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This is an oral history interview with Mr. Stephen Ailes, held in Washington, D.C., on June 6, 1986, at 3:00 p.m. The interview is being recorded on tape and a copy of the transcript will be sent to Mr. Ailes for his review. Representing the OSD Historical Office is Dr. Maurice Matloff.

Matloff: Mr. Ailes, as we indicated in our letter of May 14, 1986, we shall focus in this interview particularly on your roles as Under Secretary of the Army in 1961-64, and Secretary of the Army from 1964-65. By way of background on the appointment as Under Secretary, in February 1961, had you had any contacts with OSD or the Secretaries of Defense before your appointment as Under Secretary of the Army?

Ailes: None whatsoever. I had known Elvis Stahr, who was named Secretary of the Army. I knew him because he had been here about ten years earlier working for Frank Pace. Frank was Secretary of the Army back in 1950, and was a college classmate and close friend of mine. While Frank was Secretary, I used to go over to see him from time to time, play golf, and that sort of thing. I had gotten to know Elvis pretty well when he was a young fellow working on reserve affairs in Frank's office. When Elvis became Secretary, they had changed the arrangements-- the Under Secretary had broad responsibilities as sort of the alter ego of the Secretary and they wanted somebody who had had some experience in Washington. I had been here for quite a while practicing law. Elvis and I were very congenial, and he asked me if I would come over as his Under Secretary. The one person I did know in OSD was Cy Vance.

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He and I had been in some litigation earlier. We were both from West Virginia and had a lot of mutual friends.

Matloff: How familiar were you with the trends in defense organization and management since the passage of the National Security Act of 1947?

Ailes: I should say none at all, but that's not quite true, because I'd been here and read the papers and, again, I knew Frank very well. Indeed, when Frank was appointed as Secretary of the Army, I went over and sat with him and Jim Webb, who was Under Secretary of State at that point. They had been together in the Bureau of the Budget before that. We sat up way into the evening talking about what was happening in Defense and in the Army, so I had that background from ten years before. I had followed it reasonably well just as a private citizen.

Matloff: You had not known Secretary of Defense McNamara, or Ros Gilpatric?

Ailes: No. The head of this law firm was Louis Johnson, and he had been Secretary of Defense 10 years before, so I knew something about his role and I talked to him many times about what went on.

Matloff: What responsibilities did you have as Under Secretary of the Army for such things as strategic planning and budget? Did you get involved in those kinds of questions?

Ailes: Certainly not planning, except in a very general way. There had been a reorganization just before I got there, and the Under Secretaries were assigned responsibility for manpower and reserve affairs, so I had specific responsibilities in that area. Another

thing that happened was that the Army staff found that McNamara was going to deal with the civilians, the Secretary and the Under Secretary, on a lot of matters that the Chief of Staff of the Army had handled through the JCS before. McNamara wanted to talk to his civilian secretaries about a lot of things that really had not been within the ambit of our predecessors. When the Army staff found that out, they said they wanted to keep us fully apprised of what was happening in the JCS. So once a week somebody from the Army assigned to JCS came and briefed Elvis and me on everything that was going on in JCS. We asked questions and they would follow those up, because they wanted us to be as well informed as possible when McNamara talked to us about matters that formerly had been handled exclusively by the men in uniform.

Matloff: What kinds of questions did you get into in terms of manpower or weaponry issues? There were a number of them in the McNamara period, some, for example, involved the reorganization of the reserves, merging them with the National Guard.

Ailes: I was heavily involved in that. In fact, we had a plan once. McNamara called me up and said, "I'm going to have a press conference and announce what we're going to do with the reserves and National Guard, and I want you there because, if somebody asks, "Where does this idea come from?", I'm going to point at you and say, "There's the SOB right there!." He literally said that he wanted me to go to the press conference to catch the rocks. I was heavily involved in that business.

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Matloff: Did you go along with the reorganization of the reserves?

Ailes: Yes, there was some strong support on that from the Army staff, which was unlike what a lot of people thought would happen. I thought the organization was essentially inefficient, huge, and extremely expensive.

Matloff: What was the impact of the McNamara reforms in management on the Army during your period as Under Secretary; for example, changes such as the PPBS system?

Ailes: The Army reacted to most of those things a whole lot better than the other services did, was my feeling. Barksdale Hamlett, who was Vice Chief, and I were very good friends, and we used to say that if the other two men would leave town we could get everything straightened out. I remember his saying to me that McNamara had us doing a whole lot of things that we should have been doing years and years ago. There were just no two ways about it. There were people in the Army that didn't want other people to have ideas about how things should be run, and there was a fair amount of that view. Don't forget, Bus Wheeler was Chief after George Decker, and I think George was more inclined to stick with the JCS and be resistant to change. But Bus was a highly intellectual fellow himself, and very inclined to want to look at things and decide whether they were good or not. Ham certainly felt that way, and I was very strongly of the view that when you ask a question and are told "in my military judgment the answer is no," that that was not the end of the inquiry. It's appalling to a lawyer; he wants more than that.

Matloff: You didn't have the heartburn that some other folks did?

Ailes: Not in the slightest. I just had tremendous confidence in what McNamara was trying to do most of the time. There were some times that things would get pushed too hard, or that I thought could have been handled better, but essentially the objectives made total sense to me.

Matloff: Do you remember any particular examples or issues that you thought might have been handled more delicately?

Ailes: I think there was a tendency to let some reforms come down ex cathedra from on top--the reserve and National Guard stuff would clearly have come much better from us than from McNamara, I think. There were other times when he and I had very serious discussions on the subject of budgeting and we would be encouraged to come up with a budget that included the things that we thought we could usefully have, only to have it chopped up by Defense after it was made public--as if we were trying to overreach. I thought that was a bad system, and that those things ought to be worked out internally. They didn't need to make the Army look bad in order to make the Defense Department look good.

Loyalty is a two-way street. I remember discussions along that line.

Matloff: Did you or the Secretary of the Army play any role in connection with the Bay of Pigs affair? For example, were the Army views sought? Were you drawn in on any of the discussions at the time, early in the game when the McNamara-Kennedy administration first came in?

Ailes. I want to answer the Bay of Pigs incident by saying that we had almost nothing to do with that. The Cuban missile crisis was different

in that there were troop movements involved. As soon as that problem came alive, we were asked who ought to be mobilized or moved; if there was going to be a ground operation in Cuba, give us the laundry list, timetable, and things like that. Nothing like that was involved at the Bay of Pigs.

Matloff: Was there any direct consultation with you or Secretary Stahr by either the Secretary of Defense or Deputy Gilpatric, during the crisis?

Ailes: What would have happened there, and what I'm sure did happen, was that McNamara at a staff meeting would bring the other people up to date on what was going on as a courtesy. Then a substantive discussion could arise there, although it was not likely to, as that meeting had the service secretaries and service chiefs sitting around the table with McNamara and his deputy, and the assistant secretaries were also sitting around that room. It made for rather an awkward group. Unless Elvis was out of town, I would not have been at such a meeting. I do not remember anything at such a meeting about the Bay of Pigs situation as such.

Matloff: Did you take away any lessons in your own mind about the way the Cuban missile crisis was handled, say in terms of the way the machinery of national security operated, or in dealing with the Russians?

Ailes: I came to the conclusion that even in the era of the nuclear umbrella, locally applicable conventional forces were going to determine the outcome. It seemed to me very clear that the fact that controlled what was happening at the Bay of Pigs was that we had force that could be applied and applied damn fast, and that the Russians would have had a hell of a time countering with anything less than some nuclear exchange,

which they didn't want any part of either. I was personally concerned as to what the country was going to do, because there were tremendous military advantages from our employing surprise in whatever we did. President Kennedy was not about to pull a sneak attack on Cuba on a Sunday morning, choosing rather to confront them, and I was extremely enthusiastic about that choice. These were very dramatic times, which are written up in fascinating form in that book Bobby Kennedy scratched out on yellow pads. I think he called it Thirteen days.

Matloff: About the Berlin crisis, in 1961-62, when the Berlin wall came up. Were you consulted or did you play any role at all in connection with that crisis? This was when the reserves were called up.

Ailes: Sure. The minute you have troop movement involved, or a reserve call-up, the Secretary of Defense does that through the Secretary of the Army. The first thing he wanted to know about the Cuban missile crisis was what units? The first thing about the Berlin crisis--again--can you do this out of the force you've got, or do troops have to be called up, and if so, which ones? The information on all that is in the Army. We were consulted about that.

Matloff: What did the Army learn as a result of that call-up and dealing with that crisis?

Ailes: I remember the remarkable thing we learned was that a gesture on our part which was essentially quixotic, in terms of the troops that we were calling up and what we could do with them, was viewed with a great deal of alarm on the other side. Instead of having people laugh

at what we did, they were really concerned that we were getting ready to attack. So it would seem from some of the information that came back. I think that that in itself was extremely revealing.

Matloff: What was your attitude toward the American involvement in Indochina in the Kennedy period? Was it your thought that it might have been a mistake for American security and national interests? Did you agree with the domino theory, for example?

Ailes: Yes, I was over there fairly early on and I spent about four hours with Diem. I was convinced that he was over the hill, when you asked the man a question and he talked for four hours. I'd had the same experience as a lawyer with Louis B. Mayer, so I was braced for that endless diatribe. But I watched Diem smoke a can of cigarettes, the whole can, sitting there telling me what was going on. I was really concerned about him, but I thought that there was a relationship between that situation and Korea. I was extremely interested to know what we were doing to prevent the Korea-type takeover, by subversion as distinguished from direct attack, and manifested enough interest in it that the Assistant Chief of Staff for Intelligence actually set up a briefing for me once a week to give me the benefit of whatever intelligence was coming in with respect to Vietnam and that whole area down there.

Matloff: How did you get to meet Diem? What started that off?

Ailes: We had a lot of responsibility with respect to Okinawa that I was directly in charge of, and we had a lot of troops in Korea. After I'd been over in the Pentagon for a year or so, I made a swing which

included going to Vietnam. We had had zero casualties in Vietnam at that point, and I was asked when I got over there if I would go and have a talk with Diem, who said he wanted to talk with whoever was coming from the United States government. I went with the U.S. Ambassador, Frederick Nolting, and we had an interpreter.

Matloff: Was the mission directed from the McNamara office, or was this coming from the Secretary of the Army level or higher authority?

Ailes: It certainly was not directed from McNamara's office, but, when I was there, it was the practice for the Secretary and the Under Secretary and, indeed, other officials from time to time to go where the troops were. I'm sure that that stuff was all cleared up there. A trip like that was organized, and the Air Force would provide the aircraft. I'm sure it had the OK from the Secretary's office.

Matloff: In the Kennedy period, very early in the game he made the decision to increase the number of military advisers in Vietnam. Were you or the Secretary of the Army consulted in any way by him or his people?

Ailes: We never had a lot to say about that. The Secretary of Defense was much more heavily involved in actual operations than were the service secretaries. We were responsible for recruiting, training, and equipping the troops. We had some participation in that long process where you determine what the troop structure and size ought to be, and worked on that with the people in OSD. But in terms of the shots being actually called on deployment, the service secretaries were kept pretty fully informed, again at McNamara's staff meeting, or he would call a

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special meeting and say, "I want to tell you what's coming off here."
It was very much in his interest to have his people thoroughly informed,
but it wasn't part of your job description. I do remember once when
McNamara and Vance were both out of town and I became potentially
acting Secretary of Defense. I was briefed on how you respond to
certain acts in Vietnam and what you could order and that sort of
thing, but that was the only time I really sat in an operational slot
with decisions to be made. Thank God, they didn't do anything.

Matloff: Were you surprised when the coup against Diem actually took
place?

Ailes: I certainly didn't know that anything was coming. The situation
with him, his brother Nhu, and Madame Nhu, was so bad that anything
could happen.

Matloff: Back in 1963 a number of American officials felt optimistic
about the ability of the Americans to end their military role by 1965.
Did you share that feeling, and what was the basis for it?

Ailes: People think that we usually win; we had a lot of good people,
knowledgeable men calling the shots here in the Pentagon, and a lot of
fancy equipment. There were a lot of other people who said that it was
another kind of war, not like in Europe, and so things can go bad in
these situations. I don't remember ever having a real judgment about
how things were going.

Matloff: Were you encouraged or discouraged by the end of the Kennedy
administration?

Ailes: Nobody knew a hell of a lot; there was no way of keeping score. If it had been one of these battle line situations, you could look at the map and see what's happened to you in the last month, whether you were moving, gaining ground, or backing up. But it was totally different, and that was one of the real problems; nobody could really tell what was happening.

Matloff: Did McNamara's reforms in management in the Department of Defense affect your office, particularly in dealings with the military? Did they make them more difficult, or not?

Ailes: I think McNamara made the role of the civilian in the services a lot more effective than it might have been otherwise. He was playing a role and it was perfectly clear that you had access to him, and that you were pretty much in the communication chain. Just as Gen. Decker, the Chief, and Gen. Eddelman decided that they wanted us to be thoroughly informed about what went on in the JCS, they wanted us to know everything about what was going on in the Army. If it hadn't been the role we played, or were supposed to play, with McNamara, and we had been saying, "I want to know this because I'm a secretary," it would have been harder. I'm sure that you could do it, but it would have been a lot harder. I remember a general officer jumping on my exec. because of something he had told me, and that fellow was out of the Pentagon the next day, and I never had a thing to do with that myself. He was just told, "We want Ailes, or we want Stahr, (or Vance, or whomever,) to know every G_D thing there is to know about the Army. We want them

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to get it straight. We don't want a lot of hocus pocus because we depend on them in McNamara's office." The situation we were in was different from what it would have been if we had had a nincompoop up there as Secretary of Defense.

Matloff: The stimulus of bringing the secretaries of the services into the picture was broader under McNamara.

Ailes: It was there because the services had to depend on the civilian secretaries and under secretaries to make the fight upstairs at McNamara's office.

Matloff: What do you regard as your major achievements as Under Secretary?

Ailes: There's one they all used to kid me about, that we had a lot of fun about, which worked out very well. We got a report from HumRRO, which was then part of GW University, a bunch of psychologists who studied attitudinal responses to what went on in the Army, and they reported that at the end of basic training men of higher aptitude thought a lot less of the Army than they did going in. We were upset about that, particularly Cy Vance. They asked me to set up an analysis of that situation, and what ought to be done about it. We put a good team together, and we looked at everything. I went down to Paris Island and to several basic training centers, and we came up with a series of conclusions of what ought to be done. The Army staff responded very favorably to this. The last thing I did as Under Secretary was to sign off on this report, and the last meeting I was at as Secretary a year and a half later (once a month they would brief the Army Policy

Council on what we had achieved in this business) they reported that everything in that report had been done. We created the drill sergeant school, and the drill sergeant role in basic training, got rid of the committee system, and did a lot of other things. We thus got the reverse finding from HumRRO, that the men of higher aptitude really thought a lot more of the Army after basic training. Abrams wrote me from Vietnam about the quality of the recruits that were coming over. My name was on that thing and I had a lot of participation in it, but a lot of other people did good work there. That was a useful thing, I am sure.

Matloff: Now for your Secretary of the Army role, from January 1964 to July 1965. Again, the question of the background of the appointment-- what were the circumstances, who recommended you, and what briefing, if any, did you get from the Secretary of Defense?

Ailes: It was very simple. I had told Cy Vance, then Secretary of the Army, that I really ought to come back to the law office at the end of the year. He asked me if I would go down to Panama (I had had responsibility for Panama as Under Secretary; I was chairman of the board of the Panama Canal Company, which runs it) to look into what was called the zonian problem and make a report on what ought to be done, and I did. While I was down there, President Kennedy was assassinated. I had written out my resignation and put it on Cy's desk. The first thing that President Johnson said was that he would appreciate it if people would stay in place till year end, or something like that. So when I came back, Cy asked me to stay on until January 1. Ros Gilpatric

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decided he had to go back to Cravath in December. When he did that, McNamara said that he wanted Cy to become Deputy Secretary of Defense. Those two then agreed that I ought to be the successor as Secretary of the Army. So New Year's Eve, I'm getting ready to empty my office over the weekend, and here Cy comes down and says, "Would you stay on as Secretary?" I said that I didn't have any real commitments, and would stay on a year, and ended up staying on a year and a half.

Matloff: Do you remember the problems that confronted you as Secretary of the Army when you stepped into that post?

Ailes: Are you kidding? The riot in Panama occurred the day I became Secretary. I was with Johnson around 5 o'clock in the evening, and he said, "I'm going to announce your appointment tonight." Cy and I went to the home of a Chinese military attache and found out that Panama had blown up. We went home, got a few hours sleep, and went to the Pentagon. The President sent for us, and we were in his office at 7:00 in the morning. He said to me, "Ailes, G__D__ it, when I appointed you, you didn't tell me that all hell would break loose." We had quite a problem with that, as you can imagine.

Matloff: How much leeway did you have in organizing or reorganizing the staff, the secretariat, for example? Did you bring in new people, or did you go with the ones you already had?

Ailes: I had helped to recruit Ignatius as Assistant Secretary for I&L, and we made him Under Secretary, until McNamara grabbed him off to be Assistant Secretary of Defense for I&L. Otherwise, the people were

in place. We had a revolving affair. Joe Califano was General Counsel-- he was called upstairs. I got ahold of Al Fitt, who had been with me as Under Secretary before. I think that Willis Hawkins stayed on as Assistant Secretary for R&D. As far as I was concerned, it was simply a continuation of what we were doing, and the changes that were made would have been made if Cy had still been there.

Matloff: What were your working relationships with McNamara and Vance? How closely did you work with them?

Ailes: Cy Vance and I could have been brothers. We were both from West, By God, Virginia, and both were lawyers. We had worked very closely together when he was Secretary of the Army. I am absolutely devoted to Cy. I just think that he is one of the best fellows I have ever known in my life, and I would have no hesitancy about talking to him about anything anytime. He's just the salt of the earth. The situation was a lot easier with Cy up there as Deputy for the simple reason that Ros Gilpatric was interested in the Air Force and not all that interested in the Army, although very conscientious about his job. We really dealt with Bob. Bob is prickly, busy, p^er_hoccupied, impatient, and an immensely able man. When you're dealing with a man who is a hell of a lot abler than you are all the time, it gets tough.

Matloff: I was going to ask whether your previous association with Mr. Vance in the Army was a help in dealing with the OSD level.

Ailes: I have total respect for McNamara and the job he did. Personally, I think a hell of a lot of him. It's one of the most educational things you can possibly go through to work for him.

Matloff: Did you ever have any differences of opinion or views on matters of policy or administration?

Ailes: Sure. McNamara doesn't eliminate dissent; it's just difficult to make the argument. I once had to say to him, "I rather look forward to practicing law, where the man I argue with doesn't also sit as judge." You don't win very many arguments with Bob, but I have the greatest respect for him and I really think that I am going to be influenced in the way I do things for the rest of my life just from having watched him.

Matloff: Did you agree with his approach and philosophy in management?

Ailes: Absolutely. I think that there were times that Bob did things personally that other people could have done with less disruption, and there are differing views about how to handle something on the Hill, but I have the greatest respect for his intellect, personal integrity, and management ability.

Matloff: We have been interviewing Mr. McNamara and he has scheduled us for a third interview. He has gotten very interested in this whole process.

Ailes: You'll find him fascinating. He's probably got total recall.

Matloff: We've also spoken with Gilpatric.

Ailes: Ros doesn't remember quite as well as McNamara does.

Matloff: How often did you meet with the Assistant Secretaries of Defense? For example, William Bundy, John McNaughton, Norman Paul, Morris, and Ignatius?

Ailes: Tom Morris is the salt of the earth. Norm Paul is really a

friend of mine. We were both amateurs in this league and got along very well together.

Matloff: Were there many dealings with them during this period?

Ailes: Yes, but usually it isn't the secretary who works with them.

As Under Secretary you would work with the manpower man there, because he was really writing the rules about how your office would work.

Matloff: How about the Comptroller? Did you have many dealings with Hitch?

Ailes: Yes, and also a man named Joe Hoover, who ran the budget and was so G__ D__ autocratic that he was known as Jehovah. He was a good man, a really able fellow.

Matloff: Did you have many dealings with Harold Brown, then Director of Defense Research and Engineering?

Ailes: Yes, but our R&D man would have worked with him a lot more closely.

Matloff: Still in that general area of working relations with other services, the other Secretaries in this case would have been Paul Nitze for Navy, and Eugene Zuckert for Air--did their roles change in the McNamara era? You've indicated that there was a difference in the Secretary of Defense's relations with the Secretary of the Army.

Ailes: Zuckert and McNamara had known each other a long time. Gene had actually taught Bob at Harvard Business School. When Nitze came in, he and McNamara saw eye to eye and were very compatible. The differences among the services were not in the relationships with McNamara and the Service Secretaries or Under Secretaries. It was in the response of the

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men in uniform in the various services to the McNamara innovations. I think that the Army was a lot more inclined to go along with some of his innovations than were the other services, certainly the Navy. They were very conservative about changing the way they do things, or so it seemed to us.

Matloff: Is this because the Army fared better under McNamara than it had under the previous administration, during the period of the New Look, for example?

Ailes: The biggest bang for the buck, and that kind of stuff, was clearly a very bad period for the Army. But I don't think so. I don't think we fared all that much better under McNamara. This could be absolute baloney, but some of the civilians over in the Army used to feel that the Army has a much broader view of its role and of the role of the individuals there than the other services. You sit down and list the people out of the other services who have gone into politics, and you'll start and end with maybe one man. But over the generations there have been quite a few people in the Army who have done that. One explanation is that its role is the defense of the continental United States. Another is that a much higher percentage of the officer corps in the Army is not out of West Point; it's out of colleges across the country. We were getting a bunch of draftees in, enlisted people, every year. It is more of a civilian organization than the other two services. That may be part of it.

Matloff: You may recall that Maxwell Taylor, in his book The Uncertain Trumpet, after he was Chief of Staff, talked about the Army having been,

while he was Chief of Staff, in a period "Babylonian captivity." Do you think it was coming out of this captivity in this period?

Ailes: It could have been, but I don't think that there is a mercenary explanation of the response to McNamara, really, for the simple reason that the Army never felt that it was getting all that much under the new deal, although it was doing better. I know that McNamara, over time, got greater confidence in the people in the Army. If he wanted a job done, he had a tendency on frequent occasions to look for the man in the green suit. It could be a purely parochial point of view of mine, but I think a lot of us thought that the Army was producing the Bus Wheelers of this world, and people like that, that literally had a broader view.

Matloff: Do you recall any meetings among the service secretaries in which they were talking about the new era in relationships, vis-a-vis the Secretary of Defense's office? Zuckert, for example, is still burning a little, I think, as a result of his experience as a service secretary, in his relations with the military during this period, in the controversies over weapons. Did they ever get together and talk about the problems they were having with the whiz kids?

Ailes: Certainly. When I was Secretary, Gene, Paul, and I would meet for lunch about once a month and just throw the bull. In fact, the three of us went on a nuclear submarine once and caught hell because all three of us missed McNamara's staff meeting. There was a movie with Melina Mercouri with a name or song called "Never on Sunday." We said for us, if we go away, it won't be on Monday. We had a lot of fun

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together, comparing notes, talking about where we were going, and what we were doing. Again, Zuckert was very loyal to McNamara; Nitze was very loyal; and I surely was. It was different, I think, when John Connally was there. He was just unhappy with that situation from the word go. We were going through a shakedown about what that relationship really would be, but by the time I was Secretary, that business was in real good shape.

Matloff: Zuckert has written that as he looks back on it, the role of the service secretary had become that of "a group vice president."

Does that jibe with your impression?

Ailes: No, I think the Air Force and the Army are two different organizations. It would be a hell of a mistake to abolish the Service Secretaries and have an Assistant Secretary of Defense, Army, or something like that. The reason is that there is a long tradition in which the men in the Army look to the Secretary of the Army as the head of the department, and this goes for all of them. I think that as long as they play that role, and they are not just taken over by the Secretary of Defense, they perform a useful function in terms of leadership for that service. It's an important function, and you can perform that function while at the same time being loyal to and supportive of the Secretary of Defense.

Matloff: How about relations with the Joint Chiefs of Staff, how often did you and the other service secretaries meet with the JCS and with the Chairman?

Ailes: I would say almost never. At the time of the Berlin crisis, when they were going to close the entry roads over there, Elvis [Stahr] was away, and the Service Secretaries went down in the tank and we had a big meeting with McNamara--that's the only time I was ever there in four and a half years. We had some problems with respect to Panama, that the JCS got interested in, and I was sort of a Panama honcho on a lot of things, and I appeared before them with Jack Irwin. I'll be damned if I remember what his role was, but he was later ambassador to France. He is a Princeton man, so I've known him for a long time. He and I went down there and appeared before the JCS on something like would they give up old France field or something like that. I think he must have been playing a role in connection with negotiations at that stage. We saw the Chiefs at McNamara's staff meeting once a week, and got to know some of the rest of the men socially, but I never saw the JCS as a corporate body except in the situations I have described.

Matloff: How about the State Department, did you have any dealings with Rusk, or anyone else over there?

Ailes: Too many.

Matloff: What were the issues?

Ailes: Panama and Okinawa. Don't forget, the Army had the responsibility under executive order of the President as agent on the whole Panama situation, and an Army major general was the governor of the Canal Zone. Then there was an Army commander, SOUTHCOM, a four-star general. So the Army was up to its chin on Panama. Okinawa was the same kind of affair.

We were forever dealing with one or another contingent from the State Department on one of those two matters.

Matloff: How about the White House, did you have any direct or indirect access to Johnson, and if so, did you have to go through the Secretary of Defense?

Ailes: Yes. We had a custom that when the Army commanders from all over the world came to Washington, which happened by accident to fit with the Army-Navy game usually, we would take them over to the White House and sit around the Cabinet table with the President. With JFK that was one of the most thrilling experiences I ever went through; with LBJ that was a disaster of major magnitude. I'm sure we worked it out with the military aide, Ted Clifton, but I'm also sure that the Secretary of Defense's office knew about that.

Matloff: Did you have to clear with the National Security Adviser, too? That would have been Bundy in your period.

Ailes: I worked with Mac a hell of a lot on Panama and Okinawa. He would send for us and we would sit down and work on those problems. This other thing was just a social function of the President's role as commander in chief of the Army.

Matloff: Did you have any sense about Johnson's attitude toward the role of a Service Secretary? Was it any different from that of Kennedy as President and commander in chief?

Ailes: There was a hell of a difference about the two attitudes toward the Army, in that for some reason or other Johnson had in his mind that

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the so-called "military mind" actually existed, and that there were Prussian characteristics about our military people. That's what made that session such a disaster. He was telling them not to do things that you could never have gotten any of them to do in the first place, such as to walk around slapping a riding crop on their puttees, or something like that. I don't know what he was thinking about.

Matloff: Were there any problems that you encountered as Secretary of the Army in dealing with Congress, and on what Defense issues did you find Congress particularly sensitive? Did you ever have differences in views with the Secretary of Defense and have to appear before Congress?

Ailes: We appeared in Congress far too much, even in my day, and people that have been over there since will attest to that. They will tell you that they run into what they call micromanagement from up there on the Hill. I found dealing with Congress a lot of fun until LBJ was reelected by that tremendous margin, at which point everybody on the Hill went on the defensive. Before, if you went up there well prepared on a subject (and not with a whole bunch of men in uniform who were going to tell the story for you) and you told them and defended it, you got along extremely well with them, and they were very agreeable and helpful. After that election, when you went up on the Hill, they wanted to be sure that the bases had been touched on everything that had to do with Congressional review, or whatever it was, and they were always worried about prerogatives. You had a hard time getting anybody to talk about the merits of the issues involved. It was just a difficult time.

We also lost Senator Russell and Carl Vinson. Dealing with those two gentlemen was a great pleasure. They were really able, strong people.

Matloff: Did you have to clear with the Secretary of Defense the positions you were going to be taking when you appeared on the Hill? How much leeway did you have?

Ailes: You went up with a posture statement and a budget statement. I'm reasonably sure, without remembering very specifically, that those things were probably reviewed in OSD before you put them in. Otherwise, you would try to hew to the party line on the issues, where you knew what it was. You would protect yourself reasonably well and still seem forthcoming. A congressional cross-examination is of a very poor character.