



GEORGE H. W. BUSH ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

TRANSCRIPT

INTERVIEW WITH JOHN H. SUNUNU

November 9, 2000
Washington, D.C.

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Young: John, I want to thank you for doing the follow up, I'm very grateful for that.

Sununu: I have agreed to substitute for somebody who was supposed to speak to the Republican Women's Federation. The Capitol Hill Club is packed with women. Chris Matthews was going to give the post-election review and he's stuck someplace.

McCall: It isn't post-election yet.

Young: Chris participated in the [Jimmy] Carter project when he was a little boy almost. He was in the Carter White House.

Sununu: You digested everything we talked about last time and analyzed it and prepared 12 volumes out of it?

McCall: It's been quantified as well.

Young: No, I haven't. I have re-read it and my colleagues have re-read it. It is a very rich interview and it covers an awful lot. It makes good reading and I hope your book—

Sununu: I've done a lot of the logistics. We've gotten some data, but I have actually installed my dictation software, I have almost got it completely trained. I frankly got so caught up in the election cycle the last two months, I haven't done anything, but this is just more of an incentive, this whole—This is an amazing three days. I don't think people understand. I have to tell you, this was the strangest election I've ever seen. I was up all night. CNN had a fairly good site gathering election returns in a pretty dynamic way and I was clicking all over the place getting returns. I'll give you one return that just astounds me. The city of Detroit voted, I'm not sure if it's the final number, but about 97%, 267,000 for [Albert, Jr.] Gore, 16,000 for [George W.] Bush. I have never seen returns like that. You can't train 280,000 people to vote that way, it's just unbelievable.

McCall: How do you explain it?

Young: Maybe somebody's going to ask for a recount.

Sununu: No, I don't think so, I think that's just a very old fashioned, down and dirty, ward politics, a get-out-the-vote and tell-them-how-to-vote process. There's nothing deeply insidious in it, but it's just absolutely impressive. A combination of the union money I think, a combination of that vicious anti-Bush ad that they played in all the minority communities—they had a great last five days in doing that. The numbers in Philadelphia look the same, the Bronx wards in New York City, the same. They really did an amazing job that way. So much for the electoral outreach.

Young: So much for the Washington newsies.

Sununu: Yes, unbelievable. Anyway.

Young: Let me try something to get you going on this White House, the first Bush White House. In the transcript you said that one of the things you did before becoming Chief of Staff was to call up your predecessors and get the benefit of their experience. Well, there's going to be another Chief of Staff, and as a way of trying to get an overview of your experience in this White House, I'm going to ask you to reflect on what you would have to say to a new Chief of Staff.

Sununu: Sure. Let me do it better than that for you. For the [William] Clinton administration, Vernon Jordan called me and I went over and spent four or five hours with the transition team. I don't remember if Mack McLarty was there or not, but I talked to him either after that or whatever, and I tried to give them as much insight as I could. Now, if Bush the second does it right, he'll take Andy Card as Chief of Staff and he won't have to be trained, he's been trained.

Young: But he won't be the last.

Sununu: I'm not trying to avoid a long answer here, but I also refer you to the session we just did with Jimmy Baker, and there's a lot of good material in that. But I try to stress to people that every Chief of Staff's job is different, depending on the President. It is the President who determines the role of the Chief of Staff, and every President has a slightly different mode of operation, a different relationship with the individual selected as Chief of Staff and a different idea of the distribution of responsibility between the White House and the Cabinet structures and the way the President wants to operate in terms of the White House vis-à-vis Capitol Hill. Those are the main issues that define the broad responsibilities of the Chief of Staff.

There are other responsibilities that are not as specifically defined but to a great extent may even be more significant. They are based on what the President chooses to be the confidant relationship between President and Chief of Staff. But those two broad cuts define that job. Let me take the latter first, the confidant relationship. It is a very critical part of the job. And again, its relative significance is determined by the President.

If I had to write a recipe for the individual who should be placed in that job, I should emphasize to a President that it ought to be somebody from whom he is willing to take minor criticism as well as major criticism. Criticism may not be the right word—feedback, discussion. Everyone is willing to discuss the big issues of the world, “What is your opinion of what we are to do in the Gulf? Should we sign the Welfare Reform Bill?” That's easy for people to accept a discourse of

difference of opinion, but what is not easy is to accept an exchange associated with either style or personal relationships the President may have with members of his Cabinet: who has to be stroked or not stroked. Or having to tell the President that the person he thought was his best friend as chairman of such-and-such a committee on the Hill is really telling him one thing and doing something else.

It is through the feedback on these personal aspects of the President's job that the Chief of Staff can serve, in my opinion, a very significant role—if permitted by the President. That slice, and the slice now of dealing with the other major policy groups interacting with the White House, is what the President ought to have in mind when he selects a Chief of Staff.

If all the President wants is a chief administrator in that role, that's a very different job. They may call it Chief of Staff, but it really isn't that way. And very few Presidents have filled the role with just that. I would tell the Chief of Staff coming in that they must prepare themselves for two things: First, I think the principal role of the Chief of Staff beyond the commonly accepted responsibilities is to wake up every morning, try to figure out who's throwing what arrow or spear at the President, and try and figure out how to get between the President and that arrow. It's not a fun task, but it is to me the most critical task of all. So you've got to prepare yourself for that.

Secondly, you should be aware that the half life of Chiefs of Staff in this town is measured in months, not years. It's rare to have a Chief of Staff who will last more than a year and a half in Washington. And, to their credit, it's probably because they're doing this latter responsibility quite well, they're finding the arrows, they're stepping in front of them and expending personal political capital to take care of the President.

The other aspect of the job is a very complicated one and it's something that I've acknowledged I probably did not do well. I didn't do it well because I had the definition of responsibility in this area that was a reflection of what the President I served wanted. George Bush had been around for eight years and felt that one of the problems in the White House was that key members of the White House talked to the press too much. I made a point of not doing any of these off-the-record background briefings that had become traditional in the job in the past. In retrospect, what I probably should have done is talk to the President and created a set of ground rules under which I could do that or would do that, because to a great extent I think I could have served him better by creating a source of information to the press that was much more reflective, that allowed us to get the President's point of view out in a much more direct way.

I have said on a number of occasions that I think the structure in the White House that serves the President least best was our press office and I never realized that until I got out, post-Chief of Staff, into my Crossfire role and started sipping a few diet Cokes with members of the press. I began to understand what was going on in the White House and their relationship with the press operation in the White House, and how it functioned from their point of view. But that's a lesson you learn. So the second thing I would tell them is the hard part of the job—again, the rules have to be defined by the President—is how you interact in getting the President's message out, and that you ought not to be merely an observer of that process but to work out with the President how you function as a piece of that process.

The last point I would make and it's an anecdote I think I told you last time, but it really is the one anecdote that defines the job of the Chief of Staff most clearly to me, vis-à-vis the Cabinet and the Hill and all that. That is, you have to be prepared to be the heavy on decisions that are made by somebody else, namely the President you serve. The anecdote I always use is that if the Secretary of Commerce wants to have coffee with the President and the President doesn't want to have coffee with the Secretary of Commerce, he'll tell him, if he doesn't care that he knows it. But if he doesn't want him to know it, you have to tell him in such a way that *you're* cutting it off rather than the President. That responsibility in its broadest sense is a very important part of that job.

The last thing I would tell an incoming Chief of Staff is that the other responsibility they have, and it's a very hard one to define in specific terms, but it is as keeper of the capital of the administration. There is political capital, there are personal relationship chunks of capital, and they are to be used wisely by an administration in trying to move policy forward. The one place that has an overview of the collected abundance of capital in an administration is the President's office. As the Chief of Staff, you have to allocate that, you have to know where to recommend the President should go in terms of his travels around the country.

You have to know how to guide the President in terms of allocation of his time, focusing on different issues. Face time with the President is a big chunk of capital, one of the more precious pieces of capital in the White House since it's really in limited quantity. The responsibility of assigning values to and then setting the rules with the President on how it is to be allocated, and then making sure that all these pieces are allocated consistent with those rules is a very important part of the job.

Young: So you're also a historian and a bit of one too. [Franklin] Roosevelt, who built the first staff, used to say they were my eyes and my ears and he also said my legs. He's going to be my legs on this one. He forever resisted, though not entirely successfully during World War II, when the war came on, the idea of having a Chief of Staff at all. It was a simpler time then. He did have a Press Secretary—

Sununu: He had Harry Hopkins during the war.

Sununu: I thought that was the period you were referring to.

Young: Yes, and he also had a procurement czar. But that was the closest he came. He also liked to have conflicting advice and the left hand not knowing what the right hand was doing all the time. There are plenty of stories that Roosevelt's staff didn't know what was going on, Roosevelt keeping it all to himself and being the mastermind of his own operation to the extent that he could. That was his philosophy. Is that possible anymore? And how would you contrast Bush with that?

Sununu: There are two changes that have occurred since then which have changed the way things are done. The first is a much more significant change and it affects not just this but everything else, and that is the permanent session of Congress. Remember historically they used

to come for two or three months, do their job and go home and live as citizens. It wasn't quite the two month, three month period with Roosevelt, but it certainly wasn't the year round for two year cycles that they are now. The relationship with Congress had a peak to it but not a steadiness to it and so it was easy to handle under the model you described he had.

Secondly, the time lag that society would accept between identification of issues, pondering the issue, and responding to the issue was much longer because we didn't have instant television where the question would be asked at 9 o'clock and an answer had to be provided by 11. That permitted Roosevelt to operate, masterfully, with what was a functioning group of, and in the nicest sense of the word, cronies. He would bring them in by selection, whether he played cards with them or whether he just sat down and talked to them, in which he would nurture a point of view in them individually and collectively that he wanted and then send them out as a multi-headed Chief of Staff to perform the functions that now would be transferred to the Chief of Staff.

Whether it was to go get the chairman of this committee to move in this direction or go check in the Department of Agriculture and see if we can't deal with the problem in the Midwest or in the South on boll weevil blight or whatever it is. So, the pace of the times, and the different character of the city in terms of who was here and who wasn't here and the permanent bureaucracy and K Street, and all of that, was not part of the process. There were people who externally functioned as pseudo-Chiefs of Staff, accepting part of the job of Chief of Staff. The gentleman we mentioned earlier who walked these halls, Clark Clifford. There's a reason this office is right here and it was because Clark Clifford was used by many Presidents to deal with some of the send-a-message-to-Garcia type of responsibilities of the Chief of Staff where he had to go and tell somebody bad news. So Roosevelt at that time parceled out the Chief of Staff responsibilities.

Young: Exactly.

Sununu: And as I said earlier, it is up to the President to define the role of the Chief of Staff. In that case it was a President who was defining a collective set of responsibilities for a group of people that he used at his will and whim to pick up what we define as current responsibilities of the Chief of Staff.

Young: And all of the things that you defined as the important things about the Chief of Staff. Roosevelt protected his own political capital; he didn't have to have a Chief of Staff to do it.

Sununu: That's right. And he knew how to create new capital quite well. The man who, in my opinion, changed that, and he changed it because he recognized, instinctively I think, the quickening of the pace, was Dwight Eisenhower. President Eisenhower had come through the command structure environment of the military in which the funnel does peak and recognized the advantage and disadvantages in confiding in somebody as Chief of Staff and using them to do all these things and, if you will, allowing somebody close enough to look at the poker hand he's playing. Roosevelt didn't want anybody to look at his poker hand. It was that psychological trait I think he was unwilling to exchange. And, to a great extent, the responsibilities of the Chief of Staff are defined by a President's willingness to let somebody be looking at the hand with him,

the full hand. Some Presidents will let you look at three of the cards, some will let you look at all five cards, and some will only let you look at the back of the cards and that's the difference.

The second thing that caused this evolution, I think, was the wonderful relationship that developed between Dwight Eisenhower and Sherm Adams. If Dwight Eisenhower recognized the advantages of the change in the role, the man who really defined the modern role and responsibility of the Chief of Staff, by his loyalty to the President—and the more loyal the Chief of Staff is to the President, the more the President is empowered by confidence to use the Chief of Staff—was Sherm Adams. As the process evolved and Sherm Adams became more powerful in that role and more functional and effective for Dwight Eisenhower, a lot of people decided he had to go, and we know the whole process there.

Young: But it is also the case that a Chief of Staff can't do all these things single-handedly, because another thing that has happened is the enormous growth in the White House staff. There have been operational responsibilities—you mentioned the press office, in which, to some extent, [James] Haggerty was under the wing of Sherman Adams. But I don't think Marlin Fitzwater was under your wing, and I think typically they're not. So at the same time you're having these independent operations, the President is getting specialists to deal with the Washington press, to deal with Congress.

Sununu: Well, that happens in any bureaucracy, public companies or whatever it is. In spite of the intention of the structure, there are people who operate with more or less effectiveness by gathering and husbanding control of pieces of the operation. That gets to be expected, it happens all the time, it is part of the responsibility, and the extent to which that happens is a reflection of how complicated the process has become. So you have to recognize it's there, you have to try and deal with it.

It's one of the reasons that not only is there a Chief of Staff now but there was a Deputy Chief of Staff, and again, you try to apply the same kind of relationship there. It is a relationship built on confidence and comfort because you are—to the extent that the President wants it done—sharing the information in the poker hand, one more layer. And it is not inconceivable to me that somebody could now say this has gotten so complicated that we probably need two or three Deputy Chiefs of Staff.

Young: And the more chiefs you have, the more problems you have.

Sununu: It really gets complicated. But this city has become so large and the time for action so short, that the time for briefing somebody is almost taken away from you. There have to be a lot of people who know what is going on so you can react quickly. You cannot react quickly with people who have responsibilities to do things not having a lot of information on how to react. So, as you are forced to react more quickly, that inner circle of the onion has to get a little bit larger.

Young: So the President let it be known that he didn't think you ought to talk much to the press, or leak.

Sununu: Leak, or background or whatever it is.

Young: But others did.

Sununu: Yes, but I was very faithful to my commitment not to participate. What had become, I was told, the tradition is that the Chief of Staff would spend a chunk of time each week privately briefing favorite members of the press, and I didn't do that.

Young: So the next Chief of Staff might bear that in mind. How can you protect the capital otherwise?

Sununu: Yes, but again, what he or she does is going to be determined, or should be determined, by the President. But that is something they ought to talk to him about and address, and maybe argue for.

Young: One of the things you mentioned that had changed and that the President should bear in mind, and that deeply affect the work and the role of the Chief of Staff, is how he wants to deal with Congress.

Sununu: Or maybe how he has to deal with Congress.

Young: Yes, because every President has to.

Sununu: Every President wants to deal with them one way, but finds they have to deal with them in another way.

Young: Vis-à-vis the Cabinet but also vis-à-vis the public and his constituents, K Street and the rest of it. So I'd like to go a little bit into the question of the approach you felt Bush had with dealing with the Congress. What was his inner feeling on that, and then I'd like to move into some detail about how that actually worked out in practice.

Sununu: Sure. In order to understand the answer to that, we've got to take a step back and ask ourselves, what is the purpose of the relationship with Congress? The purpose of the relationship with Congress is to take broad policy and convert it into specific legislation. Whether it is energy policy, environmental policy, welfare policy, social services policy, or foreign policy which requires funding or whatever. The whole purpose of the relationship with Congress is to develop a process whereby the President can get Congress to enact laws that reflect the policy changes he wants. Having said that, the relationship with Congress has to have built into it an understanding of the process of developing specifics on policy within the administration.

Within the Bush administration, the two slices: domestic and foreign policy. The foreign policy side was established by the White House inner circle which consisted of the President, the Vice President, [Brent] Scowcroft, and myself. I think I referred to them last time we met as the gang of four. Plus a very strong driving force role by Jim Baker at State, and when we got to the Gulf War and the use of the projection of power kind of aspects, obviously Dick Cheney at DoD [Department of Defense].

What would happen is that the President would enunciate where in broad terms he would like to go and to a great extent Baker and, in some cases, foreign policy has to do with international economic policy, and so Treasury would come in—but they would come back in responding to the President’s broad directives with specific recommendations for where we ought to be pressing for legislation. Then, that legislative proposal would be worked up in broad terms by the bureaucracies in the associated departments, get vetted through the process, President reviews the policy papers that come on it, marks what he likes, takes out what he doesn’t, and that process goes on.

Then that is given to two groups: the legislative liaison group in the departments involved and the White House congressional operation. They go down in most cases—if it is significant policy Chief of Staff will go with them—and meet with the leaders of the House and Senate, both Republican and Democrat. You generally try and meet with your Republican leadership. In our case we were a minority party in Congress, we would meet with leadership in House and Senate first, tell them what the President would like to and then get the feedback from them, our side so to speak, on what they could or could not support.

Then you come back and try to hone the recommendations to meet the constraints imposed, if you will, by your supporters in Congress, and then go back at some point and interact on a bipartisan basis with both the Democratic and Republic leadership down there. In some cases, the issue may be so significant that the President participates in the communication process and you invite the leadership, again, quite often starting with the Republican and the bipartisan leadership to meet with the President in the Cabinet room. The issues are discussed there and you attempt in broad terms to at least define the differences, if not begin to work out the differences.

Then the responsibility for working out details passes to the congressional group in the White House and remember, we’re talking about a time constant for legislation measured sometimes in several months, if not years. Certainly the Clinton administration found, as they tried to develop health care policy, with all the focus they gave on it that it is a very daunting task sometimes to find something that fits the constraints imposed by the three-party process—the administration, the Republicans in Congress and the Democrats in Congress—and it is a three-way negotiation all the time.

The assumption is that the Republican President gets immediately the support of the Republican members of Congress, and it doesn’t work that way. They have different needs from their constituency relationships that have to be built into it.

Young: Did Bush expect to have and was he prepared to have a Democratic majority in Congress?

Sununu: Yes, there was no way, we weren’t even close. We had, at one point, I think the number was only 175 [House] Republicans and 42 or 43 in the Senate. So we never even were close to entertaining the fantasy of a Republican House or a Republican Senate. He thought that his old friends, the Rostenkowskis and the Don Riegles and the Tom Foleys of the world, whom he had developed relationships with when he was in Congress, would serve him I think better than they did.

Young: Congress is Congress, after all.

Sununu: Congress is Congress and I think he underestimated the partisanship that really existed in the Congress at the time. I don't think President Bush ever understood how partisan Tom Foley and George Mitchell were.

Young: What I'd like to get at though is, you've said Bush's approach was that of getting policy—

Sununu: That's any President's requirement. Now, specifically in this White House, on domestic issues, the President would give us a broad charge and it was basically Dick Darman, Roger Porter, and I who crafted what the President wanted from a huge broad charge into some specific pieces that were associated with the issues, tried to dole them out either within the White House or the departments for fleshing out, and then weaving the broad ideas into a set of specific proposals internally before we went down to talk to the congressional side. That was reflected in clean air, that was reflected in energy policy deregulation bill, that was reflected in the child care proposals. That was reflected in the budget packages, it was reflected in health care and some of the major changes in social services that we proposed.

All those aspects were first framed, codified—by codified I mean taken from the discussion of the room to something on a piece of paper that people could then begin to mark up and vet, circulated internally, beat up at meetings internally at the White House and then taken to the President for approval. He would say, "I liked this, I didn't like that." We would go back and reflect what he wanted, go through that process once, twice, three times, whatever was required. Then, when the President was happy, we'd begin to pass it on to the congressional people and the departments. First the departments which were part of the process and then the congressional—

Young: I'm still not satisfied.

Sununu: Keep asking.

Young: Presidents have been known to approach Congress as a potential adversary, a competitor for policy, a bunch they have to get along with—but they tend to think of a strategy for dealing with Congress, given its make up, given its mood, given who the chairmen are, and calculate and time, to the extent that they can, their policy requests of Congress, in the framework of some strategy. I don't know how it worked under Reagan but I heard there was something like a legislative strategy group that really surrounded the decisions about what we ask Congress for or when or how.

Sununu: No, functionally that group was Darman, Porter and myself. It was broadened to allow feedback and input, but the recommendations that went to the President were a reflection of what we strategized. Now, what we did was identify—either by virtue of historic stalemate or by virtue of crisis—the agenda for each session that we thought the President could influence and get done. For example, clean air had been stalemated in Congress for over 13 years. I had had

some very good luck in crafting some legislation that I thought dealt with the environment in a pro market way, effectively with acid rain in New Hampshire.

I spent time with Porter and Darman and we identified two or three areas that might deal with Republican congressional concerns that had created conflicts in Congress that did not allow clean air legislation to come forward. So we put that very high on the agenda for early action and the President in fact was able to break the logjam and get great clean air legislation, which I think has served the country well and is a great accomplishment of his that he has not gotten enough credit for. So that was identifying an opportunity for the President and to get a Republican solution—

Young: Out of a Democratic Congress.

Sununu: The demands of the time put a lot of pressure on us because of the savings and loan crisis and we had to address that in an emergency way. Some of the neglected areas in foreign policy, on the international side, the President identified what he wanted to do in terms of the Enterprise for the Americas initiative and what was then called the Brady plan for dealing with Latin American debt. Again, opportunity and timing brought those to the fore, almost around the process rather than through the process. More mundane issues that were addressed were the traditional battle over the budget in general. I mean, you do this every two years, you present a budget to Congress every year. There was almost immediately upon election a charge to Darman, who was sought as OMB [Office of Management and Budget] director, to begin the process of preparing the broad outlines of the budget. That was a great driver of policy, what we could and couldn't do within the budget.

Young: Excuse me. It seems to me that it was the great driver and it put OMB in this era and in the Bush administration in a far more consequential position than it had ever been—

Sununu: Ever been?

Young: —and this is one of the, I think, unnoticed events about what happened as a result of deficit concerns and so forth.

Sununu: There were three reasons for that. Number one, the pressure of the budget had to be an important part of any initiative the President wanted to undertake. Number two, some of the best permanent bureaucracy in government is in OMB, and it was a great asset to the White House for analysis without relying on what were the more liberal bureaucracies of the departments. And number three, Darman was a hell of a smart guy and understood the workings of government as well as anybody, and those three things elevated the utilization of OMB in the Bush administration. I think the fourth aspect was that Darman and Porter and I got along quite well, didn't really have much disagreement over the general policy direction, and were able to serve the President's agenda without much internal conflict.

Young: Now that you mention, you had plenty of arguments with Darman over taxes. But it was a kind of troika for domestic policy that was legislatively related.

Sununu: I don't like the word troika but it's a good description.

Young: No, I don't either.

Sununu: I would also say that the other aspect of the individuals involved, Porter, Darman, and myself, is that they had a very good style of sitting down and working with the President and really hearing what he wanted and then coming back with ideas that moved things in the direction he wanted them to move. They understood policy well enough that they could figure out how to do what he'd like to have done. People sometimes hear what a President wants to do and have absolutely no idea how to implement it. This group understood.

Young: But of the three, Darman was the most knowledgeable about the inside of congressional politics?

Sununu: He was probably the most knowledgeable about budget structure. Roger Porter understood how to work with Congress. Roger deserves credit for being the author of the details of, for example, the Clean Air bill, energy deregulation. When it came down to sitting down and negotiating differences with Congress and understanding how to give and take and get what the President wanted, both Darman and Porter were great at it, but Darman more in terms of numbers and budget, Porter in terms of policy and legislation and issues that were beyond budget.

Young: James?

McCall: Yes, I wanted to follow up on the President's role in this. What you expressed before was that a lot of the brainstorming sessions would happen, you know, discussions with Darman, yourself, and Porter, but in terms of getting the President's priorities, was he given a list of what was thought to be possible, or was he initiating things himself?

Sununu: To a great extent, the priorities were defined by the campaign. When George Bush got elected, he knew what his broad menu was, he'd been talking about them every day on the campaign trail. So the first task is to take what commitments we had made, kind of summarize them, I don't know if we ever made a specific list per se and said these are the 12 things we've got to do, but in essence you bring to the President, during the transition period, the broad issues, and get from him a charge to go and do something about it. That was done, even before. So the agenda for the first year was set to a great extent, in the transition period, and you go from there. Now, after the President was sworn in, the ugly head of the savings and loan reared and took a little bit of a front seat on some of the domestic policy stuff, but it was only an add on. It didn't replace things, it added to the list.

But you see what I'm saying. The first year's agenda is set that way and to a great extent the second year's agenda is set as you're writing the State of the Union address. The budget preparation is where the feedback with all the departments comes in and the President tells you what he wants and what he doesn't want. It's not that you have a session just devoted to what is our priority of the week each week, there's a broad charge and you work from the broad charge and you add and subtract from this broad road map as you go on.

McCall: I'm just trying to get a better sense of where the President's—

Sununu: Let me tell you exactly what it is. Go back to what I said last time, the most important meeting of the day is from 8 o'clock to 9:30, 9:45, and every day I bring the agenda issues to the President in terms of problems we're having, decisions that need to be made or whatever it is. So his constant interaction with the agenda took place in the Bush administration in that morning meeting, and if we needed to create a special meeting as a result of an issue, it would be defined in that morning meeting.

“Mr. President, we're having trouble getting Congress to respond to your clean air initiatives, we're going to have to schedule, somewhere along the line, a meeting between you and Foley and Mitchell and the chairmen of the committees and the Republican ranking members so that we can work out some of the differences.” “What are the differences?” “These are the differences.” Okay, schedule a meeting for a month from now or next week or tomorrow or this afternoon, depending on what the issue is.

Or he would say about an issue, “No, I don't like this,” and I would go back and tell Porter, “You can't do this,” or “You ought to that,” or whatever. So there's a daily fine tuning going on at that meeting, but it is all in the context of the broad charge that has been defined, either in terms of the agenda that was established in the transition or the budget that was put together that year, or the commitments we made in the State of the Union, or whatever other way the President wanted to tell us to either add or subtract from the items on the list.

Young: Let me not let that go and again bring up two other Presidents who had ways of dealing with Congress. Roosevelt was very particular that he wanted to be his own main congressional person. He spent an awful lot of time on it, he wouldn't have anybody else doing it, and he'd blow the whistle on departments going up there to the Hill trying to get things that—

Sununu: He spent a lot of time relatively, but in terms of what the modern President has to spend, it was nothing.

Young: While they were in session, right. But Lyndon Johnson also was his own—it was his patch, he knew it, and this created problems occasionally. The Bush White House was not like that, it was more like—

Sununu: Yes and no. For example, on the savings and loan issue, the President thought he had a very special relationship with Don Regal.

Young: Okay.

Sununu: And would bring him in quite often for one-on-ones, not quite often, maybe two or three times for one-on-ones, trying to do the kind of thing you're talking about, and we couldn't quite get what we needed in a timely way. In my opinion, a lot of the national difficulty in the savings and loan period was created by opportunistic congressional people who started to hold hearings and demonized the bureaucracy that was charged with dealing with some of the

problems, to the point that nobody on the regulatory side in the country would dare err on the side of flexibility as it came to the banking structures. And these hearings and this demonization process created a rigidity which did not serve the solution well.

Young: Lyndon Johnson had some of the same problems. He thought he had it and he didn't. He thought he could rely on his friends.

Sununu: The President for example thought that Dan Rostenkowski would do much more constructively in responding to his requests during the budget process and Rosty just, in my opinion, stuck it to the President after the budget agreement in 1991 and just stripped out on the floor the things that had been negotiated.

Young: So Bush would get these surprises that he didn't expect, from his own acquaintances.

Sununu: It goes back to the partisanship issue. I think the President expected a less partisan relationship with Congress than Congress delivered to him. The Democrats had a huge majority, they had almost 100—well 175 from 435 is 260, so it was 260 to 175.

Young: But the strategy was to get that Congress to produce an acceptably Republican approach to some of these problems that had never been solved.

Sununu: That's right. The biggest tool we had, and we worked very hard on it, was a veto threat that was credible, and with the numbers I'm talking about, it's hard to have a credible veto threat. But we were able to have absolutely no Bush veto overturned by Congress. Actually, I think, after I left one was overturned in the last days, but up until that last one, which was on a cable deregulation bill or something, I don't remember what that was, I was gone by then. But we never lost a veto. The biggest tool we had in negotiating into this partisan environment was a presidential veto threat and we used that as capital in conjunction with our allies on the Republican side and occasional allies on the Democratic side, to craft and shape and push the President's agenda.

Young: Let me try an idea out. I'm trying to get a sense of Bush's strategy for governing in relation to his experience, in relation to his situation, in relation to the domestic scene and the foreign policy scene. It looks like he was not mainly the principal strategist in dealing with these domestic issues. He got a team that helped strategize those limited objectives that he wanted, in contrast perhaps to some of the foreign things where he was very much involved in the making of the strategy, in the implementation of the strategy.

Sununu: That is correct in a way, but let me again go back to the way the agenda was formulated. In the spring and summer of '88, in the campaign, I was chairman of first the Republican Governors Association, then the National Governors Association and in fact, in the campaign we developed what has now become common practice, recognizing that Governors are the most effective political structures back in the states, and we worked very hard to get the gubernatorial endorsements for Vice President Bush. A double-edged sword for us in doing that was to create opportunities for Governors to come in and work with Vice President Bush in his campaign in developing the domestic agenda for the campaign.

Young: Right.

Sununu: And in doing that, the Vice President as candidate, before he became President, defined his domestic agenda. He embraced a broad approach on clean air, on clean water. He embraced a broad approach on pieces of welfare reform we tried to get.

Young: Right.

Sununu: He embraced a broad approach on energy deregulation. He embraced a broad approach on issues like vouchers for education or childcare, he embraced a broad approach on the agriculture issues. And so, he worked with the Governors, on a regional, state by state basis, and formulated in detail, in those meetings, “Yes, I can support this. Why should I support that? No, I can’t support this.” So by the time the process of building political capital was finished, the process of building a domestic agenda was to a great extent finished, and well defined. Okay? An ethanol policy was developed. Not just an energy policy or an agricultural policy, an ethanol policy was committed to.

Young: Right.

Sununu: Not just a “we are for clean water” policy, but a “we’ll do it with unfettered grants to the states and give the states more flexibility in using the money to clean up their water.”

Young: So it was a Bush, a Republican, and a gubernatorial agenda.

Sununu: Right. His domestic policy was shaped to a great extent, predominantly by Governors.

Young: I think this is a very important point to get in the record.

Sununu: He was the first one.

Young: You can understand a lot of what happened afterwards in Washington if you understand it this way.

Sununu: In spite of two pieces of data, in spite of Jimmy Carter being elected President as a Governor, in spite of Ronald Reagan being elected President as a Governor, the conventional wisdom, prior to George Bush was that the strongest political group to get to endorse you to be President was the Senators. George Bush was the first one to understand that the best, most effective political structure in America are the Governors. For example, after he became Governor and wanted to address the educational issue, he called a summit at—

Young: Charlottesville.

Sununu: Yes, Charlottesville, which was a joint conference between the White House and the Governors of the country, and the co-chairman of that conference was Bill Clinton.

Young: Yes.

Sununu: He to a great extent drew on this set of political relationships he developed to hone some of the detail even of the policies, and, to a great extent, the policy we tried to employ was to broaden resources available to deal with an issue and to empower the states with a capacity to work out the details most suitable to their own states.

Young: There was a strong federal component.

Sununu: Right, there was a federalism approach.

Young: A devolution component and so forth. Now, I just think, you had mentioned some of this in the previous interview, but I think that's an extremely important fact—

Sununu: For example, we met at Kennebunkport with a bunch of Governors a couple of times. We met everywhere we traveled in the campaign, we captured the Governors of the trip. Quite often we took two or three Governors at a time on Air Force One to go and visit with the President on a regional basis. And in that hour on the airplane, with three Governors, policy was crafted and committed to. I don't mean they signed a contract, but the President said, "Now I understand why you need flexibility on the spending for water projects," or, "We'll try and get more flexibility on the highway program." He began to understand the differences between clean air policy as required in the Midwest and in New England. Those things began to hit him, he understood them. Because he'd been Vice President for eight years, he understood the broad issues, but he began to understand from the states, the detailed structure that had to be negotiated to make things work.

Young: Right. So, the agenda is brought with him into office. It has strong gubernatorial input and support, it is conservative, it is Republican, it is state oriented, it is federally oriented.

Sununu: And market oriented. Those are the three. We've touched on almost all the principles, but if you add market you've got the broad ground rules that the President said.

Young: I was including that in the conservative.

Sununu: Okay.

Young: The idea, you use the market when it works. But the Governors don't pass this legislation.

Sununu: But they lobby like hell for it.

Young: That was my next question. Where were they when the going got tough?

Sununu: They were here constantly, they really were. But again, at that time, we had just begun to make the turn, on a partisan basis I'm saying this now, just begun to make the turn in terms of Republican Governors winning. At the low point, I think there were 16 Republican Governors in

the country, probably my second term as Governor, maybe 1985-86, I don't remember the dates and the numbers exactly. By '88 there might have been 18 or 19 Republican Governors, 20 Republican Governors. So, they were there, but we didn't have enough numbers. If we had 30 that we have now, we probably could have changed the world. But we enlisted support from Democratic Governors as well, because what we were talking about was empowering states and that's a bipartisan issue in America in terms of what states want. That's why we were able to get Bill Clinton as the Democratic co-chairman on education and develop a set of educational policies that were endorsed by all the Governors and the White House out of that conference. And there were commitments to quality and performance and accountability and believe it or not, that's where this whole concept of accountability in education became gospel, if you will, on a national level.

Young: But the event at Charlottesville.

Sununu: It wasn't the end.

Young: Yes I know, but it wasn't the end of the story.

Sununu: No it wasn't, but as we—

Young: So Republican Governors are not going to help you with Democrat Congressmen.

Sununu: But they are going to help you with Republican Congressmen. Believe it or not. Quite often we had to have Governors come down here and lobby on issues like, I'm trying to remember one in which they might have had, I think they came down on clean air. Certainly on the highway issues.

Young: Probably not on Americans for Disabilities so much.

Sununu: No. ADA was a federal issue, Governors didn't come in on that. But they came in on clean air, they came in on energy policy. Not so much Republican Governors, but on a regional basis, Governors came in.

Young: Could you say a word then about how this worked in terms of managing that kind of lobby?

Sununu: Our congressional guys would identify—congressional guys being the White House congressional liaison office—either issues or people in Congress that had to be lobbied.

Young: Those who were educable.

Sununu: When we had our legislative review sessions that would come up, and either I or Andy Card or Roger Porter would remember a couple of Governors who could work on this and we'd get people to call them or I would call them and say, "We need some help on this, when are you coming to Washington next?" The second slice of it was the annual Governors meeting in Washington in February. It is a perfect time, chosen by the Governors wisely, chosen by

administrations wisely, where they have them meeting in Washington. There was always a meeting of all the Governors and the President and to a great extent, it is an orchestrated agenda, but an agenda in which those issues that they can support are identified. We talk to them about it, we give them the broad charge and you pick them off, four or five at a time, and send them up to the Hill to work.

Young: Who was paying attention to the Governors in the White House?

Sununu: Well unfortunately, or fortunately, whatever trick word you like to chose, since I'd been chairman of the Republican Governors Association and the National Governors Association before I became Chief of Staff, that became my bailiwick.

[Interruption]

Sununu: Well unfortunately or fortunately, it's something that goes with the territory. I had, with Lee Atwater, kind of crafted this idea for the President—a candidate at the time—that it would be a great way to build the political machine in the primary process. And frankly, George Bush won the primaries, I think, because he understood this and Senator [Robert] Dole didn't. Dole by the way adopted that in '96. So, you know, it was an outgrowth if you will, the relationship and the responsibility and the approach was just an outgrowth of the campaign effort.

Young: Andy helped because he had done a little bit of this for Reagan hadn't he?

Sununu: No, but Andy had come on to New Hampshire and spent six or eight months in New Hampshire during the campaign and so was very much a part, in the campaign structure of the gubernatorial strategy.

Young: Before we proceed to the next step on this, were the mayors at all helpful?

Sununu: Not really. First of all, most of the mayors at that time were Democrats and secondly, there is an odd conflict between Governors and mayors and it is the following. Governors are very much proponents of federalism, empower the states. Mayors, believe it or not, are committed to a strong central government that sends them money directly and bypasses the state capital. So mayors and Governors are on different sides of most domestic legislation.

Young: So you wouldn't get market capitalism in the mayors.

Sununu: No, you get urban renewal out of the mayors. The mayor wants a sewer grant to city A, the Governor wants a grant to the state and the state will allocate the money to its priorities.

Young: So this already shaped agenda.

Sununu: And that's a very important point. I mean, it is just becoming clearer to me now as I recall it, that the domestic agenda was shaped in the campaign. It is shaped in any President's campaign. You make commitments. I mean, you look at this campaign. You know what George

W. Bush's domestic agenda is, you know what Al Gore's domestic agenda is, and that will be their agenda for the first term.

Young: But operationalizing this—

Sununu: Is the art form and that's where the structure we talked about in the White House—

Young: Is the art form. And it is also, it's just that congressional relations is much more important than what is called congressional liaison because it is a permanent Congress and it is almost a permanent campaign.

Sununu: I mean, they do everything from lobby the issues to take requests for meetings with the President both for the Congressmen and for Miss Culver City who is coming to town, or the pig of the month award, or requests for tickets to the Kennedy Center, or rides on Air Force One, or whatever. That is all part of the congressional office to sort out, to bring into the meetings and have decisions made.

Young: It's a big ball of wax. It's everything from high policy to party politics to congressional politics, to perks, to favors on down the line. It involves all of that. And you have a lot of other people in the executive branch doing the same thing, but not necessarily for the President's priorities.

Sununu: Quite often in concert, but quite often not. For example. The President had developed a philosophy on the environmental policy. When he appointed Bill Reilly to run, Reilly came with an agenda from World Wildlife Federation? No, where was Reilly before hand, one of the environmental lobby groups. So, even though he was a Republican, he wasn't quite in concert and it was one of the really tough, tough dealings we had to do in the White House. But—

Young: One of the reasons Roosevelt established central clearance of departmental legislation was to keep the departments doing their own business on Capitol Hill in conflict and not in accordance with his priorities, so he didn't regard the departments as a help but as a hindrance in all this and spent a great deal of time running his own relations with Congress.

Sununu: But let me explain that, because that's an important issue. There is a permanent relationship between departmental bureaucracies and congressional staffs that transcends the relatively fleeting life of a Congressman or a Senator or a Cabinet officer. They are here for 20 or 30 years, this is their career. And for many congressional staffers, that time frame is appropriate. So there is that set of relationships that any President who wants to establish policy must overcome.

Young: Or co-opt?

Sununu: You can try to co-opt it but you will usually find that it is cast in concrete. In their terms co-opting would mean acquiescence. So you have to devise ways to try to deal with that, and those relationships are based on a very basic ingredient and that is mutual self-sustenance. Without the bureaucracies, there wouldn't be a need for as much congressional staff and without

a big congressional staff, the bureaucracies wouldn't have to be as large. And so, to a great extent that is there and it is sometimes underappreciated in terms of its influence. Cabinet officers are shocked at this relationship. Presidents are thwarted by this relationship. Majority leaders and speakers, sometimes, have no idea what happened to the best-laid plans. But that's the relationship that drives a great deal of what happens or what doesn't happen in the city.

Young: And a lot of K Street is involved in that permanent relationship.

Sununu: Absolutely.

Young: So this is why Arthur Schlesinger coined the terms, the permanent government and the temporary government. The people who come and go.

Sununu: That is correct. And that distinction became real, it began to evolve in the '50s and became a really driving, dominant reality in the '60s and '70s and '80s.

Young: Many people were shocked or surprised by this. Was Bush? Or did he—

Sununu: No, he wasn't shocked or surprised at its existence, he knew it was there, he understood it quite well. What I think we were all surprised at is the stealthy effectiveness of it. Quite often—

Young: What do you mean stealthy?

Sununu: You don't even see it operating and you can't either get at it or subtract it from legislation and you just don't know why. You get the support of the members of Congress and it just doesn't happen. To a great extent, part of the problem is this—

Young: Behind the scenes—

Sununu: Behind the scenes. It's more important in terms of detail than broad policy.

Young: It can be important in terms of implementation too, can't it?

Sununu: Yes. It is really, usually, a slice of a problem rather than a big issue, but it can bottle up legislation. Sometimes legislation will go nowhere, big legislation will go nowhere because a small piece is in there that people don't like.

Young: I don't know when the practice of the National Security Advisor having his own congressional relations person developed, I know that Zbig [Zbigniew Brzezinski] put Madeleine Albright in that position. I don't know whether that was the first or not, but I think Zbigniew Brzezinski—

Sununu: Let me tell you when I think it really came into play. In my opinion, it was an art form crafted by Henry Kissinger. Kissinger wanted everything the State Department had as National Security Advisor. When he was National Security Advisor, not Secretary of State.

Young: He wouldn't want this as Secretary of State.

Sununu: He built his own apparatus there and in doing so created the tradition of that office.

Young: And so here was something operating quite independently.

Sununu: Not really. Brent Scowcroft was absolutely—

Young: No, in Kissinger's days.

Sununu: Yes.

Young: And also in Zbig's case, I think.

Sununu: I don't know that.

Young: Well, the congressional liaison people often didn't know what had been going to Capitol Hill from another congressional liaison.

Sununu: I see.

Young: Those things are likely to happen

Sununu: That did not happen at all in this White House. The coordination between Brent's office and our office, I'll say this unequivocally, from everybody I've ever talked to, there was never as effective a set of relationship across the board. It is a tribute to Scowcroft, and I worked hard to try to make that happen. And I go back to again, a point that I've said a lot of times but probably not enough. It all happened at that 8:00 to 9:30 meeting and that's really where I heard what he was doing, he heard what I was doing, and the President told us what he wanted done or not done.

Young: I think that comes through quite clearly in the record.

Sununu: But that's how we functioned to make that not be a problem.

Young: Right, the personalities here and the modus operandi overcame a lot of the structural problems that cropped up again.

Sununu: There was never a meeting that I was having with the President privately, that Brent didn't know he was welcome to attend and vice versa. And sometimes we came in if we thought there was an overlap and most of the time we didn't.

Young: Let me try to nail down exactly what it was that the—we haven't talked to Fred [McClure] yet or Nick Calio but we're trying to get to see them, because I think we can't leave that area undone. But, from your point of view as part of the policy team and also part of the

political team to get these things through Congress, what did you envision as the best role, or the proper role of the guys and ladies in the congressional relations? How did that fit into the way you think the White House should operate?

Sununu: You used a phrase earlier in a different context—eyes and ears and legs. Their job was to be up there.

Young: On the beat.

Sununu: On the beat, either carrying messages up, or information back.

Young: Okay.

Sununu: We talked two or three times a day, half a dozen times a day, they picked up the phone and called me anytime, they wandered in—remember, one of the points I made earlier is that I really ran an open door policy in the White House. Anybody who had a problem could run down and grab me anytime and say, “I’ve got to see you.” And I would leave and come back. I was notorious for walking in and out of meetings, used to drive people crazy, but I didn’t mind functioning that way. I didn’t mind being interrupted at a meeting and I didn’t mind solving a problem immediately. So they would go up to the Hill and come running down and say, “We’ve got a problem,” and we’d figure out a solution and they’d go back and solve it. Their role was to be smart enough to come back and say we’ve got a problem, instead of letting it fester.

Young: So it was a source of intelligence

Sununu: A source of intelligence.

Young: About what was going on on the Hill.

Sununu: We gave them enough authority to make decisions within the envelope of policy, so that if they had to sit down with somebody in Congress and negotiate an issue, they knew where they could go.

Young: Can you give me an example of that?

Sununu: I’m going to give you fictitious numbers because I don’t remember numbers, but in the Clean Air bill, you’re negotiating emission rates, and they’ll go and meet with a Congressman from Ohio who has coal-burning power plants with problems and we’ll talk about where they can move back and forth. Roger Porter may go with them or not go with them, but they’ll sit down and the guy says I just gotta have this, I can’t support the President unless. Maybe the first time they’ll come back and get marching orders, but then you empower them to go up and negotiate and they go up and do that.

Young: Okay. But the summit negotiations, you with Ted Kennedy and others, were at your level.

Sununu: Not because I wanted them, but because Ted Kennedy wanted them. I had other things to do. I didn't want to get involved in the negotiations. I was the tool. If Fred McClure comes or Calio comes, or Porter came, or Darman came and said, "In order to close the deal, you've got to sit down and negotiate the final terms," then I would go down and do it. I wouldn't initiate the meeting.

Young: No, but I'm just—

Sununu: I would be responsive to the congressional guys saying you've got to come down. They would carry it as far as they could. They would try and get Porter or Darman to go the next stage and if they couldn't do it then I would go down. Then, if I couldn't do it, I'd go to the President and say, "Mr. President, I can't move so and so, can you meet with him and tell him how important it is to you to get this?" So you utilize a hierarchy of firepower.

Young: To be sure the record is as right on this, I'm going to cite an example from Eisenhower. I did a lot of interviewing, when I was very much younger, with congressional staff people, and Eisenhower established the first full time congressional staff and I talked a lot with Bryce Harlow and [Wilton] Jerry Persons. When Bryce was briefing Larry O'Brien, who would replace him when JFK [John Fitzgerald Kennedy] came in, they were comparing notes about how different it would be with their two people. One of the things Bryce told Larry was, "You're going to have to be prepared to go in to your President and when he picks up the phone to call somebody in Congress and make a deal on his own, you have to put your hand on his wrist and say, 'Wait a minute now, Mr. President, who is that you're calling? What are you calling for? What do you want to come out of it?'" That's preventing the President from being his own worst enemy. You didn't have to do this.

Sununu: I go back to the 8:00 to 9:30 meetings.

Young: Okay, you didn't have to do that. I wanted that to be clear.

Sununu: But you do the equivalent thereof. What I mean is, 99% of the calls the President was willing to make were discussed at that meeting. "You've got on your agenda today, Mr. President, to call chairman Rostenkowski and he's going to try and get a meeting with you. You probably don't want to let him come down because he'll go back and use the meeting itself, so what we need to do is get Rosty to really move on this provision. He's going to ask to trade you this and it is best that you really say you can't give that away, what else can you do for him? If he has a whole shopping list, just tell him you've got to go back and find out what the implications are. Please do that, Mr. President." And he does it.

Young: Again, the importance of the meeting. You did not have the problem that Larry and some others had of the President going off as a loose cannon and doing things with Congress they didn't know anything about.

Sununu: No, George Bush wasn't, George Bush understood everything. The only problem you occasionally had was the abuse of the personal meeting on the part of a member of Congress. If the President would have a group of folks to dinner, one of them would corner him after dinner

and try to turn that two minutes into a negotiating session. And it's not that the President didn't realize that was happening, but sometimes you get put in awkward positions and occasionally you have to try and fix a problem that occurs there. But George Bush understood the process backwards and forwards. He'd been around the White House for eight years. That kind of a situation I'm talking about, I think Jimmy Baker calls it the "oh by the way" decision, and we try to avoid those as much as possible.

Young: The other thing that Harlow was very particular about was making sure that the people who had responsibility delegated to them for dealing with Congress (within certain parameters of what Eisenhower would allow to happen), the people who have to get something done or sell something to Congress (a Democratic Congress in this case), were involved in the development of what was sold, the policy was that was being developed. And Bryce made a point of principle of telling Larry and operating on this principle himself, that the policy people will try to freeze you out. You cannot let that happen, because if you do, they'll give you lead boats to sail over the pond, it won't be good for the President, it won't be good for the administration. How was that problem solved?

Sununu: Remember, we had a second meeting every morning, at 7:30—actually, a first meeting, before the other one—in which McClure was there, Darman, Porter, myself, the senior members of the White House. At that point if anybody had a problem—if McClure was worried that we were developing clean air policy and he wasn't participating enough in the meetings—he'd either mention it there or come down and see me. You know, you never try not to have people included unless there's a reason, and if there was a reason I'd tell him and he'd feel comfortable with knowing there was a reason that he wasn't included or he'd say he'd come next time, be a part of it. Quite often people think they're not at a meeting and find out they've been at the meeting through an alternate all the time.

Young: So that problem was also not a big problem.

Sununu: But let me tell you what was a problem. It's what I call the first meeting syndrome. You call a group of people together to talk about an issue for the first time and they want to know why they haven't been called together and been a part of it before this. At every first meeting people are angry that there hasn't been a pre-first meeting in which they participated. No matter when you have the first meeting, everybody wants to have been part of an earlier meeting. That's a reality in any bureaucracy and you just have to cope with it

Young: In other words, if you'd ask me, you wouldn't have made this stupid—

Sununu: Why are we having this meeting anyway or something. People want to be at the meeting but they don't want the meeting to have happened sometimes.

Young: Well, that's a function of the large size of your staff.

Sununu: It's a function of bureaucracy.

Young: Inside the White House?

Sununu: Everywhere. This even applies to faculties.

Young: Oh, tell me about it.

Sununu: It's the same phenomenon. Let me go back to this policy development by the congressional guys. We were very lucky. We had congressional guys who were committed to George Bush and therefore knew that the President set the policy agenda. And quite often, they felt they were being set up, they felt that issues couldn't be done, and they would come and tell me, I'd check with the President. If it was an absolute, I'd come down and tell them that's it. And to their credit, they would go up and figure out a way to do it, and as I said, the presidential veto becomes the tool and you use it. I mean, you know, there's a whole escalation of weaponry that is used in the process. They were very good at it, fighting terrible odds. I don't know what else to add to that.

McCall: You were talking about setting the agenda during the campaign, working with the Governors. We haven't talked about two things too much. First of all, what portions of that agenda never really bore fruition? Is there an unrealized agenda?

Sununu: I know this is going to sound crazy. I cannot think of a major piece of domestic legislation that the President really wanted that he didn't get. I mean that in the broad sense. There were lots of particulars in legislation that we couldn't have.

McCall: So in that case the administration set out what it accomplished to do based on the agenda?

Sununu: Oh, I'll tell you what there was, we wanted some changes in health care rules and Medicare eligibilities and things like that that we had trouble getting through [Henry] Waxman, but those were details. We got the clean air bill, we got ADA the way the President wanted. We crafted the civil rights bill the way he wanted, we got energy deregulation, we got a crime bill we wanted, we got agricultural reform that we wanted, we got child care vouchers that we wanted, we got Points of Light legislation through. We got clean water provisions we needed. Does that mean, if we had had a Republican Congress we wouldn't have had a bigger agenda? We probably would have. But, we put an agenda together that lived on the reality of what was there and they got it through.

McCall: On the basis of what was possible, not what was wished for.

Young: And as I understand it, Bush had some bipartisan support out in the states. I mean at least selectively you had some Democratic support.

Sununu: I'd have to go back and look but I don't remember. Maybe if you remember one I can comment on it.

McCall: I couldn't think of one off hand.

Young: No, I think the very first—

Sununu: We don't have the equivalent to a health care failure that the Clinton administration has. I'll give you an example. We would have loved to have put through the welfare reform legislation that the Republican Congress forced Clinton to take, but there was no way we could have even proposed it, it would have been dead on arrival.

McCall: So a lot of the evaluation of what was possible as you're pointing out, was done in conjunction with the Governors, to factor in the primary process. And it was a two-way street as you're describing it, the President testing the waters on some things and they're also bringing forward an agenda of their own.

Sununu: It was really our way of getting bipartisan support with the Governors, you see.

McCall: Just building political capital?

Sununu: Yes, yes, the Republican Governors defined the political agenda for the President and we branched out from that, Governor to Governor, got them to branch out, to get support. We went aggressively to all the National Governors Association meetings, met with them, had the President speak at a couple of them, out of town, in addition to the February one, and nurtured that capital-creating constituency.

McCall: Was there any portion of this introduction of the agenda that was being pushed by the President himself? For instance, were there interests of the President he was introducing that he was trying to build political capital or develop a consensus on?

Sununu: You know, by the time we got to the White House it was a blur. What I mean by that is we'd been together on this for two years. There was nothing new. We didn't sit down January 21st and he said, "Now let me tell you something I'd like to get done." By dialogue, by debate, by discussion, this had been crafted like very thin slices of salami, back and forth, over two years.

McCall: All I was trying to get at was early in the process, whether or not the President had things specifically in mind that he wanted to make sure got through that salami process.

Sununu: Remember, George Bush's style is to listen a lot. And so, in the campaign, where his style is to listen and where he's trying to create relationships with all these Governors as an example out there, the process of listening is where he gets ideas and then he gives it back to you sometime. I can't tell you whether he's giving back something that he got from Tommy Thompson in Wisconsin or whether it was something he's always wanted to do, but George Bush was wonderful at absorbing all these pieces and just moving the consensus in the direction he wanted it to go and then he'd say, okay, that's what we'll do.

McCall: Is that possibly part of the problem when it came to getting credit for these things in terms of the political—

Sununu: No, his problem on getting credit was a press office that didn't want to talk about domestic issues and sent them down to the agencies. We had a press office that only wanted to brief foreign policy and that's where the White House press corps developed the perception and therefore reported in such a way that the White House was only interested in foreign policy.

[BREAK]

McCall: You were talking about how the President's style was listening.

Sununu: He listens and eventually lets you know what he wants. He communicates in these meetings and you go back and discuss details and he adjusts nuances. I mean, you don't get a written memo from him saying, "I want the legislation to contain the following nine points." It is an iterative, dialogue kind of policy evolution that takes place.

McCall: You were talking also about why the President didn't get credit. I think that's actually where we left off, was why President Bush didn't get credit.

Young: You mentioned the press office.

Sununu: That to me is the issue and that has evolved over time after I left the White House, trying to analyze it, and as I said, a lot of it is just sitting down and talking to the press about how they develop this perception. They developed it because if they wanted to know what the education policy was going to be, they had to go to the Department of Education to find out.

Young: Nixon was the first President to try to get outside the Washington press corps institutionally. He established, I think you call it the Director of Communications. And he had a press secretary and somebody else, Fitch or somebody. But the whole idea was to go to the state and the local press and to get outside of Washington and to go over the heads of the press that was then saying, we're the parliament, we deserve the access of the parliament. Ever since then Presidents have had something or somebody or some office in the White House, whether it is called public liaison or communications or what, specifically to deal with this problem of captivity to the Washington press.

Sununu: Right.

Young: How was that handled in the White House?

Sununu: Dave Demarest was in charge of the office of communications and Dave was at a disadvantage in a sense because Marlin had been part of the Reagan White House, had a relationship with the President and so the President felt comfortable putting all of his stuff out primarily through the press office. Interesting anecdote. In preparation for the '92 campaign, that's not the right way to introduce it. In recognizing that there might be a need during the campaign process for this kind of direct communication, we developed, over the last two years, a room in the top of the Executive Office Building. Sig Rogich was in charge of the project, which

was really a small television studio with cable uplink capacity where the President could sit down in the evening and we could make commitments to get him on local nightly news for interviews.

We went through this process and started the process, a couple of initial efforts where we did that, and it would have been the perfect utilization of technology to accomplish what you said Nixon tried to do. After I left the White House, one of the brainstorms that the wussies had was to dismantle that room and they never used it. It would have been the perfect solution for George Bush in the '92 campaign, to get local, to talk to people directly, to address issues on a local basis.

If he had gotten on three or four local newscasts, the L.A. newscast, San Francisco newscast, the Des Moines, Iowa, newscast, the Peoria newscast, each night during that campaign, he would have been unstoppable.

Young: So Bush didn't see enough value in it to keep it going. It probably wasn't his favorite thing to do anyway.

Sununu: It wasn't his favorite thing to do and I don't think anybody there understood the value of it enough to encourage him to use it. So it disappeared by disuse and misuse .

Young: And you said the Washington wussies killed it.

Sununu: Well, they were people who thought that the only press that counted was the *New York Times* and the *Washington Post* and network TV, and it isn't. More people watch the local newscast than national news.

Young: But you said, in connection with the campaign—

Sununu: Yes, but our idea was to use this constantly during the second term.

Young: Because Reagan had his radio, Clinton does, he has all of these.

Sununu: We had the same thing, we did a Saturday radiocast. But it really doesn't have the localized effect. This was to target communications to local regions. In essence bring the President on an "I'm here electronically in Des Moines, Iowa, tonight."

McCall: In prime time.

Sununu: In prime time, yes. There's not a local news station in the country that wouldn't give you ten minutes, or five minutes, with the President if you made him available to their newscaster to ask two or three questions And you could do that in five markets a night.

Young: Well, it's kind of puzzling as to why it wasn't, I mean somebody did something to make it go away. If it wasn't the President, it was somebody else.

Sununu: They reinstated a version of that over there that President Clinton has used occasionally, but who knows.

Young: We'll have to guess.

Sununu: We'll have to guess. Incompetence has many faces.

Young: But you know, it is also the case that the first modern press secretary, Steve Early, put in there by Roosevelt, his job was the care and feeding of the Washington press corps. Roosevelt brought him in and said, "You're part of the family," thereby the better to get his message out through them.

Sununu: And in those days, in exchange for that access, they did his bidding.

Young: Absolutely.

Sununu: Nowadays it doesn't cut it.

Young: It can't possibly happen.

Sununu: But in those days they cultivated the few to tailor the message. Now everybody has that access so the capital has lost its value. It's [Sir Thomas] Gresham's Law of access.

Young: Oh yes.

Sununu: This was a way to leapfrog that. It was re-establishing the capital value of that access. It was making the President accessible to a news outlet and a newsperson who had no accessibility to him and for whom therefore that accessibility was valuable enough to treat the President in a very positive way.

Young: That lasted for a long time.

Sununu: No, what I'm talking about is this, utilization of this facility would have done that. You see it would have leapfrogged those for whom access has lost value and gotten the President accessible to people for whom accessibility was very valuable.

Young: Well Roosevelt leapfrogged also, but the press didn't know about it. The Washington press corps didn't know about it, he had other ways also.

Sununu: He used radio in the way we were going to try to use TV.

Young: Actually, there was a radio program put out by the White House that didn't always involve Roosevelt.

Sununu: Remember, we did this in a different way. We went from the Reagan nighttime press conference. I think we talked about this last time.

Young: I don't think we did.

Sununu: Then let me tell you about one of the big decisions that I really pushed very hard for and got the President to agree to. If you remember, in the waning years of the Reagan Presidency, the press conferences were East Room, evening press conferences. Now, if you go back and look at videotapes of those press conferences, you will see the ladies in the press corps with their sprayed hairdos and their new gowns, new dresses, and you will see the Sam Donaldsons of the world with a fresh haircut and a brand new suit on. Those press conferences highlighted the press corps and they got obnoxious to Reagan, remember. What happened is that snippets of those were carried by the media at night. Not many people watched, believe it or not, as many people as the White House communications office and press office liked to think did, and everybody in Europe saw snippets the next day because of the time difference, this was at three in the morning over there.

I asked the President if he would please go back to doing an afternoon press conference and doing it out of the pressroom downstairs rather than upstairs. Downstairs in the pressroom the press is crammed in like sardines, they're in their workday clothes and we did it with not too much notice, so they didn't have time to get their hair done. It was highlighting of the President, not the press corps. Since it was done in the afternoon, CNN carried it live, head to toe, and everybody in Europe got to watch it and [Mikhail] Gorbachev saw it firsthand and didn't have to have it piecemeal to him.

So anything that we wanted the President to say on international affairs, to communicate directly to these folks, it was really the CNN theory of news conferences. We deliberately did that and we tried to get the President out about every week to ten days in an afternoon news conference out of the pressroom. And we were leapfrogging Washington that way. We were leapfrogging Washington because people could watch him live—and not just the people of the country, the leaders of the world watched the President's news conference live. We leapfrogged not only Washington to the hinterland here, we leapfrogged across the ocean. But then, the questions that were asked were not restricted to foreign policy.

Sununu: No, but the President usually opened up with a statement, and his statement set the tone for the questions. So if we had a foreign policy message, it was a foreign policy statement and then the questions followed.

Young: Yes, but you had mentioned earlier that the press office was not eager to handle domestic policy issues, it was only interested in foreign policy and this led to certain perceptions. But what about the President's performance if he was asked a domestic question?

Sununu: His performance was fine. He was briefed on what he had to deal with. During the savings and loan crisis a lot of S&L questions, during the budget process, lots of budgetary questions. Whatever the cycle of legislation was, lots of questions on that.

Young: Well, then, what was the problem that you saw with the press office?

Sununu: It was their briefings and their follow up and their discussion. So they would send the press corps to the departments. It wasn't the President talking about it, it was their follow up briefings and their backgrounding and their answering the detailed questions of the press and all of that.

Young: He would not refer them to Darman or you?

Sununu: No, they would refer—didn't have any problem if they would refer them to us but they referred them to the Department of Education or the Department of Agriculture or whatever it was. They let those departments handle the details.

Young: If that would be the usual intervention of a press secretary, how would you want to deal with it if it came around again in another administration?

Sununu: I would probably try to structure in that office somebody at least at the second tier who had principal responsibility for dealing with those issues and was much more aggressive and active in participating in the care and feeding of the press on these issues.

Young: Well, it is also supposed to be the care of the President. I mean, they've got the President as a client and the press as a client and historically it's been—they haven't wanted many other people in on that act. Fitzwater was with you? The press was with you in most of the meetings in the White House in the Oval Office?

Sununu: No.

Young: He had separate meetings?

Sununu: No, we had a meeting in which we were going to do the communicating.

Young: So Demarest—

Sununu: I'm trying to think, I'm trying to give you a proportion of the meetings. They probably came in, there's probably one meeting a day towards the end of the day where we talked a little bit to Marlin and had him get the message of the day. And remember, he was present at that morning 7:30 meeting and a lot of—

Young: I guess he went with the President on all of his travels.

Sununu: He went with the President, yes. Because the press had their own plane on all the President's trips so Marlin had to go.

Young: Sure, he had to go.

Sununu: Quite often he traveled on the press plane but a certain proportion of the time he traveled, on the overseas trips he traveled in Air Force One.

Young: In your talks with your predecessors did they give you any warning about watching out for press relations and the press corps?

Sununu: Well, you've got a variety of reactions. I mean, Don Regan had a terrible experience with the press corps and made it clear. Howard Baker was very concise but pointed out how difficult they'd become and how careful you had to be with them. I don't think Cheney discussed much about them. No, the only two that actually touched on it at all were—Kenny Duberstein talked a lot about them and how difficult the process was, and Jim Baker. Jim was probably one who told me I really ought to work hard to cultivate them but understood George Bush's disinclination to have that done, so it was almost a "you know you really ought to do this but it probably won't fit in with the President's agenda" kind of discussion. And those were the ones that I recall.

Young: The President had had Marlin's—

Sununu: The President's philosophy was that all the contacts with the press had to come through the press office.

Young: I see.

Sununu: He was not a believer in staff backgrounding the press. Marlin worked hard to preserve that and so that's the framework under which we operated.

Young: And he had chosen Marlin. That was one of his choices. Did Marlin have a free hand in choosing his own people?

Sununu: I did not try to impose on any of the folks, Darman or Porter or anybody. They could have anybody they wanted to a great extent. There were a few people that we tried to encourage them to have. I'd let them to a great extent have whatever they needed.

Young: Would you advise a future person to take more of an interest?

Sununu: No, but I would advise them to have a harder talk with the President about the reality of the current system. I'm sure 95% of the staff in the White House had their set of favorite press people that they saw socially, therefore talked to, and in retrospect I would try to grab hold of that process in a more formal way and try and use the process more constructively. Since the President didn't want it that way, I never fought to change it.

McCall: You also mentioned last time that the *Post* for instance had other ideas about access.

Sununu: The *Post* thought that they had a free call once a week in the Chief of Staff's office and I told them that they didn't, and that obviously created a little strain with the *Post*. It was a constant pebble in the shoe.

McCall: Had you heard if they'd made those overtures elsewhere?

Sununu: Yes, Don Regan reminded me that I should go back and read his book. If you read Don Regan's book he had virtually the same meeting I did with the *Post*.

McCall: What about the Chief of Staff's office, elsewhere?

Sununu: I'm sure that they had access to them. Let me put it this way, the folks that were inherited from the Reagan administration had developed this habit and it was unbreakable. So if you ask me who, anybody who was in the White House who had been in the Reagan administration, I would say right off the bat I would put in that category. And anybody who had been a long time Washington insider I would put in that category.

McCall: Plenty of sources there.

Young: But I see that in the context of all the infighting that occurred during the Reagan administration. I mean it looked like—

Sununu: That's exactly right. And therefore they all developed this self-preservation habit, and it was a habit that was hard to break even when it wasn't necessary.

Young: And it might have infected others.

Sununu: Yes. In hindsight it's the one thing that I probably didn't appreciate was taking place as much as it was while I was Chief of Staff, as I have found out since I left the office.

Young: When you donned your press hat so to speak.

Sununu: Well, I called it show business, but they called it journalism.

Young: Sometimes it's hard to tell the difference.

Sununu: I admit it was nothing more than show business. I never became a member of the press, just a member of the entertainment crowd.

Young: Also thinking of Bush in relation to other Presidents, some academicians made these stereotypes which are useful but not entirely real world. One is the kind of President who wants conflicting, competing advice, alternatives, doesn't want things pre-digested, he wants to get in on the decision before it is actually presented to him to preserve his options. Kennedy was enamored of that kind of system according to this. There are others, like Eisenhower, who did not want things that way and who wanted to wait, and withhold, and make a presidential decision after the issues had really matured and been sifted through.

Sununu: I'm fascinated by these visions. I would like one example of domestic legislation in which that Kennedy model functioned.

McCall: In hindsight?

Sununu: From the academic history. I mean, I know of no example in which this myth was practiced.

Young: Well, I'm not even saying it's reality.

Sununu: I'm just saying as one looks back, trying to look at the historical record, other than the reality and the myth of the October [Nikita] Khrushchev crisis in the Kennedy administration, when was this model of conflicting advice implemented? I don't know of it. I can tell you, in the Bush administration, the President's style was just to get access to people who had viewpoints on issues and to listen to them. Not necessarily to create this conflicting—but it was merely a “Has everybody had an opportunity? Have I heard from everybody?” kind of thing.

Young: No, I didn't mean to say that the President liked conflict on his staff—and President Roosevelt is the father of this model—but he liked people to talk to him directly and he reached out here and there, rather than having a group come in, say here's what our options are, here's what we agreed on.

Sununu: George Bush was willing to take the time to give those constituency groups the face time they required but he didn't necessarily need it on every issue. What I mean by that, again, savings and loan, we had to have a meeting at least every two weeks, just to satisfy everybody who felt they had to come and tell the President what to do on savings and loan. The travesty of that is that you would listen to them gripe about the problems out there, and then at every single one of those meetings, I would ask, “All right, what specifically should the President do?” And we never got a single suggestion, never got a single suggestion.

Because it was so complicated an issue, nobody understood what had to be done. It was all, “I don't know but you've got to do something.” Now, on other issues it was a lot easier. On welfare issues you'd have people who would come in with very specific suggestions from empowering church-based services to creating a huge social welfare corps. I mean, you'd have lots of inputs on those. You'd have these meetings, you'd have the groups come in, again on the welfare issue some days you'd have a meeting of all the conservative groups that had their viewpoints, another time you'd have a meeting of representatives of states; another time you'd have meetings of congressional leaders who had a long history of wanting to shape this legislation. The President would sit down, in the Roosevelt Room usually. We'd have ten to fifteen of them, that's what the table accommodated, and that's how you'd size the meeting.

Young: What's convenient.

Sununu: You'd have people there, usually a half hour, forty-five minutes, an hour, go around the room, let everybody have their say. The President engages them in dialogue. Darman, Porter, and I would be there and try and give some order to it and they would have an opportunity to talk to the President about the issue. He would digest it. It was a mirror of the meetings that he would have had in '88 with the Governors. It would be a continuation of the inputs that he had from them. So he comes to the meeting with a lot of background on it and a lot of feeling and would engage them in dialogue and ask, “What's wrong? I heard that this was a good thing and that was a bad thing. What do you think of this? What do you think of that?” He would lead the

discussion back and forth that way. He would give his inputs. It was rarely in terms of hard debate at the table because you usually flavored the meeting. It was a meeting of all the conservative groups, so they would come in with the same kind of recommendations. The President would engage them. Then it was a meeting of all the Republican House members who were involved in that issue.

Young: I didn't state this well. Let me give an example. A President who wants to find out what's going on in London, at Whitehall. He has an ambassador. Roosevelt would send over some friend to go over and look at it and give him a second view. Joe Kennedy was not entirely to be trusted. He did this among bankers, he used bankers. He was always doing it and nobody in the White House knew what he was learning.

Sununu: This President, 99% of the time—

Young: George Bush was not that way.

Sununu: No, because he had Jimmy Baker at State whom he trusted. Now Baker might be sending people out and then coming back with those responses to the President. At Treasury he had Brady, at Commerce he had [Robert] Mosbacher, and we would have these meetings. Mosbacher would come back and say, "I'm getting feedback from people who are telling me that—" and I'd be at the meeting with the President and I'd hear him say that. The President would say, "John, follow up on it and find out if it's—get me some information."

Or Baker would come in and say, "We're having a problem." Well he wouldn't bother him with embassy problems, but he'd come in and say, on NATO [North Atlantic Treaty Organization] [for example], "Margaret Thatcher is getting more and more concerned about German reunification." And the President would say—so Scowcroft would be there and then we'd have a German reunification [discussion]. But it wouldn't be that he would send somebody out to find out about it because Jim would have a heart attack.

Young: Not to check up.

Sununu: Jim would have a heart attack.

Young: Because there was much more trust here. Roosevelt didn't trust all these people. The fact that the head of the Commerce Department would come in and say, "Let me tell you what they're saying." Roosevelt would be on the horn calling somebody and say, "Are you really saying that?"

Sununu: But what George Bush did is make good use of the telephone. But these were not spontaneous phone calls. He would have a phone conversation with Margaret Thatcher once a week, or once every three days, but it was orchestrated. Brent and Baker would come in and say, "You've got to talk to Margaret and we've got to deal with these two issues and we want it to go this way, she wants it to go that way, and move it, Mr. President." And he'd get on the phone. I think I mentioned when we came in that this is a President whose monthly head of state phone calls you could count on the fingers of one hand. When we left, you could number on one hand

how many daily head of state phone calls there were. But they were always—“Here’s the briefing paper, here are the issues.” We’d talk about where it had to go and where we wanted it to go and what the problems were. Now, since they were more frequent, it wasn’t always the world’s biggest issue, but it was the nuances and the details that were being honed on the telephone at those times.

Young: Well actually, when FDR established the OSS [Office of Strategic Services], it was not called that at the time.

Sununu: With [William] Donovan.

Young: Yes, and Donovan was his—not even all the people on the White House staff knew what was going on there. They didn’t trust the standard intelligence.

Sununu: If there was enough trust amongst the President and his Cabinet officers that it was done in conjunction with them rather than around them.

Young: That was the point I wanted.

Sununu: And they would come to the President and ask him to deal with this issue because they couldn’t solve it on their own.

Young: It is a very different kind of style.

Sununu: The President was a tool to enact his policy. The President defined what the policy was, charged the Cabinet to go do it and then when they had problems where they needed to use him as a tool to implement his own policy, they would come back to him and say, “Please do this, please do that.” Only when he got boxed in on the “oh by the way” mode would he be forced to act in a freelance, unbriefed way. If he got cornered at a dinner or at the Chinese restaurant downtown, or in a meeting with a Governor out in a state, or a Senator cornered him at a fund raiser—and you’re always on guard to try—he was smart enough not to make commitments.

McCall: I was going to ask two things. It sounds as if there is a different George Bush dealing with foreign policy than domestic policy when it came to listening and what his assets were. It is a little more formalized for the most part with the foreign policy and he is working much more with Brent and others to keep a coordinating process going. It’s not that it’s less formal than on the domestic policy front, it’s that he has more assets available to consult and to listen to before he makes a decision. Is he relying on a different structure or is it—

Sununu: Let me tell you what the difference is. Domestic policy is implemented by legislation, for the most part. So it’s a structure in which he is gathering information and then having to negotiate the details in a document called a bill. Foreign policy is implemented on the stage on which the President can hone and make the decision in a bilateral way or a trilateral, multi-lateral way with head of state to head of state. So he is preparing for a meeting or a conversation on foreign policy and there is a specific to be achieved or avoided at each one of those meetings.

In legislation, it is an ongoing process that has a gestation period measured in months or years, which evolves in a much broader way over time. That's what the difference is. There is a specific objective almost on a head of state to head of state meeting basis. "We're going to London to meet with Margaret Thatcher and this is what we have to achieve," and there is a very tight box around what you want to do within a specific period of time. On a given date, at this meeting, we've got to get that.

Legislation has a broader scope and a broader time frame and demands participation of every committee chairman, the Speaker of the House, the Senate Majority Leader, the Governors. A much broader set of players is involved.

McCall: Part of what I'm getting to also is we spoke earlier about how the agenda was developed in conjunction with the Governors and also then, once he is in the White House it is a matter of working with all these groups that are brought in. He can listen to them, dialogues are developed. It's not as easy to do that with foreign policy.

Sununu: It's much easier to do that with foreign policy because the issues are issues that the President can grab hold of and do with what he wants. He can't do what he wants with domestic legislation. He must do what he and Congress can cooperatively accomplish.

McCall: In terms of the agenda yes, but I'm trying to get a better sense of how he is doing this listening and who he is listening to. One of the questions we're going to ask you about with foreign policy was the role of Brian Mulroney because of the people—you talked about set phone calls and that he didn't necessarily sound out foreign leaders necessarily, as spontaneously as he might do someone domestically.

Sununu: Oh no, he did. I go back to the frequency of the phone calls. By calling up these people a lot, he gave them an opportunity to talk to him and it was usually this way. He would call and say we've got to talk about A. And they would talk about A. Then when they were finished, they had an opportunity to raise their B, C, D, and E. And he would listen and say, "Well, let me go talk to Brent and Jim about that and next time we talk we'll talk further about it." So they got an opportunity—the conversation might have been focused on A, we've got to take care of this immediate problem. But they were smart enough and he was smart enough to listen, they were smart enough to raise, issues B, C, D, and E.

McCall: Which were not part of the prep.

Sununu: But that would then create an agenda item, for example, "The next time we talk we really have to talk about the boat people." We had this issue, the Vietnamese boat people. I can think of that as one example. I think Margaret Thatcher would get to it and say, "You've got to understand our point of view." We never wanted to initiate a conversation on it, she wanted to raise the issue. There were lots of those. So it was not much different from domestic policy in the sense of him being willing to go into these broad discussions, but they were raised in different ways, different forums, different formats because it was with foreign leaders.

McCall: One of the reasons I was raising Brian Mulroney's name in this context is that it seemed to me that there would be un-prepped calls with Mulroney, maybe somebody else.

Sununu: Mulroney would initiate some calls. He had a good enough rapport with the President that he would initiate calls and it might have been Mulroney [who would raise issue] A, and then they would talk about [issues] B, C, D, E, and F.

McCall: It seemed to me that Mulroney in particular became, not a back channel, but a listening post in a sense for the President, and also sometimes a sounding board, because it was almost as if he were another member of the administration at times. There were so many shared issues between—

Sununu: Sure, there were so many shared issues and shared perspectives. A lot of the issues were issues in which the Europeans had their particular approach of doing it and Brian was a world leader from whom the President could get another viewpoint that was non-European. There's North America, there's the Far East and there's Europe, and Brian was the North American ally that gave another perspective.

And I go back to another point: George Bush inherited a strained relationship with France. George Bush did two things that would be critical in his capacity to influence what happened in Europe and the Soviet Union in those critical days. He established a personal rapport with [François] Mitterrand at this meeting in Kennebunkport which was, I think, a very crucial nail in the shoe of the horse aspect of getting all he needed. And Mulroney was a Québécois, wasn't a "Free Quebec" [type] but he was a Québécois who was very fluent in French, who had a historic excellent relationship with Mitterrand, a good relationship with Mitterrand, who was a second source of reinforcing that we better get France supporting the kind of thing. So Mulroney in that respect was an ally.

And he had two legs into it. One, this relationship with Mitterrand, and two, as a member of the Commonwealth, a relationship with Margaret Thatcher. So he was a very valuable ally in those two slices.

McCall: It seems to me that they became such personal friends that he was down here a lot, they were on the phone a lot. There were all those last minute calls, and that's why I'm wondering about it.

Sununu: Brian Mulroney is an underrated statesman in my opinion. I mean, I consider Brian Mulroney one of the people that I hope history treats a lot better than he was treated in his reelection process. Same as George Bush. I think he spent a lot of his personal capital to do important things. And I personally am indebted to Brian Mulroney in those tough days when I was going through my tough press times. Brian Mulroney picked up the phone every three to four weeks and called me and just said, "Hang in there, you're doing the right thing. You're protecting the President in the way the President ought to be protected." I was the beneficiary of Brian Mulroney picking up the phone at exactly the right time when things were going tough. I know he did that with George Bush as things got tough in the Gulf War, Brian Mulroney would

pick up the phone and talk to the President and just be there as a friend, from a point of reference, and served as a good sounding board for the President in doing that.

McCall: We talked about how the President consulted domestically in terms of the agenda on clean air. Did Mulroney get involved with any kind of sound-boarding for that?

Sununu: Clean air?

McCall: About clean air, just simply in terms of this is what we can do on our side because—

Sununu: We never met with Mulroney without him talking about acid rain, until I reminded him that the per capita emissions of sulfur dioxide in Canada were twice as large as the U.S. and when Canada got as good as we were then they would be allowed to preach to us on acid rain. I mean, this became a personal running joke between us. I had gotten involved with him when I was Governor and we used to meet with the Canadian premiers on these issues. So Canada at that time was preaching to us on clean air and it was a good incentive for the President to stay focused on that legislation and get it through, and when he got it through he became a hero to the system.

McCall: Was there anybody on the domestic side, a Governor or what not, outside of the beltway, that the President would reach out to the way he might to Mulroney and say, “What’s going on?”

Sununu: Yes, Margaret Thatcher, he and Margaret Thatcher—

McCall: No, I mean domestically.

Sununu: Domestically. Well, not so much on policy as just on a personal relationship, the Will Farishes of the world that he liked to talk to a lot. Domestically. Wow. Why is my head going blank?

McCall: It might be there’s no one out there, it could be he brought them in, people like a Mosbacher type.

Sununu: A lot of those people he just brought into his Cabinet. Remember, there’s one foreign policy slot in the Cabinet, there are ten, eleven, twelve domestic policy slots, so the Bradys of the world, the Mosbachers of the world, were there. The Bennetts of the world were there. The reason he probably was not as aggressive on that, beyond that group, was that a lot of his domestic relationships were with corporate types, a lot of them the oil industry. If he called them, they’re going to use that phone call to try and ask him to do something. And it was hard enough to fend them off at dinners, much less give them an opportunity to lobby him privately. So he maintained the discipline pretty well.

Even the foreign leader phone calls were almost always a briefed phone call rather than a spontaneous phone call. We would do the same thing and have him calling Governors. But they were briefed phone calls. At night, from the residence, he made a few phone calls and usually

told us about them the next day, about what the conversations were. But he tried very hard to make those mostly social calls.

Young: Do you know if he had frequent phone contact with Lee Atwater?

Sununu: Oh, Lee came, once he got ill?

Young: No.

Sununu: Lee came down to the White House—

Young: He was a regular.

Sununu: I brought Lee in twice a week. When Lee was active he was the most important asset I felt I had in getting a good political construct into policy. I was a great believer that policy ought to create good policy for the country, it would be good for the country, but that you have to do that in such a way that you don't shoot yourself in the foot politically. I worked hard to bring Lee into meetings and the President was very receptive to having Lee at meetings.

Young: So he did weigh in.

Sununu: Oh yes. One of the biggest tragedies in the world was when Lee got ill, in terms of getting things done in a way that dealt with the political side of things. Atwater was a tremendous loss to George Bush in the process. When Lee took over as chairman, we worked hand in glove on these things.

Young: So he was in fact part of the strategy, strategizing in the process.

Sununu: Absolutely.

Young: So who took his place when he got ill—in the White House circle?

Sununu: Lee was irreplaceable in my opinion.

Young: Did Ed Rogers do any of this?

Sununu: No, not at all. Ed was a communicator between Lee and the White House but Ed Rogers didn't understand the political process like Atwater at all. Ed was more of a K Street type who happened to be involved in the process.

Young: Was he a link with some of the conservatives, Gingrich and others?

Sununu: Yes, he was a link, but there were other slices there. Boyden [Gray] had good relations with the conservative groups, I had good relationships with the conservative groups, to the religious right while he was there and functioning okay, Doug Wead. Lee asked me to hire Ed and I felt comfortable hiring Ed. I had gotten to know him in the campaign. We used Ed as a

liaison to Atwater's RNC [Republican National Committee], but he also served as sort of a deputy Chief of Staff.

McCall: What about reaching out to other members of the old group that had advised him during the campaign, the [Craig] Fullers and the rest. Were they present?

Sununu: You know, [Roger] Ailes was easy. Ailes stayed on as part of the inner circle for a while and was always there. Craig decided to go into the private sector, became a member of the K Street crowd. It was hard to separate him from his clientele so to speak, so after a while it became harder and harder to give him a comfortable niche in the process. [Robert] Teeter was around doing polling for RNC so he was there frequently. Who else?

McCall: That's pretty much the group I was curious about. I'm just trying to think who could substitute for Atwater who might—

Sununu: There was no way to substitute for Atwater's acumen and Atwater's loyalty and Atwater's credibility with the President. I have to stress that. There was no substitute. That was the big problem we had.

Young: Bennett was then—

Sununu: I asked Bill.

Young: How was he chosen?

Sununu: I had to come up with some recommendations. I made recommendations to the President. We had Bill come in and talk to the President. He accepted and then he went home and decided that the economics of it weren't as attractive as he had become used to and so he turned us down. Then we went to Yeutter I guess, and Clay Yeutter was okay, but—

Young: That was, so to speak, the best you could do to replace Atwater.

Sununu: It was just, in terms of availability and timing and the President's comfort factor with him and stature—all of these things. It's a funny thing that sometimes the best person for that job is somebody the public doesn't recognize and you can't put somebody in as chairman of the RNC—it is hard, it's a hard slot to fill. It's an important slot. It was just a [terrible] loss.

Young: You couldn't replace him.

Sununu: And in a way, part of the time you had this limbo where at least the theory was that Lee is going to come back so don't replace him, so we were in that bind for a while.

Young: Let me go back to something earlier. You were talking about Congress and about the shaping of the domestic agenda and you had to get this agenda through a democratic Congress and so forth. Then you talked also about veto as an important factor in the President's dealings

with Congress and his authority. Can you say anything about resort to executive orders. You said domestic almost always involves legislation, what about executive orders?

Sununu: My personal feeling is that we underused executive orders and we underused them because Boyden and company were probably not enamored with stretching the scope of presidential power, rightly so. The conservative point of view is you don't want to have a dictator. You don't want people doing what Clinton has done by executive order. That's the first point. The second point is that we were so outnumbered in Congress, and I don't understand why the Republican Congress hasn't slapped Clinton down. If George Bush tried to do what Bill Clinton has done by executive order, the partisan Democratic leadership in Congress would have just come down and beat his brains in with legislation undoing it.

Young: Well, depending on what you try to get done through executive order. Historically this is just as important as the veto but it has to be very carefully used.

Sununu: That's right. We did not use it, in my opinion, as aggressively as we should have and there was a disinclination to use it in the counsel's office and a disinclination to use it in OMB.

[BREAK]

Sununu: Let me make one more point. Clinton has made wonderful point of executive orders in his second term and I don't think that's a coincidence. I think when the President isn't worried about his long-term relationship with Congress you can start doing things by executive orders. If there had been a second "Bush I" term, I might have had more success in encouraging the use of those orders.

Young: It's interesting that you would say that this is a conservative—

Sununu: I know.

Young: Because actually it comes down on either side, depending.

Sununu: But intrusion of government by executive order really bothered a lot of folks.

Young: Yes, it's not a substitute for legislation but Kennedy couldn't get a civil rights bill through so he used executive order to do a little bit and he got away with it on housing and things like that.

Sununu: He used executive order to fulfill his political obligation and that's what I would have liked the President to do. That is, to establish his commitment to his agenda in some areas.

Young: It can even be symbolic, it didn't have to be substantive. I don't see what was wrong with the symbolic use of an executive order, how that would bother the conservatives.

Sununu: But it would bother the Congress. The Congress hates the use of executive orders, just loathes it.

Young: History is that the use of executive orders is greatly expanded, particularly in foreign matters.

Sununu: But you see, that doesn't step on Congress's toes too much—the foreign side. Congress defers more on foreign policy to the President than it does on domestic policy.

Young: If that's true, there are some occasions where friends in Congress say, "Don't make us do this, you do it. Don't give me this problem."

Sununu: Let George do it.

Young: Which creates some opportunities. We have the presidential daily diary. You have those?

Sununu: Let me look.

Young: You know what that is. You've seen that.

Sununu: Yes, yes.

Young: I've picked up one for December 11th, and it just occurred to me that on December 11th and 12th and 13th, [Lauro] Cavazos resigned. Bennett turned the [RNC] job down. The Fiesta Bowl issue erupted.

Sununu: No, I had to ask Cavazos to resign.

Young: I know.

Sununu: I got turned down by Bennett.

Young: Now you can tell us the story behind this. Meanwhile [Eduard] Shevardnadze is on a state visit and [Yitzhak] Shamir is there the next day. So you have three kinds of things happening. The minority scholarships issue, the Fiesta Bowl thing burst just about this time. Cavazos made his way back to Massachusetts.

Sununu: See, here's a good example. You asked me earlier to see if Marlin was present, to which I said we decide and then Marlin will come in and get the —

Young: Right.

Sununu: Interesting. I hadn't seen one of these in ages.

Young: So there are two days in the life.

Sununu: I think I told you last time, the hardest thing I had to do as Chief of Staff was ask Lauro Cavazos, maybe it was on the Baker thing, I mentioned that.

Young: You did go into that.

Sununu: I didn't realize until you told me now, it was on the same day that Bennett turned us down.

Young: He had spent ten minutes with the President after leaving you the day before and you wanted to go and see the President. I didn't have the diary for that day. He spent ten minutes with the President and then the next day he was in there for one minute.

Sununu: Yes, and then went home that night and then came back the next day and turned us down. Made life hard for a while. I still tease him about it. Now, what do you need? What do you want to know?

Young: Here are four or five different things going on all at once, this state visit, Shevardnadze, another visit by Shamir—

Sununu: Not a state visit, a major foreign policy.

Young: Yes, not a state visit. There was a dinner I think, full dress, on foreign policy. There was something political happening that was problematic, Bennett turning down the job; something problematic in two ways in education—Cavazos was out and minority scholarships had suddenly become one of those unexpected issues. Can you just talk about your role and your responsibilities in these things?

Sununu: On all of this? Well, I told you last time, the President wanted to focus on K through 12 in education. Lauro's experience in education has been as Dean of the Tufts Dental School, which is where I got to know him when I was Associate Dean of the College of Engineering at Tufts, and Lauro was the holdover member of the Cabinet. So the President decided that he really wanted somebody who could talk about educational policy at the K through 12 level. I don't know if this was just before or just after we had the conference.

Young: It was after. The conference was in September.

Sununu: And the Governors and all that. We were a little bit disappointed in Lauro's capacity to follow up on that and articulate the President's goals.

Young: Why was he held over?

Sununu: I think he had been a short-term member of the Cabinet. We were looking for a Secretary of Education, he had an interest in staying over, I think he kind of indicated he wanted to stay and there was no reason not to and there was no compelling choice.

Young: Bush had made quite a point in education in his campaign, hadn't he?

Sununu: He had, and in a way, keeping him over would you get you started on the ground running, so it was partially because of that.

Young: Not bringing in your own.

Sununu: I guess he had developed a good rapport and he thought he could do it and Lauro just didn't impact the Governors or take what we got from the Governors, or take this K through 12 agenda which is really what education problems in America were all about. He had much more of a focus on higher ed, just by experience. It had nothing to do with his capacity, it was just the wrong experience and background at the time. So the President decided he needed a new Secretary of Education and asked me to let Lauro know. I had to go and do that, it was hard. I think I told you, I have not talked to Lauro since that day and I considered us good friends before that.

So that comes in. Bennett. I was struggling to find somebody. The euphoria of the yes from the day before became no that day and so I had to start the process all over again for the President.

Young: He was in to talk with the President.

Sununu: I think he just went in to tell the President. The day before? The day before he said, what do you want me—I think that was basically where anybody who was taking on a responsibility wants a mutual conversation on role, responsibility, access and all that kind of stuff. And I thought he had gotten what he wanted at that meeting, said he would take the job and then the next day came in and said no. So we have to start the machinery there. On the Shevardnadze meeting, that wasn't an exceptionally difficult, didn't make the day any more difficult than usual. It just, I don't remember if it was a formal dinner that night, it just meant I had to put a tux on and, what was the fourth item?

Young: Fiesta Bowl.

Sununu: The minority scholarships. That was a hard issue. That is still a tough, tough issue. As you remember, that issue was whether or not we would endorse black only scholarships and whether or not race or color is acceptable as a criterion for a particular piece of federal financial aid. It was really probably one of the first affirmative action conflicts. A ruling had just come down a couple of years earlier, I think.

Young: And that was the Grove City case.

Sununu: Some Supreme Court issue had come down that had made it clear that this could not be and yet some people wanted it to continue anyway. So we had this very difficult issue. There was an Assistant Secretary by the name of [Michael] Williams.

Young: Williams.

Sununu: God, you're really taxing my memory—who was a very good conservative who wanted not to allow and recommended that.

Young: He announced it.

Sununu: Let me tell you why I'm conflicted in my discussion here. I thought that happened under Lamar's [Alexander] tenure.

Young: No.

Sununu: I guess this was the first step in which we announced it. Lamar eventually got involved in it in the process of fixing it.

Young: This is the first time, what Williams did was send a letter to the recipients of the proceeds from the Fiesta Bowl and said they would be in violation of the Supreme Court ruling and all federal funding would be denied.

Sununu: And I honestly, when it first hit, didn't know what the President wanted his policy to be.

Young: You didn't even know that this was coming.

Sununu: But when it first hit, when it first came to the White House, I think you will see in there a couple of days when I wasn't sure what position we should be taking. I couldn't get enough briefing material to give to the President to make a decision, so we scrambled to get briefing material together. So on these two days my reaction was, "I don't know what this is all about. Boyden, what in God's name does the Supreme Court decision really mean? What do we have to do? What can we do?"

So in the two days you're asking me about it was full personal confusion for two reasons: One, I didn't understand the legal obligation from the Court, and two, I didn't have any idea where George Bush would want this to go. So I'm struggling to do two things, get material from Boyden that I can tell the President about. You know, "The implications are as follows. This is what you have to do under the law. This is what you can do under the law. This is what you might want to do either this way or that way. Which do you prefer, Mr. President?" And still trying to put out a White House position that says we are not as confused as we really are.

So that is what happened on those particular days.

Young: You talked a little bit about this issue in the earlier interview.

Sununu: But in the earlier interview I was talking about it in the context of when Lamar was there and we were trying to fix it. I had forgotten that this had happened just as Lauro was leaving.

Young: And I understood the President's position was, "I don't think we can get rid of minority scholarships."

Sununu: And, "I don't like the idea of getting rid of minority scholarships." They are two slightly different pieces of information.

Young: But he also had the quota business and the affirmative action, and I don't know whether the press was—

Sununu: I think we finessed it beautifully at the end, but I don't even remember how we worded what our policy was. It was one of these sentences that, depending on which syllable you put the emphasis on, you get two different conclusions.

Young: Yes, it was a very good straddle.

Sununu: That's exactly what it was, it was a straddle. And I'll tell you why we straddled it—

Young: But there was an argument I'm told in the administration, people within the administration and in Congress who thought it was right say, "You sold us down the river. He is for quotas." And you and Andy Card are reported as coming down on the side of, "We've got to keep minority scholarships."

Sununu: Andy Card and I—

Young: Sends the wrong signal.

Sununu: Andy Card and I reflected the President's position very clearly. That's our job.

Young: Sends the wrong signal.

Sununu: But that is a very good example of what I've been trying to convey here. My job as Chief of Staff is not to argue for position. My job as Chief of Staff was to get the information to the President so that he could make a decision and tell me what my position was. And we worked very hard. Because this was an issue I wasn't even aware of in terms of its legal existence, the Grove City, or whatever that was. I'd forgotten it was Grove City by the way, thank you for reminding me.

And Boyden, who was an expert on the implications of a comma in a piece of legislation, came down with this long dissertation on what the process was, and I said, "Go back and get me something I understand." Then we took it in and somewhere in there, I don't know if it is here on this day, but there was a meeting with Boyden and the President—I don't think Williams came down at that time. I think Porter came in on it. And Andy and I. I don't know, there was a meeting with three or four people in which we're trying to understand the Supreme Court decision and what it means in terms of financial aid, in terms of scholarships, in terms of admissions, in terms of all these things. And we just, as you say, didn't want to send the wrong signal. Anyway. That was a fascinating day. I'd forgotten it altogether.

Young: Yes, I can sit down and read these things and try to imagine—it doesn't tell me very much but when I'm seeing the President's day and—

Sununu: What's redacted?

Young: Only the names of the CIA briefer.

Sununu: Oh, the CIA briefer. Is that redacted in every one?

Young: Every one. Yes. It's not the only thing that's redacted.

Sununu: But it's the 8 o'clock meeting, see.

Young: I'm checking up on you.

Sununu: This is odd, why isn't Brent there at 8 o'clock? He comes in I guess at 8:05. Okay. I guess I met with him for a couple of meetings earlier and then the meeting started.

Young: No, this was about to happen. Somebody had a word.

Sununu: Then he talked with Cavazos.

Young: See, you were in just for a couple of minutes before he was in for one minute.

Sununu: Oh, I think I had done Cavazos the day before.

Young: Yes, you had.

Sununu: Then Cavazos asked for a minute with the President.

Young: Yes.

Sununu: Okay, that's what it was.

Young: You told him the day before and I think you'd all gone to bed thinking Bennett was okay and then he comes in to say no.

Sununu: Typical day. What do you need? We have 25-30 minutes.

Young: You have the floor.

Sununu: I have the floor.

Young: Do you have any more questions, James?

McCall: No, I don't.

Sununu: Let me do a couple of things that I think are important. I think I've made it clear to you that I think George Bush will be treated much better by history for a lot of reasons. He handled the transition period, obviously the international transition period masterfully, but I go back to something I tried to convey last time and I'll reiterate it. Once we put down in black and white for people what his domestic record is, I think people are going to find out that this was a President who was very successful in getting major domestic legislation through a reluctant Congress. Making sure that legislation was framed in a Republican way. And in particular, people who care about the Republican agenda, which I think is a good agenda for the country.

And I talked a lot about the first two years of the Clinton administration when he had the House, the Senate—did he have the Senate? Did Clinton have the Senate the first two years? No, he had the House. But he could have crafted the legislation almost any way he wanted instead of getting all the free market things that George Bush got into the legislation. So I think his domestic record is going to be more and more appreciated.

But even more than that was his capacity to bring good people into government, motivate them, and get them to help him do what he eventually accomplished. Now, he had a management style that is very different from a lot of other Presidents and yet it was a style in which he kept control of what he wanted, kept people energized, kept them focused. I think he deserves a lot more personal credit for all those accomplishments than he's been given and I just hope a lot of that has been reflected in the comments, and questions we've gone through here.

Young: Well, that comes through pretty clearly. I think I've said perhaps in the earlier discussion, I know I've said it with you, that the effectiveness of the legislative side of the Bush Presidency is already being recognized because, if for no other reason, it wasn't the stalemate, the deadlock, that people might have expected given the numbers on the two sides.

Sununu: You haven't talked to Fred or to Calio yet.

Young: It is very hard to pin Fred down to an interview. He said he would, but we've been months trying to capture it.

McCall: We'll talk about this later. Fred told me to keep on bugging him and I'll keep on bugging him, but we'll talk about it.

Young: Okay, let's talk about that, because I think we're having some secretarial interference on that one. But I think this is already being recognized and it was part of the mythology I think of the press at the time.

Sununu: I wish I could remember the names of all their staffs, but they both had some people that were really, really—had great relationships with the staffs and with the members themselves up there.

Young: Yes, so we have more to learn on how it was done and to get to know some of the people in that history, familiarize themselves with some people. But the fact that it was a far more effective Presidency in an opposition Congress situation than people like to think, I think that will clearly be recognized. So you will no longer get—

Sununu: What will you do with all the stuff we did?

Young: We're not writing books.

Sununu: You record the stuff.

Young: We record it so others now and in the future—the principal audience for these things is people not yet born actually. But we hope that uses can be made of them.

Sununu: Have you gone through the stuff of the Hofstra seminar, because there was a lot of good stuff there but I have to also say the academic presentations at Hofstra were unbelievably bad and uninformed. They were *Washington Post* skimmers who wrote academic papers from the front page of the *Washington Post*. I mean, I couldn't believe how bad they were. So I want to get on the record here that the academic papers at Hofstra were just disastrous.

Young: Yes.

McCall: They didn't have a whole lot of access to the early administration.

Sununu: I understand.

Young: This is an example of what happens to almost all Presidents. They go out of office. The conventional wisdom that had been fed by the observers trails them into history and then a different picture begins to emerge.

Sununu: I gave you guys a big plug, not necessarily the Center, but oral history, at that Chief of Staff thing. I made the point that there is unfortunately a new tendency, and I don't know if I told you about it, this is real. People are tending not to keep records, not to keep notes and not to write memoranda, and so the historical record is, in my opinion, an order of magnitude smaller from the important people than it used to be. That's why I think these oral histories, and I said it there, that there are really two times you have to do it: one, immediately afterwards while it is fresh on people's minds but they're not going to tell you what they don't want to tell you. And then, after an appreciable period of time when the memory has eroded a little bit but there's more of a willingness to talk about what really went on. And so I think there are really two periods when you have to do it.

McCall: Let me ask you a question about that. For the period right after the administration, when people coming in to do these—

Sununu: I probably wouldn't have done it.

McCall: On top of that, how would these people be informed enough to ask good questions, other than structural ones? I mean, yes, we've had the benefit of more than a few years.

Sununu: You know, if you do no more than just stick a microphone in their mouth and tell them to talk.

Young: You can do a form of interviewing. I talked to Carter people within two months after they left office and some wouldn't talk, but then later on others would.

Sununu: I have become comfortable to talk, only because I've talked to the President and told him I'm doing these things and he's been encouraging me to do it. You need them, you need the President to have enough of a period of relaxation so that he encourages his people to do it.

Young: Well, I appreciate the plug and I may ask you to put it in writing.

Sununu: It's available in writing.

Young: I've asked for it, but I haven't gotten the transcript yet of those meetings.

Sununu: I got one the other day.

Young: I'll get one.

Sununu: They're probably waiting for people to review them first. I just got mine to review a while ago. But you can probably get the tape from C-SPAN.

Young: I think the videotape has been edited. They have the whole record, but the ones that are available—

Sununu: Really? I saw them replay it on C-SPAN and they looked—

Young: I'm talking about, well maybe so.

Sununu: I don't think C-SPAN edits.

Young: Well, PRG [Presidency Research Group], the group, Terry Sullivan, who put this together, has offered videotapes to colleagues of his profession, but when I looked into it, it wasn't the whole thing, it was excerpts.

McCall: I would think you could bypass and go straight to C-SPAN.

Young: Well, I'll have to get my staff to do something about that.

Sununu: Will all your stuff be indexed?

Young: I hope so.

Sununu: I mean, the stuff I've given you, will I be able to go in and say, gee, what did I say about Bennett, and find a way to find all the references I made to Bennett?

Young: Oh, you can do that by keyword if you have a disk.

Sununu: Oh, so this will be available on disk?

Young: We have the transcription on disk.

Sununu: I've got the tapes, you sent me the tapes last time. But you now have it on disk?

Young: Yes.

Sununu: Could you send me a disk.

McCall: We will see that that be done.

Young: Because it is put that way.

Sununu: If you could send me the disk, then I could use a word editor or something to find everything.

Young: The actual editing of a hard copy is labor intensive, it's terrific.

Sununu: I hate editing anything. I don't know what to do. I don't know whether I should keep my grammatical excesses or whether I should be editing like a manuscript, and so I hate doing it at all. At least somebody is kind enough to pull out the uhs and all that, but there are some grammatical constructions that you die to change and yet you say no, they want it the way it was.

Young: Well, to the extent that these things at some point become readable, you control disclosure. When they become readable—

Sununu: I'm not just talking about yours, I'm talking about any time anybody sends me a transcript to edit, I hate doing it because I feel this compulsion to edit it like a first draft of an academic paper rather than just clean it up.

Young: I think it is important to keep the totally authentic copy of that somewhere on the record. I think it's less important to make the information that it contains available in precisely the form, so I'm thinking of maybe a copy of record and a copy that you might want to do something else with.

Sununu: Have you done Andy, you did Andy right?

Young: Did Andy, did Boyden.

Sununu: What did Boyden say about the minority scholarship thing?

Young: Well, we have a policy that we don't tell Boyden what you said and we don't tell you what Boyden said. I don't think he talked too much about that.

McCall: I don't think we got into that extensively.

Young: But the whole issue of affirmative action of course was something he talked about. You can ask Boyden.

Sununu: Oh, I will. I was curious because you just raised it. It was one of these things that we really struggled over because there was no answer to it. There were about five or six issues like that in policy that you just can't deal with.

Young: Well, one of the things we're trying to do at the Center is to establish an oral history program for all Presidents and I think very highly of this idea of trying to do something on the exiting side and then something a little bit later on, so, we're hoping to do that. The whole idea is that people can speak

Sununu: What else can I do for you?

Young: I think you've done plenty, I want to thank you.

Sununu: My pleasure, I actually got a chance to think, which is a rare opportunity as well.

Young: I don't believe that for a moment, I don't think there's a moment of the day you don't think.

Sununu: If I can help getting anybody else just let me know, I'll be happy to call.

Young: You'll get a transcript of this one. The other one is about finished on copyediting, we've had a back up.

McCall: The paper copy hasn't come out yet.