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### Interview with Brendan Melley by Brien Williams

Brendan G. Melley

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## ***George J. Mitchell Oral History Project***

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**Brendan Melley**  
(Interviewer: *Brien Williams*)

**GMOH# 180**  
December 10, 2009

**Brien Williams:** This is an oral history interview for the George J. Mitchell Oral History Project at Bowdoin College with Brendan Melley, vice president of The Cohen Group. We are in The Cohen Group's offices in Washington, D.C., today is Thursday, December 10, 2009, and I am Brien Williams. Bowdoin College would like me to start out by asking you for your full name and its spelling?

**Brendan Melley:** Okay, Brendan Melley, B-R-E-N-D-A-N, M-E-L-L-E-Y, middle initial G.

**BW:** And your date and place of birth?

**BM:** July 8, 1963, in Hartford, Connecticut.

**BW:** And this is mainly for Mainers, but your parents' names?

**BM:** William Joseph Melley, Jr., and Rita Murphy Melley.

**BW:** Thank you. Give me a little bit of your own family background, I guess you grew up in Connecticut?

**BM:** I grew up in Windsor [Connecticut], the town just north of Hartford; I'm the youngest of six children. My father was born in Hartford, and my mother was born in Springfield, Massachusetts. They are both children of immigrants from Ireland, so all my grandparents came to the United States in the early 1900s. My father was the oldest of six, and I'm the youngest of six, so we have [ ], on the Melley side, a small family that has stayed close through [the years], the extended family of cousins and everybody that's stayed close based upon how [our parents] did it. One of my father's [siblings] (there's only one from his generation left, his youngest brother), [is] Ken Melley, who has worked in Washington for years as an advocate and lobbyist for teachers. And [during] my first interaction with George Mitchell, I had to say, "I am Ken Melley's nephew," as a way of breaking the ice. And that was a good thing to do.

**BW:** And what about your education; where'd you go to school and college and so forth?

**BM:** [I] went to parochial school for eight years in Windsor, and then went to a [ ] prep school [ ] in my town, Loomis Chaffee, and then went to Providence College in Rhode Island for my bachelor's, and did ROTC there the last two years. Upon graduating I was commissioned into

the infantry in the Army, ended up having seven years on active duty, which took me here to Washington, and made the decision to get out of the Army rather than continue to travel around. I knew Washington was a place I eventually was going to end up, and so I left active duty in 1992. And after a year of doing different jobs, bartending in Cape Cod and selling children's wear clothing in New York City, I [worked] for Booz, Allen and Hamilton down here in Washington [*sic*: Northern Virginia], and then from there had an opportunity to get a government position, and spent the next ten years as a federal civilian in a couple different capacities.

**BW:** As I understand it, your military career brought you into the intelligence realm, is that correct?

**BM:** Correct, I was initially commissioned in the infantry. The Army in the mid to late 1980s, before Desert Storm, was trying to fix the problem of needing more captain-level officers in the combat support branches than they do in the combat branches; combat being infantry, artillery, et cetera, and the combat support being things like signal and quartermaster and intelligence.

In 1988, as I was getting my packet together for a promotion to captain, I was told, "Congratulations on your promotion, and you are going to be in the military intelligence branch." So it could have been one of the others, but I had requested MI as a – which is the abbreviation we use – I had requested that as my first choice back when I was commissioned. And as a political science student at Providence College, or at any college I guess, it made perfect sense that political science leads you to infantry. It ended up being the right choice. So having a few years in the infantry and then switching to military intelligence was, career wise, professionally, personally the right way to do it.

**BW:** And you said that you had this urgency to get to Washington. What was it about Washington that was more alluring than Cape Cod bartending?

**BM:** That's a good point. It actually goes back to my uncle, who I mentioned at the beginning. He left Connecticut back when I was seven, came to Washington, and by the time I was in college in the early '80s, I had been down here to visit him a few times. And on one of those [ ] occasions, [p/o] he was part of a group that, he was active in Democratic National Committee politics, and he took me around to several political events that I just happened to be in town for. And I was the young nephew with the [semi]-long hair in the early '80s that was thinking about the Army, that type of thing, and it [made] quite an impression on me to have a chance to see the halls of power, the places, the people, and it attracted me as a place that I wanted to eventually land in.

So when I had the opportunity in the Army to make a choice for education within the Army structure, I seized on one that was here in Washington at Bolling Air Force Base, and pushed hard to get it. And then it was after Desert Storm that President Bush started the downsizing, the Cold War was over, the Soviet Union had collapsed, therefore we can have a relaxation of our spending on national security and defense. And it was probably the first and only time in a long

time that broad categories of military people were given the option to take a bonus to get out, so that was the encouragement to stay here, and again, being probably one of the only opportunities that you could actually be paid to get *out* of the Army, so I took advantage of that.

**BW:** So at some point, you went into the White House, is that correct?

**BM:** Correct, after returning to Washington in I guess it was 1993, I was working for Booz Allen and Hamilton, I was working on a national security related intelligence community contract. And through friends and colleagues and networking, I had an opportunity to interview for a job on the staff of a commission that President Clinton had formed. And again, this is the post-Cold War: what do we do with all the spending on the intelligence community? So it was a joint presidential and congressional commission, established in law in 1995, to spend a year looking at the roles and the capabilities of the intelligence community.

It was a topic that I had professionally been writing papers on when I was here in Washington and doing research on, so it was a substantively interesting issue, historically timely, and I aggressively pushed to find my way into an interview, seeking help of political friends and making connections, et cetera. And [I] had an interview with Les Aspin, who had just departed the Pentagon as secretary of defense, after his short tenure there, and he was named chair of this commission, as well as being also the head of the President's Foreign Intelligence Advisory Board, which is what Clinton appointed him to. So through him and then through the staff director, I appealed in the interview and ended up being selected for this one-year government job, and it had a one year life span, not intended to go longer than that [p/o]. And from that experience, I then built some relationships and then went on as an employee at the Defense Intelligence Agency.

Interestingly, and this does bring us slowly down the path, one of the other commissioners on this commission that Les Aspin chaired was [Senator] Warren Rudman. And in the interim after Les Aspin's passing, which was unexpected, until the president appointed Harold Brown, another former secretary of defense, to take his place, Warren Rudman was the acting chair. Now, Rudman being a Republican from New Hampshire, it was expected he would not get the chairmanship title, because he wasn't a Democrat, but that's how I first ended up getting to know, and letting him get to know me, [Senator] Rudman. And then jumping ahead several years, and I'll let you ask the questions in the order you want, but that gets us to how I ended up being with George Mitchell in 2000.

**BW:** I'm trying to find my place.

**BM:** Sorry.

**BW:** No, that's quite fine. So after the one year commission, then you were part, just follow the train out.

**BM:** I went directly to work for the Defense Intelligence Agency. I had met the, he had just

taken over as director, a gentleman by the name of Patrick Hughes, three-star Army general, lieutenant general, and I'd met him when he was a two-star and was on the Joint Staff [as] the director of intelligence, the position is called the J-2. I had in this period of time also started doing some Army Reserve duty time. I left active duty, but when I returned to Washington continued to do some Reserve activities, and the job that I ended up on was at the Pentagon, in the J-2 section of the Joint Staff.

So I had met General Hughes, and both from my now civilian capacity on the commission, and then in a uniform when I was a subordinate officer, and we built a bit of a relationship. As I was looking for a job he asked me to come and apply at DIA, and I did and ended up at their congressional relations office for about half a year. And it was a interesting time because all the work that we had done on the commission, much of that was translated into legislative packages and proposals and bills, and those were now being debated within the administration and Congress about what to do [going] forward. So I had a good knowledge of the policy proposals themselves, as well as some of the key players that had returned from the commission staff to the Congress, congressional staff, as well as within the Pentagon.

So I was able to take advantage of my year experience and help DIA and the Department of Defense sort through some of the major issues and interpret [them]: "Well here's what the intent was of this language in that bill, because so-and-so and so-and-so who are friends of mine wrote it and I just spoke to them, and here's why they're doing that." So it was good timing. I ended up applying then for the job as executive assistant to the director of the agency, and was selected for that, so then I spent the next eighteen months working for him as the executive assistant. The director of the agency has usually two special assistants, or executive assistants, one a uniformed officer, one a civilian, and I had the civilian job.

**BW:** So your next career step was what?

**BM:** It was interesting timing again, I was at the DIA when a request came from the President's Foreign Intelligence Advisory Board for a position available for a DIA person to go to the President's Foreign Intelligence Advisory Board staff, now chaired by [Senator] Warren Rudman. And the executive director [ ] was somebody that I knew from the time on the commission a few years earlier. So I put my name into the ring for that, because it described as background experience and capabilities that which I had been doing, and because of the name recognition I believe, on the part of PFIAB, I was selected for that, and eagerly [accepted it].

So then I spent the next, I guess, three-and-a-half years on that staff, which included a transition to the President [George W.] Bush administration and a period of time where there was no clear requirement or direction from the president for this advisory board. [ ] The President's Foreign Intelligence Advisory Board [ ] is now called the President's Intelligence Advisory Board, to [cover all intelligence issues, not just foreign]; President Bush made that change about four or five years ago. It is a unique animal in every administration in that it is created by executive order, and by the terms of how it was first created under Eisenhower and then clarified with a different name under President Kennedy; the intent is for it to report directly to the president and

only to the president.

And it fits the definition of executive privilege by [ ] any interpretation of that, and it's intended to be for the president to do with [ ] as he wishes. Some presidents have made it large and some have made it small, some have not used it much at all, some have relied heavily on it. Some have been bipartisan in how they've populated it, and some have been very partisan and rewarded political friends and donors and things. And any combination of that is fine, because it is a tool for the president personally to have, and so it's a fascinating place. And as a staff member to support, in the circumstances I was in, with Senator Rudman as chair, as a Republican, working for President Clinton, and the kind of professional respect [ ] that Senator Rudman had in this town and that the administration had for him for his very straightforward [manner], known to be perhaps [blunt] at times but always candid, always will directly tell you what he believes, not afraid to take a position, and consistent in his positions and not personally challenging in any way. A good person, very good person, I respect him highly.

So there were several things that came up during that time, where the president himself or the president's staff, in the form of the national security advisor or other, the director of Central Intelligence, as the senior Intelligence position was [then] called, had reasons, either political or substantive reasons, to get Senator Rudman to tackle a project. So during this period of time there were a few projects that we did, only one of which was public, [because] normally, the PFIAB['s] [ ] reports are [never] released, they're not available to historians, because of the executive privilege rule and because of classification restrictions. But there was one that was allowed to be public, [and] there were two or three [other] meaty ones, meaty being high import, a lot of time spent, a lot of resources; so there was a very small staff and I got to know and work closely with Senator Rudman a lot. That helped me establish my credentials for him and on these substantive issues.

**BW:** So the Sharm el-Sheikh event came within your period there.

**BM:** Correct, exactly.

**BW:** Draw the connection.

**BM:** Well, it was fall of 2000, I was visiting family over the Thanksgiving weekend, [ ] the election had just happened [p/o] but the outcome was not certain – so I didn't know professionally where the next steps were [for me]. But I was in Connecticut, and I remember it was the Wednesday before Thanksgiving and I had driven up, and at the time I was not married, and I was actually doing a piece of work for the PFIAB. There was a member up in Connecticut and I had to bring a draft paper for him to take a look at, and because he lived twenty miles from where my family lived, I eagerly took that [opportunity] to do it.

And that afternoon, early afternoon, I got a phone call, a request to call Senator Rudman. The day before Thanksgiving. And he says, "Hi Brendan, what are you doing?" "I'm up in Connecticut visiting family." "Well what are you going to do, what are you doing on Friday?"

“I plan to still be here.” “Well can you come down and meet me in New York at the Waldorf Astoria on Friday?” “Sure,” I’m stumbling, “what’s going on?” “Well, well,” as he would say, “President Clinton asked me to do this thing with George Mitchell, and we’re having our first meeting in New York, and if you can be there, that’d be great.” “Okay, what time?”

So I ended up going home to my family on the Wednesday, having Thanksgiving dinner on Thursday, flying down, or driving, I think I drove, I drove back down Thursday night, grabbed my suit and stuff, and ended up in New York on Friday morning for this meeting. As I learned over the next day, not much was known [about the task], but it was the result of three weeks earlier, in Sharm el-Sheikh, Egypt [ ]. President Clinton pulled together a group of senior regional and [other] senior leaders interested in maintaining stability in the Middle East, to talk about the intifada that had begun in September of 2000 [ ]. So it was actually about two and a half weeks after the fighting and the violence had started that President Clinton asked for this meeting to try and stop it early in the process, rather than let it go on for months and months. And at this meeting in Sharm el-Sheikh it was agreed that he would assemble a group of senior diplomats, senior statesmen to take a look at the causes of the violence that was then well underway, and make recommendations on stopping it.

[p/o] At the Sharm el-Sheikh meeting, the U.N. was represented, the governments of Turkey, Norway, the European Union, Egypt was there, and Jordan, as well as the Israelis and the Palestinians. And so in the intervening time between, I think that was October 16, 2000, and [ ] Thanksgiving, [p/o] [the parties involve] had decided on how they were going to structure this group. It was [ ] to be five members, [p/o] [as] a report to the president of the United States that he would then share. [p/o] I’ve seen this happen [ ] where, when you’re not sure of the outcome, you sometimes have a [ ] report be directed towards the senior executive, [ ] who if it’s completely off the wall, off base or something, can decide whether to release it or can decide to amend it or send it out for more work; you don’t usually allow a group like that to just report without knowing what they’re going to say.

And he named George Mitchell as chair, [p/o] [who had] recently come out of the years he had spent trying to negotiate for Clinton a Northern Ireland peace; obviously President Clinton had a fond affection for the capabilities of Senator Mitchell [ ]. And [p/o] in addition to George Mitchell, there was the former president of Turkey, Suleiman Demirel; the [then] Norwegian foreign minister, Thorbjorn Jagland; and the essentially foreign minister of the European Union [p/o], Javier Solana. Those were the three foreign officials, and then two more slots of Senator Mitchell, and they wanted one other American.

And here’s where I found out later that the White House staff knew of Senator Rudman: a) in a position of trust for the president already; b) being a Republican, there might be, if somebody perceived that it was tilted Democratically because of President Clinton’s party, that he could be, “Oh no-no, we’re bipartisan in our American approach.” It turns out that few knew at the time, but Senator Rudman’s parents were Jewish. [For] Senator Mitchell, attention was paid to the fact of his Lebanese Christian ancestry. [p/o] To have someone who had Jewish parents to also be a part of this [was a bonus].

And so that's [how] I ended up in New York on the day after Thanksgiving, and completely [impressionable], walking into a situation [at] the Waldorf Astoria, with the elegant rugs and long chandeliers, [to] an upstairs room. I have a room to check into, it's a complete whirlwind, there's State Department people shuffling things around, I'm handed, "Oh, you're here with Senator Rudman, go sit here." And then we're in a small conference room and I'm within, again, probably two hours of arriving and kind of getting the lay of the land, [there are] representatives from the government of Israel, representatives from the Palestinian Authority, making their initial cases on the intifada which had begun in September, and what they wanted the commission to do. And so the first [impression of Senator Mitchell], as I mentioned earlier, having walked up to [him] and introducing myself [ ], this was the first time to see him in action, [was] with the other members of the Sharm el-Sheikh fact-finding committee, and [begin to] really appreciate what we're going to do.

At this point the committee was established by the president in a letter, this was the first meeting, and it was an attempt by Senator Mitchell and the other members to get organized, to determine what the scope and scale and level of effort was going to be; nothing was known prior to when I showed up in New York what this meant. Was this 'show up for one meeting?' Was it show up for a couple? And on the margins of that meeting in New York, Senator Mitchell and Senator Rudman spoke and said to each other, we have full-time jobs as well, let's designate a person to be our full-time eyes and ears to participate in this process, go to the region, work with the other staffs, and they'll report to us, but each of us of the five will designate one person.

The other members agreed, so I became Senator Rudman's representative [and Jim Pickup was Senator Mitchell's]. Because Senator Mitchell [p/o] was living in New York at the time, but the rest of the U.S.-based people focused on this [were in Washington], from either the State Department who were facilitating a lot of the [support] (because the money that was coming from the State Department [was] funneled through a think tank [ ] called the Meridian Center), there were Meridian Center staff [p/o]. So it became natural that while I was Senator Rudman's personal representative on the staff, I was also participating in the U.S. contingent of staff, so it was in that capacity that I didn't support just Senator Rudman, I was supporting Senator Mitchell and the broader effort as needed.

**BW:** I guess at least one person has told me that they were struck by how ably Senator Mitchell took command of that meeting at the Waldorf and led it very adroitly, is that your recollection?

**BM:** Yes, this was my first time seeing him in action. His reputation for me preceded him, and through my uncle, the fact of his early rise to be majority leader, early in the context of the years that many senators will stay without ever getting that opportunity. So he was known to be partisan as needed, when he was up on the Hill, but more importantly he was known [by] his judgment and the way he considered issues. He has a quiet, commanding presence. Because of his intellect and the depth of his experience, when he talks to you, or when you're talking to him, he is one of those people that can convince you that he's nowhere else in the world but listening

to you. And in a room full of people with different points of view, he was very ably going around the room and letting everybody have their say.

And I saw this happen later in the process when we went to Gaza for a big meeting and there was, maybe others might have told you, I forget how many people were in the room, forty is not an exaggeration, each of them wanted a chance to speak and he gave them each a chance to [do so]. And he, unlike the rest of us who [had] jet lag [sneak] up on [us] within twenty minutes, he was able to do this. He has a commanding, quiet presence that people [notice]. I mean he was recognized as a chairman, so in diplomatic and statesman terminology, he did not need to assert his authority, it was established. So from the beginning, he had that in his favor.

[It was fascinating to watch] the way he conducted himself [or diffused sensitive issues] [p/o]. [One side would direct criticisms through him to the other side, or] one party [ ] object[ing] to a proposed scope of our work that the other side had suggested [p/o]. And the way he would end up doing it, and that we saw in many of these meetings was, let everybody have a chance to say something, let everybody make the points and their objections and whatever their critical issues were, and then summarize what he had heard. Summarize it in a way that met his objectives, and the objectives of what we were trying to do, but do so while reflecting points from each of the participants. So that he might be rejecting seventy-five percent [of] what you said, but he's referring to the twenty-five percent that he's accepting, and thereby [convincing you] with [ ] eye contact [ ] that, okay, he's heard you.

[I think] because it was the first meeting and people weren't [there to oppose the committee outright], the Palestinians [and] the Israelis [ ] had some [p/o] instructions on where the [red] lines [ ] were, what they wouldn't allow the commission to do [et cetera. Senator Mitchell] was able to deflect some of their concerns, and not commit to things that would have been objectionable, but leave the door open for consideration of other activities or issues that we could address. He did it in a way that nobody was forced to say, "this is unacceptable, I have to go back for instructions, I have to [object]" – he really was very sensitive to making sure that everybody got something, but [showed all] that he was still in charge and we had the flexibility to do the investigation and the report as we saw fit, rather than being led by the parties. So yes, he did that very well.

**BW:** And I suspect that Northern Ireland was a very good training ground for that kind of leadership.

**BM:** Right, and he referred to it often.

**BW:** That meeting was just one day?

**BM:** Yes. [ ] There was an overnight, and then there was [a coordinated meeting, but] the main players were there for just that one day. I think there was a regroup the next day on, okay, practical, 'how do we move forward?' I think that may be right.

**BW:** And originally, did you all think that this was going to be a sort of short term -?

**BM:** Had no idea, absolutely no idea. And it was at this meeting that it was decided that very soon the committee members would go to the region, and then we started mapping out where we would go and [what] we would do, and we did that just a few weeks later in December. So it quickly became a full time job and picked up, it seemed, very fast. The problem was, right before our trip the then-prime minister of Israel, Ehud Barak, announced his resignation and called for elections. So he stayed in his job, but he called for elections because of domestic political issues that he was dealing with, and we were still battling out [in Florida] on who was going to be the U.S. president. So the previous regime, essentially, had created this committee, and we had [ ] committed to a trip in December, met with all the parties, but I think it was literally almost on the eve of our trip to Israel that Ehud Barak resigned [ ]. He stayed in the position, as I said.

When we came back from that trip, and there's more on that trip that we could discuss, but we still didn't know what was going to happen because you had a government of Israel that was a caretaker government. By this point we did have a president here, but it was not clear whether that president would accept, on January 20th when he took office, the previous president's creation of this committee. So we were expecting to be in limbo for quite some time, which [ ] ended up being [true], but we filled that time by doing some research over there.

**BW:** And you, and Senator Rudman's position on the advisory board was also somewhat in limbo, I would suspect, because of the change-over.

**BM:** Correct, right. And it's one of those [things] where the board sets its own agenda for meetings [p/o], following the requirements of what the president is directing, but yes, as we had a lame duck president, there was no need for the board to meet any more. Technically, there was no need for there to be a staff, but Senator Rudman had graciously written a letter or called, I forget at this point which one, because he'd had to do this a few times – my initial term up on the PFIAB staff was supposed to be for one year, on rotation from the Defense Intelligence Agency. At that one year mark, I remember he asked me if I wanted to stay, I said, "Yes." He called up the director and said, "I'm keeping Brendan for another year, is that okay?" Of course he said "Yes, yes sir, yes Senator, that'll be fine."

That next year morphed into a longer period, it wasn't a year on the nose, then it became [another] PFIAB [extension], or then it became the Sharm el-Sheikh experience, and that was the prompting for another call from him to the next director who would come in, saying, 'Brendan's helping me on this project the president has asked, and the president's my guy and so continue to pay his salary, but he's working for me.' And so that allowed me to do the work on the [PFIAB] transition between President Clinton and President Bush, and still stay connected to the White House complex, still have [ ] an office and a place to go.

**BW:** And was Senator Rudman also still on, a member of the board, or part of it?

**BM:** Well at the end of every administration the board submits their resignations, so technically, no. And he had his professional office in downtown Washington here, so we would generally go there to meet with him, and he would [ ] come to the board spaces for reading or for meetings. It was a flexible time where nobody was asking the question, and it was a little bit more fluid than that. And because President Clinton had asked him to be on this capacity, nobody asked why I was still hanging around the PFIAB, put it that way.

**BW:** Was there any expectation on the part of the Clinton administration or the Bush administration that you were, that you and Senator Rudman were the conduit for information as things progressed?

**BM:** It's interesting, I think that I saw that as an opportunity, that because I had the security clearances and access to the people and the information that were paying attention to this in the U.S. government, in the national security side of things, that it was an opportunity for me to stay current. And Senator Rudman did ask me to do this, to stay current on the intelligence reports, assessments, and be able to let him know of any major judgments, analyses, or things that were happening. So it was an informal request from Senator Rudman and Senator Mitchell, with Senator Mitchell's acknowledgment and concurrence, that I would do this in an informal way.

I then went to people in the intelligence community and said, I kind of have a couple different hats, I have been a PFIAB staff member, I am a federal employee, but I am now doing this, and I want to make sure that we are not stumbling into issues or areas, both geographical areas, for personal safety, but just issues, and what are the touch points and the flash points of things to avoid saying and people to avoid seeing, or whatever the case may be. So I asked to be kept in the loop. And what was interesting was that at the time, the National Security Council staff, who were in a caretaker status, waiting for the new president to come in, they had kind of created this monster of the Sharm el-Sheik Fact-Finding Committee, knowing that they would not be receiving the results of it, that they would be moving on and be replaced by the next administration.

So I think there was a bit of a washing of hands of, well good luck, you know, 'hey kid, good luck, you're on your own.' And I [took] that in a personal way, that they weren't going to actively be – and perhaps it was appropriate that they did this as well, so that it wouldn't look like the U.S. administration was trying to drive the recommendations of the committee. And that was not my intent, and perhaps that's why I got a little bit of a stiff arm. But it was always funny, because I was happy to see that six months later, when we produced the report, the same people who were not convinced that we were going to be of significant value to the overall effort in the Middle East, or that I personally was not going to be able to contribute much to the overall effort, came up to me and said, "That was really well done." And I wanted to say, "Yes, and we could have had many more of these discussions in the ensuing months."

**BW:** One question I meant to ask you earlier, had the Middle East become part of your purview at DIA, or not?

**BM:** Not in a focused way, no. My responsibilities and DIA, and again, when you're working for the director as executive assistant, you're covering all the issues, [but thinly]. So I was familiar with [the issues in] the Middle East, but just as I was familiar with North Korea and other key hot spots that we had to pay attention to. So I had a lot of cramming to do as this got underway, so no, I did not have a focus.

**BW:** The first trip to the Middle East, give me just a few words to describe what that was like.

**BM:** Absolutely frenetic, and having never been to that region, the pace that Senator Mitchell had chosen, I was impressed by what he wanted to accomplish in a short amount of time, because the logistics of making that happen were impressive. [p/o] Senator Mitchell and Senator Rudman spoke about this back in Washington [and determined] that in order to do this trip right, to go in a short period of time, with the members of the commission, so [that] the Turk, the Norwegian, the Javier Solana from the E.U., who was Spanish, to be able to travel as a group, because to travel separately would have been almost impossible, to go to see the right people in Israel, right people in the West Bank and Gaza, Jordan, Egypt, and we had a list of places that we thought we might want to go. You can't do that by commercial air, it would be exorbitantly expensive, and hard to coordinate. So the really only option was to get a U.S. government plane.

So it fell upon me to make the request, and to figure out how to make the request for such a plane. And that was a fun project for me, to talk to the White House [staff], since I was again still in the White House complex, in the Old Executive Office Building, I was able to ask some people, 'what's the process?' and get some insight. But then putting words to paper, making the case, and justifying the use of an aircraft was actually kind of interesting and fun. So that was the only way we were going to make this happen. I had not [ ] been on a professional trip [yet] where you get to the hotel, and breakfast is in [two or] three hours so you have a short period of time to undress, [nap], get up, shave, change, and be downstairs for breakfast [and meeting], and this was one of those trips and it was just crazy. But instructive, and Senator Mitchell again, driving the whole process and moving it.

And looking back now, knowing more now about how senior executive travel happens in the government, it has to be done that way. Time on the plane is time to catch up, not just travel time. That's why your having a government plane is helpful, where there's a little bit more space. But otherwise you get bogged down in meetings and things that you might not need, so this was fast.

**BW:** And you were flying Air Force Two, right?

**BM:** It was the plane used for Air Force Two. Of course not called that if the vice president's not on it, but there's a few planes that are used for the secretary of state, the vice president, any other senior Cabinet officials, essentially the secretary of state has command of it all the time, except for when the vice president needs it, but yes.

*End of CD One*

*CD Two*

**BW:** This is not essential to the story but I am curious, at what point did the others from Europe join you in Turkey?

**BM:** In Israel, we all met up in Israel as the first stop, drove to Gaza [*sic*: Jerusalem], West Bank, and Gaza, and then at Tel Aviv we all flew together out to, and I forget whether it was Egypt then Jordan or Jordan then Egypt, so we got them all on board for hitting those capitals.

**BW:** And in what ways did this trip solidify, clarify or change the nature of this project?

**BM:** That's a good question. Well having, as I mentioned, Ehud Barak announce his resignation right before we got there, it changed a bit of what the level of participation was going to be from the government of Israel, and how much they were going to be willing to participate in this. So like any bureaucracy, the leadership takes a position on something and the lower levels sometimes have their own views, and it wasn't clear that we were going to get the support necessary to do this, as it happens.

The meetings in Jordan and in Egypt, those two meetings were commissioners only, staff were not allowed in the room, but we got the feedback afterward. The judgment was on the trip that what we had to proceed. Because of the limitations on how much the Israeli appeared willing to embrace us as outsiders coming in and, quote/unquote, investigating, or 'fact-finding,' contrasted with the Palestinians' just burning desire for everyone to be able to tell their story, their personal stories of loss, of grief, it was pretty dramatic. And the time we spent in Gaza on that trip, listening to this room full of forty[-plus] people, show us pictures and give us bullet fragments and shell fragments taken from family members, and it was graphic and it was personal, and yet we hadn't heard anything on the Israeli side other than the political leadership telling us what the limitations were on our mandate.

So it was during this time, and I don't remember exactly when, that it was seen as important for the staff to go to Jerusalem and spend time there, and take advantage of any opportunity the Israelis were going to give us to talk to them, as well as continue to listen to the Palestinians.

**BW:** What was George Mitchell's mood like coming back on the plane from, what was it, a two-day visit?

**BM:** Yes, roughly, measured in hours as opposed to days. I know he seized the bedroom, the only bedroom on the plane, he commandeered that pretty quickly. I actually don't remember any specific reaction.

**BW:** So, you met a few days here to plan your move to Jerusalem. And then you went back pretty soon afterwards, is that right?

**BM:** Right, in early January, right after the holidays. Again, for an unknown period of time,

and knowing that we would come back and forth as needed. But through the help of the Meridian Center staff, they got us rooms and they put somebody on our, a retired State Department person who they had on staff to help us do administrative and logistics things, they had a couple people do that, in Jerusalem. Get us the hotel rooms and conference space and phones and computers and things like that, so we did that.

**BW:** How is the Meridian House's mission so compatible with what you were doing?

**BM:** That's a [good question], because I didn't work a lot of the foreign affairs/public diplomacy things beforehand. Meridian has [ ] a charter of being very focused on international development programs, they fund through their donors a lot of outreach programs, and they do a lot of good work. Senior leadership usually comes out of State Department, and I don't remember the exact connection, but they were selected as a vehicle through which State Department funding would go to the commission. So they were, either as somebody to kind of mind us without State Department people, government employees having to do it, it made sense.

**BW:** So just generally speaking, your modus operandi while you were in Jerusalem and surrounding area, what was it like?

**BM:** Now this being the second time I was in the region, when we had just been there once on this whirlwind tour, now being there and having more freedom to explore and do things we, again, we had some reluctance from the government of Israel to meet with us. We had the Palestinian side being represented by the Palestinian Liberation Organization support unit, the PLO's support unit, and they had a few people on their staff who were Western-trained lawyers, one of whom grew up here in Fairfax, Virginia, he was American, and around my age so [ ] the Palestinian side made a very earnest attempt to talk to us, work with us, explain things, listen to us, not be pushy.

And they invited us to a lot of meetings, and to meet a lot of people, and in a very thoughtful way – 'oh, you should really meet so-and-so, he's very smart on these issues and he can talk to you about this aspect.' Or, 'we should go to Nablus and we can arrange a day to meet people up there.' And they did a very good job of that, because these were places we should go, and people we should talk to. And they enabled us staff to see a lot of the issues from the Palestinian point of view, which was certainly their goal, and their responsibility in fact, somebody had to do that.

The Israeli side, on the other hand, we met with some academics, we met with Foreign Ministry people, and we met with Defense Ministry people, and as is the case in the region and as is the case with Israel on some of these issues, there's a tendency to be lectured to, that they fall back upon. Here [is] an outside presence that their prime minister, who had just announced his resignation so therefore he's politically weak, had agreed to, no one else in the government liked the idea, so they're going to work with us? And they have lots of examples that they can roll out of how outsiders have threatened Israeli security, or Israel's security, because of not understanding the dynamics and giving too much credence to statements from Palestinian leader X or Y. So absolutely, even the academics were not convinced that we were going to be of any

value. How could we be? We weren't Israeli, and Israelis were going to solve this problem, and outsiders didn't need to help. So it was an interesting dynamic, and then you probably heard the reports of the visit to the Temple Mount which we did, which prompted the government of Israel to formally suspend its cooperation with us.

**BW:** No, I hadn't heard that.

**BM:** One of the staff members who was a European Union designee, one of the people from the European Union – when I mentioned earlier that everybody had one staff person, each of the five members, that was technically true but not literally applied. So the E.U. had two, three people, the U.S. had three, it didn't matter. But one of the E.U. people, who was a British civil servant who spent a lot of time in the region, [had] arranged for us to go to Haram al-Sharif, the Temple Mount, where the Al-Aqsa Mosque is, (which was the reason why the intifada got the name Al-Aqsa Intifada) to physically see what it looked like. You can see it from the Israeli side when you're down at the Wailing Wall, the Western Wall, looking up, and it's above there, you see the dome, it's an iconic photograph of the old city of Jerusalem, the big dome, that's the Haram al-Sharif.

And [we needed] to get permission to physically walk on the grounds, and of course this is where Ariel Sharon had gone in that September day which prompted the demonstrations the following day which led to the violence. So it made perfect sense for us to go up there. We were pretty convinced that the Israeli government was not going to give us permission to do that, but then we didn't really need permission to do that because it is a Jordanian group called the Waqf, W-A-Q-F, that manages the Temple Mount for both parties, so that it's not Palestinians, it's not Israelis, running it. And because it's a place of such importance to, and the proximity within, for Jews, Christians and Muslims, it's an amazingly powerful place.

So our contact from this British civil servant went to his Jordanian friends and said, "Can we, after hours, later, get a tour?" And they said, "Yes." So we went, not through the front door, so to speak, we came in through a side door, not through the door that Ariel Sharon had gone, and mindful that we were probably being watched on occasion, we looked like shoppers going through the old city of Jerusalem, and ended up, [p/o] "Oop, look, here's a door." And because of the arrangements made by phone, the guards were waiting for us, the head of the Waqf at the time was waiting for us, there were Israeli guards who were on the Israeli side of this door, and their job is not to stop people but just to maintain security, and they looked at us as the Jordanians said, "Come on in." So we walked in. We looked around the Temple Mount, it was still daylight, and it was a fascinating fact-finding little venture we did.

Well, the Israelis, the government of Israel did not know that we had done that, and we did not tell them ahead of time that we were going to do that because we didn't want to be prevented. And so in fact when they learned, they were very upset, [which we first heard about in the newspaper]. We got called in two days later and formally told that the support from the government of Israel for the fact-finding commission was suspended, because of this transgression, et cetera, et cetera, and insert your diplomatic language here about how upset you

are. The funny part was that [the] staff director for the committee staff was Larry Pope, former U.S. ambassador, and he actually happened to be back in New York or at home, Washington, during this time. And Fred Hof and myself and some of the other staff went on this, but, he got blamed. So in the Israeli press it was: Larry Pope took this group of [foreigners] and violated the conditions of Israel's agreeing to the formation of this committee, et cetera, et cetera, et cetera. And Larry was back in the United States, he had no part of it, but he got blamed for it.

**BW:** Did that prompt his leaving the operation?

**BM:** It did, it did, because it quickly became apparent he was going to be a scapegoat for this, and so he called Senator Mitchell and said, "It makes sense for me not to be a part of it." And that's where Fred, who had been involved, stepped up to become the staff director.

**BW:** Proportionally, how much of your time was devoted in fact-finding about the intifada and how it unfolded, and how much of your time was spent fact-finding about directions to take, in the recommendation end of things?

**BM:** Predominantly towards the latter, because the fact-finding [was not that] complex, [although there were] different points of view on how the early days of the intifada played out [p/o]. When you looked at the facts for this it quickly led you to the current complaints and gripes and issues between both sides, which led you to the broader issues which were well written about and well understood. So it was clear early on that in order to address this issue, we had to think about the large context, about how do the parties move forward towards a peaceful settlement. And you could not neatly box in a recommendation that said, 'stop the violence,' without it being connected to the larger 'stop the violence permanently,' or trying to do that.

**BW:** I'm curious, were you dogged by security in all of your movements, or not? It sounds like you weren't, because you got to the Temple Mount.

**BM:** Chances are we were for a large chunk, and we didn't know. There were times when we did know, there were times when, where it became obvious and comical. If it hadn't been explained yet, the one incidence of us getting [harassed], we tried deliberately to shake anybody that might have been following us – this was towards the very end of the process, where we knew it was likely our last trip there. Ariel Sharon was the prime minister, had accepted [the committee], President Bush had accepted [it], several of the members had come over, [but] Senator Rudman wasn't able to make it on this trip [p/o]. We were kind of deciding on how we were going to take this forward, and how we were going to write the report.

And we wanted to have a conversation about it among the staff in Jerusalem, but we really wanted it to be a [group] conversation, because you didn't know what everybody else was thinking. You'd have one-on-one conversations, but you couldn't really have a group conversation. So we thought we would be very secretive, or at least play a little subterfuge and [p/o] everybody would go at different times and arrive at a restaurant that we selected right then, and then we'd hopefully get a big table and we could just have a meal and [talk].

We selected the restaurant, whispered it to each other, everybody left in groups of twos or threes and sauntered in that general direction, arrived at the restaurant, and there's no room for us. We end up sitting at tables of twos and threes, and then we still have to have this conversation, so on the way back from the restaurant to our hotel, we walked by a park and we saw that there was a tree and bench, and let's just go over there. And the park had a slightly crown shape, and were up towards the middle, so you had to be within fifty yards of us to see us directly [p/o]. It was just the contours and the trees, you had to be close enough.

So we just pulled off to the side of the sidewalk we were on, walked over twenty yards to a tree, and stood around and talked. And there was nobody else in the park, but out of the corner of my eye I see a man dressed in jeans and a sweatshirt or something, just casual clothing, kind of a serious look on his face, come walking towards us. And he walks towards us, steps over a low shrub which was there, and walks through us, literally through the group, and continues to walk straight on. And we laughed, because if he was truly somebody walking through the park, ten steps to the right and he would have walked around us. But no, he went through us, so he was, in our view, sending a very clear message. He was upset that we had managed to evade [ ] control and somebody was sending us a message, "Don't do that again," or, "We found you." So we thought that was funny. But we were able to have our conversation and which led to us coming back to Washington to draft the report.

**BW:** And that happened in mid- or late April, I guess?

**BM:** [p/o] It might have been late March, right in that time frame.

**BW:** And the second visit of the commissioners, did that occur while you were all still there?

**BM:** Essentially it was a couple of three- or four-week stints that we did over there, and then we'd come back. So I think it was on the third stint is when they came back over, [which] we had planned for [ ]. I think there was already the expectation that there wouldn't need to be any more trips planned. There [were] a lot of things I think that, had we as staff had unlimited time, there were a lot of other issues we would have wanted to pursue, but this was a good effort and it was time to go back and write.

**BW:** To what extent were the commissioners involved as you all were pursuing your work there?

**BM:** Getting reports from us, phone calls, we would talk to Senator Mitchell and Senator Rudman regularly so the Americans were [informed, and] we left it up to the other staff people to communicate as they saw fit. And then when we'd come back to Washington for a week break or something, we would invariably meet with them. We would set broad outlines of what we wanted to accomplish and who we wanted to see, and get their agreement.

It wasn't [always about] conversations about the substance of where our heads were thinking on

this issue, but about the practical and administrative and political issues. So when the government of Israel suspended their support for us, what do we do? How do we approach this? Who do we talk to next? That would be a subject for a call, or several calls obviously. Not, [as much], where do we think there was going to be fruitful information to support a substantive conclusion or something.

**BW:** So talk a little bit about your all repairing to the Meridian House and your work there.

**BM:** Fred Hof did a great job of [leading this], and with a little bit of cajoling that we collectively had to do to the others, [we agreed] that it would be okay to let Fred take a stab at drafting an outline. And he did that after talking to Senator Mitchell and getting some initial guidance from him, and he worked on it for a few days. We all assembled, and the foreign staff members came in town, and we started off with a draft outline of major points of issues to cover, of a structure to include in the report, and then started on filling in the holes, and having conversations in this large, beautiful room. So it was fascinating to be in an elegantly appointed historic home, with beautiful linden trees outside the window, it was [ ] heady. [ ] We were talking of matters of huge importance in this [beautiful] setting.

But there were some difficult negotiations, or differences of opinion, and it was useful, and it was necessary, you had to go through that process [of discussion]. What would the Europeans, quote/unquote, not accept in terms of language, what would the Americans not accept. We could never say *this* because of this historic precedent, or we never will not say *this* because of [that] precedent. So there was a lot of that back and forth that had to happen. And over the course of a couple, several days, we worked on shaping this.

I took on the role of being the writer, the literal typer of the report, because I was a little bit more [ ] proud of my typing speed, and I got frustrated watching somebody [else] trying to manipulate Microsoft Word [ ], and I [said], “C’mon, let me do that, let me get in there, that’s not how you delete a sentence, here’s how you delete a sentence, shift-end-delete,” not moving the cursor one space at a time. So I said, “Let me do that.” So I started taking [over] the draft, not changing the words of other people but just, “Let me make the changes,” so we had one person typing, making changes, different versions reflecting the edits and the comments of [the] other people.

[This] led to a meeting in New York where the committee members would be for one final time. And we knew that there were many issues that we would go over with the committee members that we all had agreed upon but wanted [the members] to agree on, and we knew that there were some issues that they needed to discuss themselves and [ ] debate. So it was presented to them in such a way, here’s the draft report, and here are the things we think you all should consider discussing.

**BW:** How long did you meet in New York?

**BM:** It was just a morning. I actually thought it was going to be longer but it ended up being a morning, which is another one of those images I have in my head of Jim Pickup, Fred Hof,

[Kelly Currie], and myself sitting with Senator Mitchell. I forget the name of the lounge in the hotel, I think we were back at the Waldorf, but [it was] one of those elegant mahogany wood and rich carpet and deep, dark leather chairs, with small lampshades, and normally in the evening it would be very cozy, with a fireplace burning or something [warm], a place to have a glass of scotch or bourbon or something. And this was breakfast, so we had coffee, and [ ] went through the whole report with Senator Mitchell.

[p/o] It was just us and Senator Mitchell. And we had worked over the report with him and several aspects of the report before, so we knew what his expectations were, and we knew how he was looking at things, but it was the final time to, in our view as the American side, to present to the others, here's where we [are]. So it was actually a fascinating time. As Senator Mitchell went through every page, we would wait for him to read, wouldn't rush him, he read every word, often paused: why did we say this; what's the background; what's our evidence to support this; why are we using this verb; why is this modifier being used; can we really say that? You know, 'where did you learn this from?'

And [he] methodically went through the report so that, and I remember thinking this to myself at the time, he was owning this, he was now owning this. We had done a lot of drafting and writing, but he, in this process and in this read[ing] the ability of him to retain the nuances of these issues in the wording, was just so impressive. And in this final run through of the report, to me, he was taking ownership of it. So we made a few final changes based upon his guidance, and then we went to meet with the others. And he led the meeting, and I was running back and forth, because again, as the volunteer to be the pen, we had a computer set up in the meeting room next door, and I would be expected to run back, make changes, and deliver the new page to reflect the agreed language.

And they quickly went through all the issues for which we didn't think there was disagreement, and there was not. There were a handful of issues, I forget how many, somewhere packed away I have all my probably old copies of the reports, or at least I have them on, different versions on an old floppy disk if you can find an old computer. So there was a break while the staff went back to the side room, and having taken our notes, okay, what did they say on this, or how was this paragraph supposed to change. And so the Norwegian, the European Union, the Turk staff members and [we] would sit around and huddle over my shoulder as I'm typing. And I don't know if you're this way, but I'm a very fast typist until somebody's looking at me, and then I'm making errors and I'm getting frustrated. But we made all the changes, and then we did some, 'no, that's not exactly what they said, but this is how the wording is, so let's try this. Do all of us agree?' and so we made a few of those changes, and then there was one or two sticky issues that we had to go back with.

And this was my final personal anecdote of how he prepares himself, how he conducts these meetings, and how he reaches consensus and conclusions, and why I think he is as respected a statesman as he is, because this is innate or raw talent, and perhaps learned and polished over years, but this is not something that most humans can do, in my experience.

It was a discussion on two competing points of view, which were in two separate sentences of two separate paragraphs. And on their face, they didn't contradict each other, but the positions of different people in the room, there were issues that we could not abide by. And primarily the Norwegians were concerned that their government had never taken a position that said what was in this paper, in sentence A, for example, so therefore they could not agree to that sentence being in there. The Americans, whether we were by ourselves or not I don't remember, but we had a reason for it being there, because it factually was correct, and this was factually something that we had discussed and logically we had agreed to. We weren't making this up, this was a reasonable statement to make, to include this thing. Then a reference was made to, well over in this paragraph there's this sentence, sentence B, and it says it this way.

And there was a back-and-forth and it ended up being [a bit tense]. The Norwegian senior staff person could be very dramatic when we were in our staff meetings about the necessity of consulting with the minister. He's a Norwegian foreign official, excuse me, public official, who is still serving the United Nations and the E.U. in a number of capacities, but he had a very dramatic flair [ ] when he objected to something. He was not [always calm]. Americans might [say a terse] "I don't like that," [but for him] it was a, "I must *protest*, I will go back," [and] he would pound the table. And so we knew this was an issue for which he had had those outbursts.

And the foreign minister, who was much more collected and reasonable on a personal interplay level, nonetheless had been convinced by him and said, "This is something that is of great concern and we cannot accept this language." He did it in a much more practical way, but we could see all the energy behind him, defying us and defying the Americans for putting in this language.

And Senator Mitchell looked at the paper, he had listened to what was happening, he looked at the paper again, paused, thought reflectively for a number of seconds, twenty seconds, I don't remember what it was, and then said, "Why don't we try this." And he pieced together a new sentence containing the parts of the other sentences, and in a creative way that kept our points in there of being factually correct and included whatever the clause was that we thought was essential because it was an observation that was factual that we had made, but avoided the precise formulation that the Norwegians were objecting to, and he did this while looking up around the room. So this was like from memory, crafted a very long, multi-clause sentence – and we're all scribbling, writing it down – and there was a pause, and Foreign Minister Jagland said, "Brilliant." And that was the final point that needed to be resolved, and then there was full agreement on the report.

And it was amazing to watch him, I mean somebody of lesser capacity might have written it down and sent us back but this was in his head, he constructed this sentence based on these different ideas, and it met the objectives of everybody and everybody was happy. It was an amazing thing to see.

**BW:** Do you imagine on an occasion like that that he experiences a rush of adrenaline? I mean it's sort of like a Michael Jordan act, in a way, isn't it?

**BM:** Yes, 'in the zone,' yes.

**BW:** Or does he just not calculate things that way, do you imagine?

**BM:** I think this is how he [is], because as you may know and have heard from others, my experience with him, he's fairly level in his reactions to things. There are clearly things that you might see him get a little more perturbed about this or that, but generally he's not an animated, or outwardly animated person. This formulation by him was not punctuated with an exclamation point, he didn't pump his hands in the air and say, voila, or eureka, or something. It was very precise, and in the same tone and matter-of-fact presentation that he did virtually everything else. So no, I did not see any difference in how he formulates and conceives of ideas, that's how his brain works.

**BW:** Interesting. About how long was the report in its final form, twenty pages, fifty pages?

**BM:** I think twenty was more like it.

**BW:** Because I can see this breakfast meeting going on forever if there were forty pages or fifty pages.

**BM:** Right, no, and it was constructed where there was a summary that laid out the primary points, and then the [ ] three sections [inside]. You could see him shaping the report as if he was thinking of how he was going to verbally describe it. It was not complex at all, so that he could say, we recommended three things, and within each of those things there were a number of other recommendations. But depending on whom he was talking to, he could, here's the bumper sticker, here's the longer one-page version, here's the longer report, and it was all organized neatly that way in the report and for him in his mind.

But as I mentioned, every word was carefully chosen. There was no extraneous adverbs or adjectives that shaded the meaning one way or the other, so it may be twenty-ish pages, the font was bigger so it wasn't densely packed, and it was written in paragraph or even bullet form, so that it was faster for people to digest. But it was very carefully crafted.

**BW:** Have you had any subsequent contact with Senator Mitchell?

**BM:** I've seen him on a few occasions, not substantive, more social. I hope to see him soon, I am now back involved, Jim Pickup has asked me in the last several months to get involved outside of work on something called the Middle East Progress, which is a component of the Center for American Progress, and it's a – think tank is probably too big a word – but is a policy focus organization on achieving a two state solution in the Middle East. And part of Jim's goal, my goal and collectively, is to try to promote the conditions that would lead for Senator Mitchell to be successful in this current role, for which Fred Hof is working with him. So from the outside now, I'm able to reengage and think about these issues. And as I just started doing this

again, I haven't seen him yet, but I hope to in some form.

He's very busy right now. We've actually heard, some people have complained that he's not being - By reporting to the secretary of state and then the president, he's in an interesting position. There are other personalities at the State Department and in the think tank world that have their own views on it, so I think he's avoiding bureaucratic fights that I think frankly he doesn't need to get into, nor should he. But he's keeping his counsel, doing the work that he's doing in a non-public way, and at appropriate times you'll see statements and interviews.

But it's easy for people to say the answer is obvious in the Middle East, Israel has to do X, Palestinians have to do Y, Syria, Lebanon and other parties have to do these things. But one thing I've told people when they ask me about the report, one of the things that Senator Mitchell said - I traveled with him on one of his little speaking [trips] up to New York, he was speaking to a couple groups and I went up with him to take notes and to be there while he was talking to this group, and he got some tough questions from [p/o] a private meeting of leaders of some American Jewish organizations - and it was a very instructive.

And he had a couple [of] good turns of phrases, and one stuck with me, which was, "Neither side is going to achieve their objectives by denying the other side its objectives. So Israel wants security, it cannot get security while denying Palestinians their desire for a state. Palestinians will not get a state while denying Israel's desire for security." And it was simple but accurate, and that's still the case now, yet personalities, politicians change, and [p/o] I don't know how it ends, but his dogged determination I hope will pay off for him again.

**BW:** I want to end, unless you have something to add, going in a different direction. You are now working for another former senator from Maine, Senator or Secretary Cohen. Any observations about what kind of politicians come out of that far northeastern state?

**BM:** Yes, what is going on in the water up there! And with my experience with Senator Rudman in New Hampshire, and from my home state of Connecticut, Senator Joe Lieberman, who has turned his independence streak [up a notch], who my mother worked for thirty-five years ago back in Connecticut. So I have discovered in life that while I was raised in a very Democratic family [who were] active in local Democratic politics, my uncle, as I mentioned, [who was] a Democratic union kind of person, and I in the early '80s followed the call of Ronald Reagan and went into the army, so I was a bit of an odd duck [with some conservative views].

But the experiences of your family will always weigh in on you, [and] being exposed to Senator Rudman, Senator Mitchell, Senator Cohen, and now Susan Collins and Olympia Snowe, and Linc Chafee from Rhode Island, John Chafee from Rhode Island, Joe Lieberman from Connecticut, the New England sense of, [perhaps], not as in-your-face as New Hampshire's "Don't Tread on Me," but [more of], 'Let us think for ourselves' [is important to me]. I've discovered [this] in the last ten years, [and] I appreciate [this] more and more, because of how missing it is here in Washington, [where] people have to follow the agenda set by someone else. So I [p/o] will always work for, support somebody that takes the time to think for themselves and

makes a judgment based on what they think is right, not what [*others*] think.

A lot of people [may disagree] – my mother, who loved Joe Lieberman, isn't happy with him right now. But nonetheless, we can respect Joe because he is doing what *he* thinks is right, and I think that's the case. So yes, there's something about the water up in Maine – [and New England].

**BW:** I'm sure we are leaving some things unsaid, but anything you want to add to this?

**BM:** I hope this is helpful, and I hope that those who have the fun challenge of editing my [ ] Connecticut drawl will find some nuggets that are of use. But I am pleased and honored to be able to participate in this project, because I think that Senator Mitchell is [a great figure, and] the more future folks studying this can learn about what made him, or what makes him as unique and strong a character, with integrity and intellect, perhaps there will be future people that can rise to the level that he has risen to.

**BW:** Thank you very much.

**BM:** Thank you.

End of Interview