm-hmm,' commit to nothing, commit to absolutely nothing, but just looked like the nicest, friendliest, helpful-est guy you could ever find, and not give you a damn thing. That's how I always saw those. Paisley, he liked [some of] them [ ], but he didn't commit. When they left, they didn't have a thing in hand, except that they liked George Mitchell, and Mitchell was going to help, he was going to work on it. But what he was doing to work on it and the way he was going to work on it, he didn't give them that.

He played that hand beautifully, and I think that's why he was able to do it, because he never really committed anyplace, but he listened to everybody and he made up his own mind. And that's true – and I'll back up, you said you wanted another one. Middle East: I had Leah [Titerence] doing the Middle East, because I hated to deal with AIPAC [American Israel Public Affairs Committee] and that crowd, so I'd send her and she'd go and listen to all of it. She didn't like them, because she was pro-Arab, was very pro-Arab, so everything she wrote to Mitchell would be pro-Arab. And of course Mitchell, he had his problems with it because he, I don't know where he was really. My gut was that he wanted to help the Palestinians where he could, much like [Senator] Percy had done six years before, and I think that's what he tried to do. But in terms of where he put himself, he played pretty much the same game on that one. If he leaned at all, he'd lean a little bit on the Palestinian issues, particularly the settlements.

The first time I remember when Netanyahu had just gotten elected as prime minister, first time, Mitchell met with him, I sat at the end of the table taking notes. Mitchell was very, very, you know, typical George Mitchell deal negotiator. But I had gotten from State what they were concerned about, I'd done a memo to him, he had talked to Christopher, they had lined up what he was supposed to push Netanyahu on, and he did. He was supposed to push him on the settlements, he was supposed to push him on the closure of the West Bank, the issues that we were, at that point, [ ] concerned about. And he made every one of them, but he made them in a very gentle way [ ], Netanyahu didn't give him one inch on any of those issues – there were three of them, there was settlements, West Bank, and Gaza, and he didn't give him an inch on any one of them.

After it was over, after Netanyahu left and I was picking up my book to leave, and Mitchell very seldom said anything, he kept it to himself, but he said, "Boy, he's a hardass, isn't he?" And I said, "Yes sir." And that's all he said. So when he was meeting with Netanyahu the other day [as Secretary Clinton's Middle East envoy] I was thinking, "I know what George Mitchell's thinking when he walks in there: I'm back with this hardass again."

BW: With the same issues on the table.

EK: Same issues, exactly, same issues.

BW: Did Mitchell have any role to play when Clinton had Rabin and Arafat in, and they came to some resolutions?

EK: Not that I was involved in. I think he probably had talked to Clinton about it. I do not know. But I'm sure, knowing him that he had talked to both Christopher and Clinton about it.

BW: Did you travel with Mitchell down to the White House, either Bush Forty-one or with Clinton?

EK: Forty-one and Clinton.

BW: What was that like?

EK: Well, it was interesting. With Forty-one, I sat in the outside office, the bag boys, the [so-called] 'horse holders' sat out in the outside office, he goes in. And I had done that with him on, on Central America I think I did it three times with him, and I was a 'horse holder' outside, sitting out there waiting, and he'd come out and get in the limo. And he was interesting too, because Mitchell would always sit in the front, he wouldn't sit in the back and take the salutes, he'd sit up front, he'd put you in the back. And I would [say to] him, "Senator, go ahead, sit there." "No, no, I'll sit in front." I said, "Don't you want to sit back here and take the salutes?" "No, no, you sit back there." I'd say, "Okay."

But I'll give you a couple of funny stories about him, and then we'll get back to MFN because we played pretty closely on that one. He was getting swarmed, when we did the first bill and got Clinton to do the executive order, boy, that stirred Chamber of Commerce, they were up in arms, everybody, all the business types were. And he'd get all these appointments that people wanted to come see him about MFN, and one of them was [Maurice "Hank"] Greenberg from AIG, the one that just got canned two years ago. But Greenberg at that time, he was riding high, because AIG was big. See, AIG started in China, that's where they began as an insurance company, they began in Shanghai.

So in comes Greenberg, and my job on the foreign policy stuff [was] when they came and they were waiting to go in to see the leader, I would sit out there and schmooze them to get them ready to go in, and try to size them a little bit. So I was sitting out there and here I'm the staffer with the book, and Greenberg, he's a great industrialist, or great insurance guy. And he's telling me about himself, and how we're doing all these wrong things, how George Mitchell's doing all – of course, he's feeding the staff so they'll feed Mitchell, he's playing his game. He's telling me about what we're doing wrong in MFN so I'll tell Mitchell what he thinks. He's going to tell him too, of course, but he's playing both ends of the game.

And he mentions that, "I was in Asia," he said, "I've been in Asia most of my life, I was in Shanghai and I was in Korea during the war." I said, "Oh, were you?" Because I'd been in Korea. I said, "Well who were you with in Korea?" you know, one veteran to another, I was trying, it gave me a little opening. And I said, "Well who were you with?" "Oh, I was with the 21st Signal Company." Signal Company, you know, that's a rear area [outfit]. So I said, "Well I was in the 14th Infantry, 25th Division," that's front line infantry. Oh, he says, "Yes, yes." And that dropped Korea, that was gone.

So we went in, I take him in, introduce him, "Senator, this is Mr. Greenberg, chairman, CEO." 'Yes, yes, how are you, how are you,' both of them up, shaking hands, smiles, the usual, photos, everything. And they sit down. I'm down at the end of the table, and Greenberg sits down [ ]. Mitchell always sat at the head, he had a little table there off the leader's office, he would always sit in the chair, and there were two chairs on each side, and there's two other chairs there, and then there's one over against the wall that I sat in.

And so Greenberg sits down, very executive type, crosses his legs, sits there and leans back, 'hey, here I am,' you know. And Mitchell's sitting there, as he always was, he's sitting there kind of like this, with his hands on the table, looking very friendly, very smiley. And they're talking, making general [comments], the entry shots, before they get to the nitty-gritty. And Mitchell says to Greenberg, "Hey, that's a good looking pair of shoes you got there." Oh God, these were hand made, tanned, beautiful piece of leather, gorgeous shoes. And Greenberg says, he's like this, he says, "Oh yes, those are Austrian," and he describes them, where he bought them in Vienna. Mitchell puts his foot out, he says, "Cole Hahn, in Maine." Cole Hahn, cheap-ass shoe, because that's what he had on. He sticks out – but the shot was so good. I mean psychologically, what he was saying to him, look, big shot, don't give me your [b.s.]. That was kind of the, but that's George Mitchell, that to me was typical Mitchell. "Cole Hahn, Maine," he says.

BW: You've still got me in the bag room at the White House. Did you ever go in then?

EK: Yes, okay then, (*unintelligible*). When we went down for the [MFN] executive order, yes, he took me in, introduced me to the president. I had [heard about] Clinton before, because I worked in the McGovern campaign and Clinton was the McGovern campaign organizer in Texas when I was speaking for McGovern back in 1972. And I was supposed to meet him in Dallas, or he was supposed to meet me in Dallas, because I was doing a head-to-head with Phyllis Schlafly on Dallas TV to promote McGovern's campaign. I was a surrogate speaker [for McGovern], and they told me, the state director in Texas, a [young guy] named Bill Clinton is going to meet you in Dallas and get you a place to sleep. And he didn't show up. So I asked the guy that did show up, "Well where's this guy Bill Clinton?" "Well, he had a date down in Austin," he said, "he couldn't make it." So I knew [about] Bill Clinton.

Anyway, took me in, introduced me to the president, very gracious, and I sat on the couch while he and the president and secretary of state did their meeting, so yes, I was in that one time with him. And then when we came out with the executive order signed, after they had the signing, after the president signed it, he gave a pen of course to the secretary [of state], to Mitchell. We got in the car, and Mitchell was sitting in the right front, he reached in his pocket, pulled out his hand, says, "Here, you wrote [it], it's yours."

BW: The pen.

EK: Yes, the pen, yes.

BW: And did you visit the Bush White House too?

EK: George W.? No.

BW: No, Forty-one?

EK: Forty-one, yes, as I say, I went down with him to the White House [p/o]. At the White House I was a bag holder, I sat outside in the waiting room, yes, I was down there three times.

BW: When you say bag holder, what's your function?

EK: Well, you just go with all the information, this one you don't take a file folder, you take a briefcase, and you're there with all the things that the leader might want to be able to quote facts on, or whatever he wants in the office. So you go in with him, you ride down with him in the limo, in the majority leader's limo, it's parked, you go in with him, and as you enter there's a room there, where the secretary is. He is admitted right away into the inner sanctum, and then there's a series of couches there, and then the hangers on, we call ourselves, the bag carriers, 'horse holders,' whatever you want to call [us], you sit there with your briefcase with all this stuff. If the senator in there needs something, out will come one of the aides and say, 'the senator would like to have you come in,' or, 'the senator would like to have such-and-such', and then you get it out and give it to him and he goes back in. That was how it worked when you were outside.

In the case of the MFN, I had all the backup on why we had written it the way we had written it, and he took me in with him. But I never was taken in with H.W. [Bush]. Now, when I worked with Hathaway, I went in to see Carter once, into the inner office, and then we did a fund raiser up in Bangor and he got Carter to agree to come up to a bean supper, which are big in Maine, and so Hathaway took me with him on Air Force One when we flew up to Bangor to have Carter appear, we were trying to raise some money. And that time [ ], before we left, we went down to the White House and I went in with him. But only, I'm a bag holder, I don't pretend to have any high level stuff, I just did the nitty-gritty, which is what you're there for.

BW: You portray a very hierarchical situation on the Hill, and is that uniform, or not?

EK: Well it wasn't all over. I'm describing to you basically the Democratic Policy Committee under Mitchell. But the Policy Committee itself was pretty fluid; I could do pretty much what I wanted over there. I was careful in terms of how I wrote things, because I always felt, I thought I understood where Mitchell wanted to be. He never told me, that was the thing about working for George Mitchell, he didn't tell you much of where he wanted to be. He wanted you to show him where you thought things were, and then he would decide where he wanted to be. And it wasn't important whether you agreed with it or not, because you were a staffer. He was going to go where he wanted to go, but you were to provide him with the wherewithal to get there. At least that's how I read it.

BW: And were there morale issues for someone like yourself in terms of knowing that your, as you said earlier, your work, you don't take possession of your work once you hand it to the Senator, he wants to -

EK: It's his call, yes. No, it wasn't a morale issue for me. The internal stuff, I didn't pay much attention to it, because you can't spend twenty-three years in the army and go through three wars and be worried about what thirty-year olds and twenty-year old [staffers] are arguing about, I couldn't have cared less. It didn't bother me, it just didn't play on my scheme. But in terms of morale [ ], I would get, you'd get frustrated because Mitchell, I liked him and I thought I understood him – [I was five years older than him] – but there were times when trying to dredge it up, you got frustrated, what in the hell does he want, you know? And the answer was, get him what you know, that's what I resolved [what to do] was, give him what you know, give him what you have, and then let him do what he wants with it, and don't get frustrated because he doesn't tell you where he wants to go, because he did that. [My job was to give him my best advice and counsel].

Now with Daschle, it was a different game. Daschle would tell you nothing, and then wouldn't get the game going, he wouldn't – Mitchell would come back and say, yes, yes, or no, so it was a different game. But Mitchell was, to me, as I say, I'd get frustrated, and some of the staff would get extremely frustrated, because he wouldn't give them what they wanted. The one that got mostly frustrated was Sarah Sewall. Sarah would write these long detailed memos telling him exactly what he ought to do, which was exactly what you didn't tell George Mitchell, and he would read it and do what he wanted to do, because that's where he was going to go. And she would get all frustrated and angry because he was not listening to her on Southeast Asia, which she was working [p/o]. But that would be [the same for] some of the ones in domestic [section], too, that they wanted to be the big players, and with Mitchell you were [always] staff, not a big player.

BW: As a person working on the Policy Committee, did you regularly service other members of the caucus, or was it pretty much -?

EK: Well basically I worked for George Mitchell, but I did, if somebody else wanted something, like Daschle wanted something, or -

BW: What about Senator [Claiborne] Pell?

EK: Yes, with Pell's people I worked very closely, because Mitchell liked Pell very much. In fact, when he first took over as majority leader, he came over and he said, "Where's Pell's office?" I was over in the Capitol. I said, "Downstairs." He said, "Come on, I want to go down and see him." So he went down and he went in and he didn't introduce himself, but he said, "I want you to know, Claiborne, that anything you need to have done, you tell Ed to do it, and he does what you want him to do, so you tell him whatever you want to do, and he'll tell me. And if you have something you want to talk to me about, any time of the day, you just call me." I

remember that conversation. That was his first week I think, or second week as majority leader. So I worked very closely with Pell's people.

BW: And of course Pell was chairman of the Foreign -

EK: He was chairman of Foreign Relations. And that's another thing I fed Mitchell daily, was where Foreign Relations [was], because I talked to [their staff director] every day, every morning I'd get together with them. They had a meeting, I always sat in. If I had a meeting, one of their people always sat in. So yes, he was always informed, we worked very closely.

BW: Did you work much with the Congressional Research Service, or not?

EK: Not too much. If it was something that I didn't have time, because I could do most of it on my own, I had a process of my own thinking from the time I had done Army Intelligence. Remember, they used to have the FBIS, the Foreign Broadcast Information Service, back before computers, and we got those every day, and I had done that, when I worked in Army Intelligence I had read those ad nauseam, so I still did that every day, and you could get a lot of stuff out of that. Now you get it on computer, but then you got it out of the book. And I would put that in some of the memos, of what I was reading, and I would talk to Army Intelligence, I was on the list for stuff that came around. And if I needed something, well I'd just pick up the phone and call and they'd give it to us.

BW: Was there much change from the State Department under Christopher to Albright?

EK: Yes.

BW: What were the differences?

EK: Christopher ran a – my impression – more hierarchical structure than Madeleine did. Madeleine did more on her own; Christopher delegated more to the different agencies and bureaus of the department. Madeleine tended to suck it up to the high level; much like Hillary's doing too, and control it up there. Because Madeleine and I went way back, [p/o] when I was AA for Hathaway, Madeleine came as a fresh graduate out of Columbia to be a foreign policy assistant to the legislative assistant in Muskie's office under Charlie [Micoleau] – [p/o] and so we went a long way back, yes.

BW: What was your reaction when Mitchell said he wasn't going to run for reelection?

EK: Well, I was surprised. I was surprised when he didn't take the Supreme Court job. I thought he would take that, because all he had to do was say he wanted it and Clinton would have given it to him. He knew that. And I was really amazed that he didn't take it. And then when he didn't take that, of course he didn't take it because he wanted to be baseball commissioner. At least that was what we were all told.

BW: Told by whom?

EK: That was a rumor, that was the Hill, rumors are going around all the time, was that Mitchell, out of the [Mitchell] inner sanctum, was that he wanted to be baseball commissioner, and he's going to pass the Supreme Court thing by. But I'm not sure that's true. But I was surprised he didn't take the Supreme Court job, because he liked being a judge, and I never understood that. [p/o]

BW: Some people have said that George Mitchell could devote so much of his energy to his job because he didn't have family obligations.

EK: He worked, Mitchell worked all the time. With him it was seven days a week.

BW: So what career move did you make then, when you saw in '94 that this was all going to come to an end?

EK: Well, I [ ] agreed to stay for a year with Daschle. I didn't want to leave, as a matter of fact I hoped to stay because I needed another [year], you know, you retire on your high three [salary years]. Well Mitchell was not a big [staff] payer, I never made [much] money with George Mitchell, so I needed to get as many years as I could at the best pay I could get. Well with Mitchell, my best pay got drained off because John Hilley was the staff director and he would drain it off to put it in other pots. And so I needed to stay two more years to get that, to keep that high three-year level at the best I could get for retirement, because when Mitchell left I was sixty-seven, yes, I was going on sixty-eight, and I needed to do two more years, I was hoping to stay until I was seventy and then escape [ ].

But I did the year with Daschle and that was too much. So I decided, well, I'm out of here. So I retired at that point, and that was early '97. So I had a year-and-a-half after Mitchell left, because he left in '95, late '95.

BW: No, January of '95.

EK: January of '95, that's right, early '95. So I did '95, '96 with Daschle, and I went out first part of '97.

BW: You described George Mitchell to me a little while ago as being quite withdrawn.

EK: My impression, yes, I always had the feeling that he was, very much was in himself, very private. He's a very private person. I'm not sure that's true with his close friends, because I wasn't one of his close friends, I'm a staffer.

BW: As history looks back on him, how do you think he should be remembered?

EK: I think he should be remembered as an extremely effective [senator] and negotiator, one

of the best we've produced in a long time. As a very dedicated public servant; to me he was always, I'd get frustrated with him, but he was always trying to do what he thought was the best way to go, best way to go politically, because George Mitchell's a political animal, [ ] and at the same time the best way to go for the country. But if it came to which one was the way to go, he would always weigh in that political [aspect], because that had to play on how the country went. So I always saw that as a strength of his, that he weighed the political stuff very, very tightly [in regard to the best interests of the country].

BW: In what ways was he bipartisan?

EK: Well -

BW: Or was he?

EK: Well, as I said to you earlier, he could appear to be bipartisan when he was being [actually] very partisan. But he was bipartisan; I'll give you an example, with Dole. Now he and Dole were not friends, but they were certainly not enemies, they respected each other. And he would always tell me, on any issue, go talk to Dole's guy. And MFN was a good example. Let's see, yes, it would be MFN, yes, I guess so. I'd go to see Al Leyhn, and Al was working for Dole first and then Randy Scheunemann, who was [ ] McCain's guy, Randy came on after Al, I would always go to see them and say here's kind of what he told me, go see what they want to do. So I would stretch it a little bit, I'd go say, "Here's where the leader's going to go, here's where he wants to go, and where's your boss want to go?"

And Al was always very open, but Randy would play games with me, he was younger. But he'd come back and say, "Well here's what Dole wants to do." I'd write up the memo to Mitchell, this is what Dole's people are telling me, do you want to meet with him? He would check off 'meet,' I'd set up a thing with Al, because the minority leader goes to the majority leader's office, and Dole would come over.

And I can remember a couple, two or three times, Dole would come in, they'd sit down, and Mitchell would say, "Now Bob, here's what I want to do, and here's the language I got to do, Ed's talked to Al and you know the language I'm thinking of." And Dole would say, "Well now look, George, if we do that, I'm going to lose," and he'd name the senators: "I'm going to lose so-and-so, Simpson, so-and-so, and so-and-so." And Mitchell would say, "Well, yes." And Dole would say, "Now if you can do it this way, I can pick up two of those." Mitchell would say, "Well, if I do it that way I'm going to lose Boxer and Kennedy and [the] liberal[s], they're going to go away, they're not going to vote with me." And so then Dole would say, "Well okay, how about this?" And they would sit there, the two of them, and they'd work back and forth until they came up with what would be a winning vote, and the language that would get Dole's five or six that wouldn't go, and Mitchell could get the liberal vote that wouldn't go, and they could get something that, they'd lose some of them, but they'd have enough to pass it.

And then they'd say, "You go write it up" – they wouldn't say either one of us, they just said,

"Go write it up." So Al would go back and he'd draft up his and I'd [draft] up [ ] – whatever they told us to do is, because we were taking notes, and we'd put it together. And then I'd go over [to Al] and sit down with him in his office and we'd look at the final version, and that'd be the version that was going to come out of Dole's office, and ours would be a little different but the basic stuff would be in there. And [ ] Al would write a floor statement for Dole and he'd call me. He'd say, "Hey, wait'll you see my floor statement." And I'd say, "Wait'll you [hear] mine." And I'd write a really tough one. We called that, Al and I, (not Mitchell and Dole), Al and I called that the kabuki dance, because then they would go to the floor [with the agreed points, and do rhetorical debate].

Now, the leader controls the floor, and they control the amount of time, and Dole would say, "I want two hours equally divided," or let's do three hours equally divided, and fine, so they'd have one-and-a-half hours on the Democratic side, one-and-a-half hours Republican side. Dole would give his spear throwers, Helms, et cetera, he'd give them the floor time, and they would be [making their speeches]. We'd give our spear throwers, Kerry, Biden, Sarbanes, [et cetera]. Sarbanes was the best spear thrower we had, Sarbanes would get out there, he'd just talk, and just drive the Republicans up the wall because he'd just hammer them point after point. Anyway, we'd put the spear throwers out, they'd all do the spear throwing, the [press] gallery would be full, big deal, you know, big issue.

Then the leader would come out, the minority leader would come out, take their desks, and man, [they'd] go at it. Dole would come out first with a ripper, and Mitchell would come back winging and dinging him right back. Press gallery's writing it up. We already know what the vote's going to be, because they've agreed ahead of time. And generally it would come out within one or two votes of what they wanted. Sometimes it would slip, because you can't always guarantee [a vote when you have senators like] Joe Lieberman in there, never know where Joe's going to vote. So that was the game.

But what I'm saying, to answer your question, was yes, they worked together, and they worked basically to get stuff through the Senate. Now sometimes they didn't, sometimes they - I've been to meetings on some of the things, on Bosnia for example, where Mitchell would say, "No, I'm not going to do that." And Dole would say, "Well I'm not going to do it either, I can't do it, you know, Helms is not going to go for that." Then they'd just say, okay, we're going to go out there and knock heads. The deal at that point was, you got your [issues], I got my [issues], we'll take them up or down.

Now, Jesse Helms would put up what we called the 'ton,' he'd come up with a hundred amendments, because he's going to grind us down. And what Mitchell would tell [us], write up an answer for every single one of them, and make sure we've got that planted all over [different Democratic offices]. So we'd plant answers for every amendment, we'd take every single amendment that Helms wanted to put up, and we'd take them to the floor and we'd vote them, and we'd be out there all day, half the night, if that's what it took. And of course the rest of those guys weren't with Helms, the Republicans, and they started disappearing and his votes started disappearing, and pretty soon he'd begin to drop those amendments off.

The point I'm making is that Mitchell was prepared to play that kind of hardball: we'll fight every single one of this amendments. Most of the time, before that, Byrd would get disgusted with it and say, the hell with it, give him [some of] the damn amendments. And Mitchell, he would take them – and Byrd didn't always do that, Byrd was just as hard nosed as Mitchell, harder nosed actually. But Mitchell was partisan enough that he'd take them all one at a time. We stood out there once, started on Thursday, we were there Thursday all day, till late Thursday night, back again Friday morning, all day Friday, late Friday night we finally got it to a vote, because he just fought every single amendment [and made the Republicans vote them].

BW: Those kinds of battles don't seem to be going on now very often.

EK: No, now it's scream and shout. Now, they should do it – again, we're off the subject now – but that's what they should do on health care. If the Republicans won't go along with anything, tell them, if it was Byrd or Mitchell, this is what would be happening – they would tell McConnell, Mitchell would tell – I'm talking for Mitchell, I shouldn't. But that type of leader would tell McConnell, 'okay, you don't want to vote with us, put your amendments out there and we'll debate every damn one of them, and we'll see where it comes out and we'll see what kind of vote we get.' And just take it out there and vote it down the line. That way, you put the Republicans on the record, which they're not having to be now, they're just saying we don't want anything. Well what do you want? Put your amendments out, by gosh, and we'll vote you, [up or down], and we'll take them one at a time. Then you're on the record. That's where Mitchell would have taken it, I would assume.

BW: How drastically did the Senate change after George Mitchell left, the '95, Trent Lott, Daschle?

EK: Well, it wasn't the same caliber, because you lost Dole and you lost Mitchell, and they could work together. Daschle would try to work with Lott, but Lott was pretty hard Republican, though Lott would work, there wasn't the same camaraderie. And the problem on the Democratic side was, with Mitchell we never had a precise Democratic position that we pushed every day, it was pretty much, take the issues and deal with the issues as they came up. With Daschle, in the morning we had the seven o'clock staff meeting, Ron Klain would lay out, this is the message, one, two, three, and that's what we would hammer the Policy Committee, domestic and foreign sections would hammer all day long.

Plus, they stripped the committee, they gave the committee to Harry Reid, and Reid's a good guy, I know him well, I traveled with him twice, in fact I helped him work on the Contras, but the sectional thing of it was dissolved and it was farmed out, so that the central control was not in the Policy Committee. [p/o] Anyway, it [i.e. policy] was farmed out to other senators, so it became more diffused. [ ] Daschle [set] the message, but there wasn't the underpinning of the firm positions that the leader got out of the Policy Committee that Mitchell and Byrd before him had always used, as that was a core standpoint from which they could direct their legislation, legislative attack or whatever. So it became more diffused, I think.

BW: Are we leaving anything important out?

EK: Yes, I'm sure we are. I can't think, I've told you too much now, get myself in trouble, [but] at this point it doesn't matter. No, I think, I guess what I'm trying to convey to you is my impressions of Mitchell. And you asked me a good question which was, what would you say his remembrance should be, and I think the negotiator part is really important. He was a good negotiator, was a very, all those points I just made to you, but as a person, an unusual leader.

Because I saw Mansfield as a leader, who followed Johnson and came in to soothe, because there was so many [raw] egos when Johnson left, but Mansfield, he stroked and he was very, very gentle with it, but firm, gentle and firm. With Byrd it was much more decisive and rigorous, Byrd didn't stroke and [ ] he wasn't gentle.

I'll give you a case – we had a meeting in [Room] 111 one day, and I forget what the issue was, I think was on Central America, anyway, all the senators were brought in for Byrd, as chair, and Byrd was making his pitch on what he wanted to do, what he was going to do, not what he wanted, what he was going to do. And Ted Kennedy got up to leave. The room was a long room like this, table's down the center, you got eight chairs on each side, we had one at the end, you had the chairman's seat, and there was some back chairs that the latecomers sat in. Senator Kennedy got up to leave. Byrd was laying out what he was going to do. Obviously Kennedy didn't agree – they didn't agree on much. Byrd looked up, said, "I haven't finished yet, Ted." And he turned around, came and sat back down in his chair.

That's the kind of shop that Byrd ran, I mean he was, he talked to everybody. Byrd would say, "What's the vote going to be?" I'd say, such-and-such, Senator, (*unintelligible*) so-and-so, [so many yeas, so many nays], Senator. [He'd] pull out [an old] envelope [from his pocket]. "No, it's going to be such-and-such," put his envelope back in his pocket, that's exactly what the vote would be. This guy could count votes.

Now Mitchell didn't do that, Mitchell was not [an individual] vote counter, Mitchell would go out with it much more loose in terms of votes, so he knew where the key guys were going to be but he didn't have it down to the one, two, three, four thing. He expected me to have that for foreign policy, or whoever was doing health care, they were supposed to have that. But he wouldn't ask you. You're supposed to tell him ahead of time. He didn't enter the floor – see, when the leader comes into the floor, you're sitting right there by the doorway. If it's an issue, if you're the health care person and it's a health care issue, and he comes in the door, you stand up immediately and walk up to him and say, "Senator, here's what's going on." He's watching it on TV in the office, but you tell him, here's what's happening, here's what I think the vote's going to be, what the count is. He would stand there for a second or two. Okay, thanks, down to [his] chair and take the floor. You never knew whether he heard what you said. But he expected you to get up and be there when he came on, and to tell him what the state of play was at that instant, from the time he left the TV till he got to that door, what the state of play was.

BW: And where were you observing the state of play?

EK: Sitting on the back bench, behind the seat, the desk, there's a row back there, I had, for a staffer for a senator, just any senator, you got to get permission to enter the floor and to sit on the back bench, you get that at the window, at the clerk's office, you can get it in the caucus room [*sic*: Cloakroom], the clerk will give you permission to go on the floor, give you a little slip. In my case, since I was the senior foreign policy advisor, I could go on the floor any time I [needed] to. And so I had a seat either on this end by the door as he came in, or at the far end coming out of the [Cloakroom], because sometimes he'd come out of the [Cloakroom], sometimes he'd come out straight across [from the leader's office].

BW: You're calling it the caucus room, is that also the Cloakroom?

EK: Cloakroom, yes, well caucus room is not the room, it's Cloakroom, so that's the wrong term. Caucus room's over in the, on the main room, over in the Capitol on the second floor where they had the Democratic caucus, and the Republican caucus on the other side.

BW: As a staffer, were you allowed to, or did you spend much time in the Cloakroom?

EK: Yes, I could go in there and sit down. I didn't spend much time [in there], but I could, yes. I'd just go in if I had something that I had to talk to somebody about. Of course senators would be sitting around in there, and I'd listen to the conversation, because you could pick up a lot of things. I could tell you some really good ones, some of the things that came out. Some of these guys would be talking among themselves, you know, you sit there, you keep your face straight and you listen. And I could use the phone in there if needed to use the phone.

BW: Well, it's struck one o'clock, and you're not going to tell me any of those stories.

EK: No, I can't, it would not be a good idea.

BW: So think maybe we've come to the end.

EK: Okay, fine, I hope I've given you things you need. Probably gave you things you didn't need, a lot of things you didn't need.

BW: Thank you.

EK: Yes, sir.

End of Interview