
Interview with James L. Buckley

The interview was conducted by David Welborn in Washington D.C. on March 4, 1993

Audio Cassette 32a
DW: First of all, Judge Buckley, thank you very much for inviting me into your chambers, and they are very pleasant chambers, indeed. When did you first become acquainted with Howard Baker?

JB: Almost right away when I came into the Senate; I entered the Senate properly in January of 1971. Anyway, within days or a week or two, I knew of his presence.

DW: In 1971, he contested for the Republican leader's position. Had you been contacted in his behalf prior to the caucus at which the party leaders were elected?

JB: Yes, I was; I was contacted by Bill Brock who had been elected to the Senate at the same time I was, so he was a fellow freshman.

DW: Do you remember the nature of the politics among the Republican Senators at that time associated with the selection of leaders?

JB: Not too well, to tell the truth. First of all, I should warn you that I have a very bad memory for specifics and for anecdotes.

DW: It was a while ago.

JB: It was a while ago also, but I would have had the bad memory a couple of years later. Obviously, I knew there was this challenge, and I was invited to have lunch in the Senate dining room by Bill Brock. He then disclosed what it was he wanted to talk to me about. He told me of all the virtues of Howard Baker, as to which I had no experience but no reason to doubt. I must confess that I was then exposed to the first offer of trades and so on that I had ever experienced. I came in from a background that had nothing to do with politics. This was a very odd situation in my life.

DW: You were, in a sense, an _____.

JB: Yes, an accidental candidate and as, a third party candidate, more involved in making points. This time around I was trying to get elected, seriously. But in any event, I did not have a political background. Bill Brock mentioned that he understood that I had a great interest in ecology, the environment, and so on, and that I had hoped to be able to be a member of the Public Works Committee where the action was and that the ascendancy of
Howard Baker would help a great deal with my ambition in that respect. Frankly, I didn't like that but, in any event, I listened. Hugh Scott, of course, gave me a telephone call; I think that was in hope that I would go along. I believe these things were a secret ballot, so you will be the first person who will have learned that I voted for Howard Baker.

DW: And he lost, but you ended up on the Public Works Committee anyway.

JB: By virtue of something known as seniority; I was number 99 in the pecking order in the Senate and there was that vacancy when my turn came around.

DW: After you had been in the Senate a while—a couple of months, three months—and began to learn your way around, what was your sense of the way Baker's colleagues saw him? He had only been in the Senate for four years at that time, and he had just completed his second attempt at the leader position, the first being in 1969. What was his reputation among his colleagues?

JB: He was obviously respected, but I can't recall anything beyond that. If you were suggesting by your question was there any feeling of "who is this upstart?" I had no impression of that whatsoever. All I can say is that I was trying to learn the ropes of being a legislator. I was, as I said, very interested in the work of the Public Works and we immediately became immersed in a reconsideration of the first thorough revamping of important environmental legislation. In this instance, it was the Water Quality Act. So I saw him at work right away in that context.

DW: Were you on that environment subcommittee?

JB: Yes. I saw him at work there and could see the respect that he commanded.

DW: Let's talk about the work of the Public Work Committee a bit. I've been told that the Public Works Committee has—or at least had, I don't know about the present—a distinctive culture.

JB: Yes, it did.

DW: How would you describe that culture?
JB: It prided itself on being nonpartisan. The staff genuinely served the total membership of the Committee. There weren't divides as between Republicans and Democrats. There were people who had different views on different issues, of course, but that was more a divide on an analysis of what the devil the federal government should be doing. It was very refreshing.

DW: Was this culture something that stemmed from Jennings Randolph or was this something that predated him?

JB: I've no idea whether it predated him; he seemed to have been there forever from my perspective at the time. So I don't know if he inherited that, but I do know he took great pride in it. As I say, I cannot think of any instance offhand where I felt that the staff was taking sides on a purely political basis.

DW: Talk about the kind of chairman Randolph was, because I've been led to believe that he played an important role in Baker's career, even though they were of different political parties.

JB: He was very solicitous of the views of the individuals on the Committee. He encouraged a tremendous amount of civility, if you will, and consideration. He had a sort of grandfatherly view of the whole situation, at least as a very, very junior Senator saw it—telephone calls at Christmas time, things of that sort, the nice little courtesies. As I say, he helped create a culture; now whether it had any effect on Howard or not, I just don't know. I didn't see Howard as he was when he entered that sphere. It was an agreeable committee to be on, because there was enough problems involved in legislation, especially controversial legislation, not to have these gratuitous irritants.

DW: Randolph was courteous, considerate—was he also a leader?

JB: Not really, no. Well, I'd better take that back, because to set the ambience for a body of that sort does take leadership. If you mean "was he a leader in terms of statutes?" during the time I was there, I would say no, but I understand that there were certain projects. I've forgotten the name of the agency that looked after Appalachia—

DW: The Appalachian Regional Commission.
JB: Regional Commission—and there was also another one that gave economic aid, that was designed to help that, and then its scope started spreading all over. In every area it considered impoverished, it found itself in there, including, believe it or not, one particular area within New York City. It was a particular program that I thought needed to be abolished—it's still around. So, obviously, Jennings Randolph accomplished legislative goals, but I didn't see anything during my six years which would make him stand out.

DW: Was he a leader in the sense of moving the process along?

JB: The process did move along; whether he was pushing it along or whether that was how things worked—now let me say this, I did notice the process slowing down significantly during the course of my six years in the Senate. It slowed down across the board; it became more and more difficult to have quorums to handle business. There were more and more interruptions of roll call votes. Do you mind if I ramble on?

DW: No, not at all.

JB: Start with the fact that I knew nothing about the legislative process or anything else. I had very definite ideas on where legislation should go, mostly off the books. But, in any event, after I was elected, somebody handed me a book that had just been completed by the bar association for the City of New York. It was a thorough study of Congress, and one of its conclusions was that the workload of the average congressional office had doubled every five years since 1935. I could see the doubling in my six years. One of the few anecdotal examples that I remember is the contrast between the work done within the Public Works subcommittee, the environmental subcommittee, on the revisions to the Water Quality Act, which we did and accomplished within a year in 1971. That same exercise with respect to the Clean Air Act, which was begun in 1975, the Senate finally completed its part of it at the very end of 1976. It was an agonizing process, totally interrupted towards the end, impossible to keep the thread going. It was the result of the time pressures and the distractions that had come into being during that period. When I was first in the Senate I would be given each day a little card showing my various appointments and so forth. There would, with some frequency, be a conflict between this committee and that other committee or subcommittees and so forth; toward the end it was not uncommon to have conflicts between three and even four simultaneous appointments. The institution was grinding to a halt, and I can't blame that on the chairmen. Whether he did anything to make it—I don't think there was anything he could have done to have slowed that down.
DW: Did this change that you've just described also serve to increase the role and influence of the staff in the legislative process?

JB: You're focusing now on Public Works.

DW: Yes.

JB: Again, what did happen, halfway through, was—and this I think was beginning in Public Works, of having things that might ultimately develop into a partisanship and so forth—members of the committees in the Senate were given the right to appoint one staff member, who would become that person's individual there to keep track of what that individual was interested in. I had a direct input, halfway through, and I did not notice anything that would cause me to believe that staff in that Committee was having greater influence. On a couple of other committees, Commerce Committee for example, the majority staff was the majority's property, and there was very little access to it, if you will. I found that very partisan and strikingly different from Public Works.

DW: The reason I was asking the questions about Jennings Randolph and his relationship with Baker is that I think, I don't know, that the Public Works Committee was one of the main school rooms in which Baker learned the legislative process after he came to the Senate. It was always the committee that seemed to be his principal interest, and I confess to looking for some of the roots of his leadership style, perhaps, in what he saw as he watched Randolph function as chairman.

JB: If one of the characteristics is a search for consensus, that was very definitely the style there. I remember once I came up and questioned something, and there was silence around the room, because apparently I wasn't supposed to throw in a little monkey wrench at that particular point in the process. I could see that.

DW: What did you observe to be Baker's legislative style as you worked beside him in the Committee?

JB: What struck me almost at the beginning was his extraordinary intelligence. His ability to have all kinds of disparate odds and ends thrown up during the course of a hearing day and at the very end of it say, "All right, now we've heard five witnesses and these are the issues
in this particular area: A, B, C, D. The reasons for A are such and such, the reasons against A are such and such," and go right down the line. All of this massive information had been weighed, sorted out, cataloged, and brought into a coherent whole. I didn't see anybody else who remotely approached that kind of a talent. As a result, this capacity, plus his fair-mindedness and evenhandedness, gave him a tremendous leverage in influencing other people and developing a kind of a consensus.

DW: That capacity to essentially describe the situation faced by the subcommittee or the committee really defined the job that had to be done, which can be a very important way of influencing the outcome, even unintentionally.

JB: And doing it in a way that is not offensive to anybody. It might be intimidating, in the sense of "Well, I wish to could be doing that sort of thing," but—

DW: Did you ever see Baker frustrated, angry, obviously bothered?

JB: I say, yes, a couple of times at least, but I cannot conjure up the context. I suspect not in the context of that particular Committee's work.

DW: Talk a little bit about his relationship with Senator Muskie.

JB: Very respectful. I hope you will excuse these pauses, I'm just trying to conjure up some memories.

DW: They were quite different personalities.

JB: They were totally different; Muskie was totally mercurial, he could get utterly impassioned. He did have the capacity to blow gaskets and so forth and to quickly simmer down. I have the feeling—and I'm talking about people who will be alive five years from now, and both of these individuals I very much like—I have the feeling that Howard was a little bit bemused by some of the tantrums or explosions or scoldings or whatever and took them in stride and would find a way to calm things and get us back at the point—in a good-humored, always well mannered way.

DW: Would you say that he had a major impact on the Clean Water legislation in 1972 and the Clean Air legislation in 1977?

DW: It passed the Senate in 1976.

JB: And then had to start over again, although I assume they borrowed large chunks of what we had slaved over. Yes, he had that intelligence, that analytical capability that would often resolve particular issues and bring people together. Whether it was a dominant influence or not, I wouldn't say. In the Clean Air Act, he phased out. I'm trying to remember what it was that did that, because suddenly I found myself the ranking minority member of that Committee. My meteoric career, unappreciated by the people of New York. I guess it was that Howard became the ranking minority member of some other committee and therefore had to step down from that particular position. But he was less involved there than he had been in the Water Quality Act.

DW: Was Jim Range working on the Committee staff at that time? He came over from Baker's office; that may have been a little later.

JB: It doesn't ring a bell.

DW: You also worked with Baker on the Commerce Committee, at least until he left it to go to the Foreign Relations Committee. Did you share a subcommittee or subcommittees there?

JB: I don't recall. Let's put it this way: I was not conscious of doing a great deal of work with him at that time, so we must not have been on one.

DW: Do you have any recollections his reaction to the different political circumstance that marked the Commerce Committee as opposed to the Public Works Committee? I think Magnusson was still chairman at that time, wasn't he?

JB: He was still chairman, yes. I don't recall his reactions, though; I do recall my reactions.

DW: What were your reactions?
JB: That this was totally different, utterly political; you didn't count if you were a member of the minority, you had a hard time getting yourself heard. I didn't like it, it was a very different environment.

DW: I suspect then that would be true for all Republicans, except perhaps for the ranking member who might have a little more clout.

JB: I suspect so.

DW: Was it your impression that Baker's standing among his colleagues was growing between 1971 and 1976?

JB: Very definitely, although, as I say, I don't have a fix as to where it went to another. But, of course, the Watergate hearings gave him enormous prominence, and he was the subject of a great deal of discussion on how he handled himself in contrast to some of the other Republicans and how he was able to get a point of view in that might otherwise have been swallowed up.

DW: Of course, there was public approval, but his colleagues in the Senate gave him high marks for that as well.

JB: Yes.

DW: Do you have any insight into Baker's relationship with your neighbor, Lowell Weicker?

JB: Diplomatic...how it went beyond that, I really don't know. Do I have any insights? No.

DW: Because Weicker was not a team player on that committee and perhaps in other contexts as well. I was just curious if there was anything you could report there. Then there was the Church committee on Intelligence; you were not a member of that Committee.

JB: No.

DW: Do you have any recollection of the role Baker played there, as seen by his Republican colleagues in the Senate?
JB: No. I'm much more conscious of Goldwater's role in that particular committee.

DW: Why don't you comment on that just a bit.

JB: Again, you've trapped me in this position of being unable to grab hold of specifics. It seems to me that Goldwater was properly aggressive in surfacing certain—arrogance isn't the right word—but rather blatant suppressions of certain points of view, certain facts and so forth, with respect to Chile, particularly, that could be laid at the feet of the chairman of that committee. He was letting the world know that this was hardly the ideal, unbiased, clinical approach to an important problem.

DW: That was quite a tempestuous Senate session, was there not, on the Report and when and if to release it, in which passions were quite high?

JB: I don't recall; I might not have been there that day. When was that?

DW: That would have been in 1975, I guess, something of that sort.

JB: I was accused of a certain absenteeism during the course of the campaign in 1976.

DW: Oh, I see!

JB: Incidentally, on the advice of Howard Baker, it occurs to me. It was highlighted by Pat Moynihan in certain debates in New York.

DW: On whose advice?

JB: Howard—that when the election was on, you'd better be in your state looking after your real interests.

DW: Oh, I see. Are there any other things about Baker in the Senate, in the years that you were there, that come to mind? Any other occasions beyond the Public Works Committee when you working together with Baker on something?

JB: I get back to the Public Works Committee, and this was on one of the automobile emission standards problems. This is the Clean Air Act; we ended up with a series of meetings with
Muskie in his private hideaway in the Capitol. I forget the exact issue, but I did see Baker take a tremendous amount of time and initiative on that particular technical point and work it through all kinds of—work out all kinds of problems. I saw him being very effective in that particular context and working with somebody who is coming from a quite different direction and getting it done. In other contexts, other than Watergate—

DW: This may seem off the subject, but it's really not: how would you characterize Hugh Scott's leadership style?

JB: It was rather unaggressive, it was "let's get along." He was very attentive to people who came up with something, more the mechanical, housekeeping things. He was very good at follow-up. But I don't have any memories of him really standing up when there was a crisis with the Democratic leadership in the Senate. One thing that comes to mind would be the Wyman—John what's-his-name—special election in New Hampshire.

DW: Dirken.

JB: Dirken, right. The person who emerged as the feisty partisan in what was a totally partisan struggle was Bob Griffin. He was the aggressive one on the proper occasion in that context.

DW: Do you recall Scott as being a vigorous advocate of Nixon's programs, at least pre-Watergate, and a vigorous advocate of Ford's programs? Was he telling the Republican Senators, "We've got to hang together and do the best we can for the president"?

JB: I think the proper phrase is that he was a dutiful advocate rather than a vigorous advocate.

DW: He would say the right things.

JB: Yes. He was not energetic—how's that?

DW: Was he doing what the Republican Senators, generally speaking, expected him to do?

JB: I'm not sure there was a particular consensus as to what Republican Senators should be expecting. The leadership that I saw came out—and was a faction within the Republicans—but in terms of having an agenda and trying to put it forward, it came out of something called the Steering Committee, of which Howard was not a member.
DW: I was talking to Margo Carlisle the other day, and she very clearly told me she was not going to tell me who was a member and who was not. She told me of people who had stated publicly that they members.

JB: I hadn't realized that this was not a matter of public information. Dear me, have I stepped out of line?

DW: I'll treat this indiscretion discreetly—trust me. I will ask you if you were a member.

JB: Yes.

DW: Talk a little bit about its operations and its objectives and its effects.

JB: Its objectives were to advance certain legislative agenda, which under the circumstances meant how to most skillfully drag heels so as to keep another calamity from occurring. We would meet once a week, maybe not that often, but we tried to meet periodically. We had a tiny little staff; we dedicated people from our own to this Committee. We did set out certain objectives, either legislation we wanted to promote or certain concerns about legislation that was coming up. Then we'd decide how we might best get people to understand why this should be passed or why that should be blocked. Out of this came a cooperation among the various Senators who were actively involved; there were some who turned up once in awhile and others who were there all the time, at every meeting. I think that the result of this exercise was to harness a certain amount of strength to achieve certain objectives, and I think some of them were achieved. We put certain issues on the table that otherwise never would have gotten there, so I thought it was an effective operation. It obviously did not speak for a majority of the Republicans—an important body of Republicans, but by no means a majority. I think, though, that it did illustrate how leadership could be exercised and mobilized—to mobilize a minority on those issues which all Republicans would tend to agree on.

DW: Do you have any sense as to how Baker viewed the Steering Committee and its activities?

JB: No, I don't, I just have no idea. He—ideologically or whatever, didn't belong in that particular group.
DW: How would you characterize his political philosophy at the time?

JB: If you use the word pragmatic, it sometimes has a bad intonation; I don't intend that at all. He's a practical man who works with what can be achieved. His basic views on any particular issue tend to be on the conservative side, but I think that what would separate him from the people who tended to be on the Steering Committee would be that he was not at all (a) surprised that the federal government was involved in these areas, nor did he particularly think that it was a bad idea for the government to be involved. But given the fact that the government was involved, how does one do this in the most intelligent, least damaging way? Whereas the thrust of the people on the Steering Committee—a lot of it was—we should not get ourselves involved here or we should get ourselves out of involvement there. So it was pulling from a different direction.

DW: This is getting a little bit ahead of the story, but it is interesting that after Baker became the Republican leader in 1977, a number of the other people in the leadership were from the Steering Committee: Curtis, as Conference chairman in 1977, followed by McClure in 1979; John Tower, with the Policy Committee; and I don't know where Stevens stood in regard to the Steering Committee and its activities.

JB: I know—but I can't tell you! All I can say is that while I was in the Steering Committee, neither John Tower nor Stevens were noticeably associated with it.

DW: Certainly Tower was identified as a conservative.

JB: Sure.

DW: Other than advising you to absent yourself from the Senate, did Baker help you in your 1976 campaign? Did he come up and campaign for you?

JB: He came to New York, yes; he was very helpful. Said lots of nice things, very supportive.

DW: How did New Yorkers react to him?

JB: Unfortunately, I was not getting all that much publicity, so there wasn't much reaction at all. There were a couple of fund raising type things that he talked to. We had a couple of
outdoor things where he went out and said brave things, and went to headquarters and things of that sort.

DW: Did the people seem to respond to this southern Republican?

JB: The people who were there were people who were fans of mine, so they would naturally respond to these wonderful things he was saying. But the press did not give it particular play.

DW: In between the November election and the start of the new session in 1977, I don't know where you were or what you were attending to, but probably you were not spending a whole lot of time thinking about the leadership contests that were going to be resolved at the start of the next session.

JB: No.

DW: But did you pick up anything, as you recall, as to what was going on?

JB: When you're out, you're out.

DW: What did you do between 1977 and 1981?

JB: Business; I went for one year with Donaldson, Lufkin, and Jenrett in New York, a securities firm. Then I ended up doing some consulting work; we had a family business that had some problems, and I tried to work on those for awhile. That took me through 1979 and then I quixotic idea that I might be able to return to the Senate, but from a different venue—namely Connecticut.

DW: I recall that. Were you paying much attention to the Senate during those years?

JB: No, no.

DW: I was going to ask you—I will ask you—what impressions you have of Baker as minority leader, his effectiveness.

JB: I simply have nothing to say. Nothing I can say.
DW: Were you involved in the presidential politics in 1980, or were you focusing on your own?

JB: I was involved in my own politics at that time, which meant that I had to forego Republican presidential politics in that particular context.

DW: What were you thinking about Howard Baker as a potential Republican nominee when he was in the race?

JB: I think I've told you enough about how I respect the man to feel that he's one of the singular people that I've had the chance to meet. I don't think he would have been my choice for president, among the Republicans running, for the ideological reasons that I spoke of. Ideological is a word let's throw away. Philosophical. I have the conviction that the United States had to go in a different direction than they were going, and I would see a Baker presidency as being enormously competent, but I would not see it as changing the thrust of the American political institutions. I would be very confident in a Baker presidency, but of the people who were running, it would not be my choice.

DW: I understand. Ronald Reagan goes on to win the nomination and to win the election, and you become a part of the new administration as Under Secretary of State for Security and Assistance. I understand the assistance part—

JB: And Technological.

DW: I understand the assistance and the technological, but how does security fit in? Is that security assistance, military aid and that sort of thing?

JB: Security Assistance and Technology. What security assistance involved was that whole gaggle of programs where one extends aid, for example, to a combination of military assistance, hardware, training and so forth, and economic aid to, say, Pakistan for our security—because of our security interests. In other words, you would divide the economic aspects of that aid from what AID does, which is you do it to people who just need help, irrespective of whether they in turn would become potential allies of yours.
DW: As you were becoming an Under Secretary of State, Howard Baker was becoming the Republican leader in the Senate. What became the nature of your associations with Baker with the two of you now in these new positions?

JB: You mentioned my neighbor, Weicker. My first formal contact with Baker after I arrived on the scene—before you start doing things, you have to be confirmed and then there's a little ritual that usually means that your home state Senator, if he is of the right party, will escort you to the Committee and introduce you and say nice things, at which point the Committee takes over and asks you questions. Lowell Weicker was not at all certain whether he wanted to have that honor; Howard Baker wanted him to do the honorable thing. Believe it or not, we ended up at a meeting in Howard's office, in which basically what Lowell Weicker wanted was an assurance from me that I wouldn't run against him two years later! He was just unhappy about the fact that I had moved into his territory.

DW: Did you give him what he wanted?

JB: No. But I did say this was the furtherest thing from my mind.

DW: Did he, in the end, do the honorable thing?

JB: He did the honorable thing. But Howard was being Howard. Beyond that, I saw Howard on a number of occasions; I'd occasionally drop in on the majority office and just chew the fat with him. There's kind of a happy hour at the end of the day—that Hugh Scott, incidentally—maybe it's an old tradition—but he encouraged that. It was a nice way to relax and to get to talk to some people informally that otherwise you never really saw.

DW: And Baker offered his offices for that purpose.

JB: Yes.

DW: Talk a little bit about the Senate Foreign Relations Committee under Senator Percy, obviously, an important committee in connection with your new position. Was it an easy committee to deal with?
JB: I had a particular portfolio that made it very difficult. One of the things I found myself doing, which is something that I told myself I would never do, was lobbying. I don't know how familiar with these various issues—AWACS—does that ring a bell? Saudi Arabia?

DW: Oh, yes.

JB: There is very little sympathy among the majority in the Foreign Relations Committee on this kind of issue, so I would have to go make the rounds among members of the Senate at large and try to be persuasive. Percy—I've got this thing backwards—I had a slippage of time. Of course, this is when the Republicans were in the majority—we had support there, yes, we did have support. I was thinking on to another hat that I put on a few years later, after the Republicans lost the majority, and I was thinking of Pell, Clayborn Pell. This was when I was with Radio Free Europe-Radio Liberty in Munich. It was in those days, in those context, that I had very little sympathy. But in terms of the support for my particular area of responsibility in the Senate, it was there; a lot of flak from the Democrats, but there was a comfortable majority. The selling that I had to do was not to the Committee, but to the Senate as a whole.

DW: According to my understanding, when the AWACS issue first arose, it seemed almost inevitable that when it came out of Foreign Relations to the floor, you would lose. The head count seemed to show that; I've forgotten what the numbers were.

JB: There were those who were justified optimists.

DW: What was the organization or combination of effort that was involved in turning things around over that period of time? I think it was two or three or four months until it seemed that there was a good chance of securing approval on the floor. There was the State Department, the White House people, the Pentagon, and Senate leadership. Who was coordinating all of that?

JB: It basically came out of NSC, Dick Allen. He had the key position, but not the exclusive position by any means. I think there was a certain amount of non-coordinated help—targets of opportunity, if you will—but we kept in fairly close touch with one another, who was doing what and who had to be seen, what might be the persuasive arguments.

DW: Baker himself played a pretty major role in that, did he not?
JB: Yes, he did. And he would arrange meetings here and there and so on.

DW: Were you reasonably sure that at some point you were going to be able to get this through?

JB: Not sure, but thought that it was doable. The logic of the situation was so great, and obviously it had that very effective—what's the name of that pact? The Israeli—it's the Jewish principle _____ Pact or something of that sort. They did a very competent job. We saw them from time to time and respected what they were doing and so on. But I think the arguments were on our side in terms of a projection of any kind of a threat from this against Israel.

DW: Was that the toughest situation you were involved in with the Congress while you were Under Secretary?

JB: Yes, that's right.

DW: Another one that I noted that had to do with F-16s to Pakistan.

JB: That was another one, but less so. The complicating facts with Pakistan was not the F-16 so much as nuclear—Pakistan's interest in the development of the capacity to build a nuclear bomb. That was the thing that was the real troublemaker. Yes, F-16 was our top of the line, and there were a number of people in Congress that were afraid that if Pakistan got it, then somebody else would be wanting it. Also, why does Pakistan need it, if you are not looking at India? And we're not allowed to look at India. But, in any event, it was the nuclear aspect of it that created the problems.

DW: Did Baker play any special role on the resolution of that problem?

JB: Not that I recall, no. That one was not one that was really in doubt; it was just that you had to go through—you had to touch the right bases and slug it out.

DW: What was the character and the quality of the relationship between Secretary Haig and Baker?

JB: I have no idea.
DW: Was Haig pretty active on the Hill when matters of interest to the State Department came up?

JB: No, he relied more on people like me and on Dick Fairbanks, who is very competent.

DW: Was he the Assistant Secretary for Congressional Relations?

JB: Yes.

DW: When you would go to testify before the Foreign Relations Committee, would Baker generally be there?

JB: Sometimes yes, sometimes no. It's a moving cast of characters.

DW: Is there anything else about any other specific situations connected with your service in the State Department that is relevant to what Howard Baker was doing at the time?

JB: It gets back to AWACS; I recall having the great pleasure of visiting him in his mountain hideaway in Tennessee. I flew there with Prince Van Dhar—is that the right name?—who subsequently became the ambassador—maybe is the ambassador now—from Saudi Arabia. He and I flew down to consult with Howard and get advice on one thing or another and picked up some lovely pictures. One of them is in the hall, of an eagle. So he was very much involved in that, but that comes to mind.

DW: What was the purpose of the trip?

JB: I think possibly to suggest how the Saudis could be helping their cause and most particularly what they should not do to hurt their cause. Advice. Van Dhar was not then the ambassador; he was very knowledgeable, educated in the United States, knew our military people very well. I guess he was in the Air Force.

DW: He was a fighter pilot himself, was he not.

JB: Yes, and did a lot of very effective things. But I suspect it was consultation as to what he could do and, equally importantly, what he should not do.
DW: Basically you brought him to East Tennessee so that Baker could tell him what he had to do and should not do to get this through the Senate.

JB: Right.

DW: How much time did you spend down there on this trip?

JB: We arrived in the early afternoon, flew back late afternoon. I forgot where we landed—was it Chattanooga?

DW: Probably Knoxville.

JB: Knoxville—and then we drove all the way up and saw the pretty scenery and so forth. We were there about two hours, I think.

DW: What was your overall assessment of Baker's performance as majority leader?

JB: Strictly from the sidelines—I thought he was doing an effective job.

DW: Were you surprised at what President Reagan was able to get done with Congress the first couple of years?

JB: Yes, I thought that making sense out of the income tax code was something absolutely extraordinary. I never thought that could be done—now I'm talking politically, I'm not supposed to do that. I'm just distressed that we are going back into the old problems so fast. There were some signal achievements, I thought.

DW: Knowing the Senate and being publicly experienced, let me ask you a question for which there is probably no answer. In a situation such as pertained in the 1981-1982 period—and you're trying to explain congressional results—say, the Senate passage of that reconciliation bill in 1981, is it possible to sort out presidential influence from the influence exercised by the party leader in the Senate—Baker in this case—in explaining the result? Was it your perception at the time that Baker—and other Republican leaders—was doing things that had important effects on outcomes, or was it just Ronald Reagan overwhelming the system? In
such a way that would allow one to say that congressional leadership didn't make any
difference, it was going to happen anyway.

JB: In the Senate, of course, you had the numbers during that period, but it had to be done in the
House. It seems to me that in the House, it had to have been done by Reagan. That does
not mean there was not tremendously effective work done in the Senate to keep people on
board. Always a few Republican Senators splintering off, and of course you had some
Democrats splintering on. But my guess is that the dominant force was Reagan and his
willingness to get on the horn and talk and talk.

DW: Does anything else occur to you that we need to talk about?

JB: I can't think of any.

DW: Let me conclude by thanking you once again for your hospitality. This was been very
interesting and useful.