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State Government Oral History Program

Volume 3

Oral History Interview

with

MERVYN M. DYMALLY

United States Congressman, 1981-1992
Lieutenant Governor, 1975-1979
California State Senator, 1967-1975
California State Assemblyman, 1963-1967

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Los Angeles, California

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[Session 12, July 2, 1997]

[Begin Tape 14, Side A]

CARR: Good afternoon, Congressman Dymally. As I mentioned earlier, in this particular session, I'd like to begin focusing on your congressional years, on specific issues that you were involved in as a congressman. There will be kind of a two-pronged approach. There will be foreign affairs and domestic issues. Within the domestic issues, obviously, there will be certain local issues as well. As we go along, I will be reminding you of certain issues you were very much involved with during that period of time on the legislative level.

First, I'd just like to talk about your appointments--to the Committee on Foreign Affairs, and the Committee on Science and Technology. You mentioned how the Committee on Foreign Affairs appointment came about. Could you tell me a little bit about how your appointment came about to the Committee on

Science and Technology?

DYMALLY: The United States in the Congress is divided into geographical areas for the purpose of the Steering Committee's appointments of members to the various committees, and California was large enough to be its own region, and Phil Burton was an old friend of mine way back in the assembly. In fact, the book written about him. . . . I'm told this--I've been featured in the book. He got me on those two committees.

Now, Foreign Affairs--that was a personal interest. I had known about the commitment of the Jewish members on Foreign Affairs to Israel, and I thought that I could make a similar contribution to the Caribbean and Africa. So that was the motivation for going on the Foreign Affairs Committee. The Science and Technology [committee assignment] seems to me to balance off this faraway assignment. And besides, I represented most of the aerospace companies in southern California, in the Thirty-first District.

CARR: Now, was Lockheed Martin. . . . Was there a branch . . .

DYMALLY: Lockheed [Aircraft Corporation] had a small

assembly plant in the Watts industrial park, which was really based in Lynwood. And then you had Douglas . . .

CARR: Those are the two defense giants.

DYMALLY: But the big one was Northrop [Corporation].

CARR: Northrop. Before we go on to Science and Technology, one of my interests is this: it seems to me that you were one of the first African American congressmen to take a very active interest in foreign affairs, specifically in Africa.

DYMALLY: I was preceded by [Charles C.] Charlie Diggs [Jr.]. Charlie Diggs opened up Africa to the Congress.

But I want to go back to Science and Technology. I was, as far as I know, the first black member of Congress to sit on the Science and Technology Committee. Out of that we developed the Caucus on Science and Technology, and we developed a project on science and technology at Howard University, which had a full-time coordinator. Every year we had these seminars which were well attended by a lot of educators around the country.

CARR: What was the project about? What was the purpose

of the project?

DYMALLY: Promoting science and technology on the university level.

CARR: And these seminars took place at Howard University?

DYMALLY: No, it took place at the Congressional Black Caucus legislative weekend, every year around the end of September.

CARR: And what was the primary concern for setting up a project like this?

DYMALLY: When we looked around, we saw that, first, that was the growing industry, science and technology. Two, that black colleges were somewhat behind. Three, there were funds available in the National Science Foundation, and NASA [National Aeronautics and Space Administration], and a number of agencies, to assist these colleges. And indeed many of them got grants to proceed with science and technology. So it was promoting science and technology to be part of our curricula. And I was honored by the group called National Association for Equal Opportunity in Higher Education, which is historically black colleges, for my work there.

CARR: Now, your appointment in '81 to this committee

was very crucial, in the sense that a lot of the space shuttle stuff was really starting to take off. What was your involvement in any of that?

DYMALLY: Well, I was the first one interviewed after the crash.

CARR: Really?

DYMALLY: Yeah, because they knew of my prominence there, and I suggested that the time had probably come for us to take a second look at the speed with which we were traveling.

CARR: This is the Challenger's crash.

DYMALLY: Yes. That we need to sit back and reflect. I was very active. In fact, the president of Occidental College was head of the National Science Foundation and he and I became very good working associates. So I was very visible, very active on that committee. Vice President [Albert A.] Gore [Jr.] also served on that committee.

CARR: What was your opinion, or your position, on the funding for a lot of the space programs?

DYMALLY: Well, I supported space, as opposed to the military race. And so I had that conflict there, because a lot of the aerospace industries were involved in that. For instance, I supported the MX missile, much to the chagrin of some of my

liberal friends. But I noticed Maxine Waters, as liberal as she is, she supported the B-2 bomber.

CARR: Now, why did you support the MX missile?

DYMALLY: Well, that was the reality of my district.

CARR: Right, OK.

DYMALLY: Northrop was the lead contractor and they were the major employer in the district. So that was pragmatism.

CARR: And that pragmatism seemed to be a very peculiar and tenuous thing for you in the sense that, on the one hand, you were clearly interested in certain areas of human rights that ran counter to the U.S. military buildup, and the military industrial complex. How were you able to toe the line there?

DYMALLY: Because you don't get elected in Washington, D.C. You get elected in your district. In the final analysis, these human rights groups are Washington based, and they have no interests in what your constituents do for a living or how they feel. So in the final analysis you have to look in your district. In fact, I always admonish my press person about catering to the Washington media and in fact needing to know more about the district media.

CARR: Who was your press person?

DYMALLY: Well, I never had a full-time press person because they tended to create news in Washington, and that was not my interest, so I never had a full-time person. But various people would write press releases.

CARR: So you didn't have a press aide or anything like that?

DYMALLY: No.

CARR: Other congressmen do.

DYMALLY: Yes.

CARR: But you just . . .

DYMALLY: It wasn't my thing. I believe I would have rather gotten a story in the Compton Bulletin than the Washington Post. When you have a press aide, they have to go out and sustain their job. They go creating stories in Washington trying to get you to write columns for the Washington Post and New York Times.

CARR: It seems to me that after the whole L.A. Times incident in the seventies, late seventies . . .

DYMALLY: Incidents. [Laughter]

CARR: Incidents. Plural. [Laughter] You seemed to try to avoid the media.

DYMALLY: Absolutely.

CARR: I mean, it seems like you avoided the Washington Post like the plague.

DYMALLY: The Washington Post is a mean-spirited newspaper.

CARR: Why do you say that?

DYMALLY: Very racist. You just read stories from the people who work for them. A very racist newspaper. You would almost think that they were from Mississippi.

CARR: Are you speaking about any particular writers here?

DYMALLY: No, no, no.

CARR: Or the attitude of the paper?

DYMALLY: Yeah, one time there was a big protest against them for the magazine cover.

CARR: Ah yes.

DYMALLY: Back to the Los Angeles Times . . .

CARR: Jill Nelson was involved in that.

DYMALLY: The woman who owns radio WOL was very, very prominent in that protest, and then they apologized.

[Robert] Bob Scheer, whose column you read in the Los Angeles Times, came to interview me when I was running for reelection for lieutenant governor. He had a stack of clips, and he kept asking me about those stories. And I said, "What

are we doing with these stories?" And he said, "You know something? I went to research your record with the Times in the morgue and I couldn't find one positive story about you." And you know what he did? He took the whole bunch of clips and put it in the trash can in the restaurant, at Aldo's restaurant. He just threw it away and did a Q and A. And that was the best story I've ever had in the Times, because I was able to talk.

CARR: So you avoided the press.

DYMALLY: Yeah, it was deliberate. No news was good news for me.

CARR: [Laughter] So here you are. Pretty much up until '85, '86, really there's nothing major that you have to deal with. You're going along in this early part of the eighties. If, in fact, you're avoiding the press, what are you trying to do to get attention for yourself and credit with your constituents?

DYMALLY: Good question. I used to hold these seminars. One seminar a month in one of the, I think, seven cities. In fact, on September 13 at UCLA there will be a conference on Japanese redress and reparations. It was at one of those seminars

that a young woman by the name of Miya Iwataki came to see me. She came to the seminar, and at the end of the seminar she asked me, did I know anything about redress and reparations. I said, "No, but I'm very open." And the rest is a little minor history, because I authored the piece of legislation. It was the first order to ask for reparation. Now understand this: I wasn't probably the first to have introduced that, but the others asked for redress. The old-timers of the Japanese American Citizens League did not want reparations. They thought it was insulting. The young turks came to me and said, "Nonsense." So we spent a lot of time drafting this legislation and I introduced it late in the session, fully aware that it could not pass-- there wasn't enough time--but to educate the public about reparations. And lo and behold, a month or so later on, the commission came out for reparations.

CARR: Now, weren't the Aleutian Islanders also involved in that?

DYMALLY: In my bill. In my bill, yes.

CARR: Now, when the final bill came down, were they included?

DYMALLY: I don't think so.

CARR: Why did you include the Aleutian Islanders?

DYMALLY: The young turks that I was dealing with in the Japanese American community felt strongly about that, felt they, too, were under detention. In fact, one prominent member of the Congress scoffed at my bill. He said it was not going anyplace. But it was never intended to pass as such; it was for education.

CARR: Who was that?

DYMALLY: I forget. But that was not the intention. The intention was not to get the bill passed, but to educate the public. And sure enough, it ended that way, so I became very involved. In the final analysis, Miya Iwataki came to work for me.

CARR: Doing what?

DYMALLY: Local press. I wasn't opposed to local press. By local press I meant the small weeklies and the throwaways in the district.

CARR: So this is how you were building your support. You have these seminars, you're dealing with local press . . .

DYMALLY: I was in the county. I didn't represent Los Angeles, and I'm not so sure the Times had a great deal of influence in that district. The

influence was out of the district.

CARR: In fact, in this particular area of Los Angeles, it seems to me there had often been somewhat of a distrust of the Times on a certain level.

DYMALLY: In fact, that was told to me by Mr. [Otis] Chandler himself.

CARR: Really?

DYMALLY: When [William French] Smith arranged for me to go see him [Otis Chandler] about Bob Fairbanks's attacking my wife in a story, suggesting that she had broke up my marriage, I went to see him. We started making small talk, and he said that, at the time, the Examiner sold more papers in the black community than they did. And one of the reasons why the Times's policy to the black community is one of benign neglect, or negative, is because they don't have a major readership in South Central. Their readership moved to the Valley and Orange County.

CARR: What about the other communities within your district that aren't necessarily, quote, unquote, "black" communities?

DYMALLY: They depend on their local papers: the Daily Breeze, the Gardena Valley News, the Long Beach Press-Telegram, the Compton Bulletin.

CARR: How much of this might have had to do with a labor issue, in the sense that it has always been fairly well known that the Times was anti-labor and many of the people who worked in the aircraft industry, and so on and so forth, were very much union people?

DYMALLY: And so that saved me because I was very strong labor, and they knew that they could depend on me. I had a 100 percent labor record. So my concentration was: spend your time in the district; come home with some frequency; have some visibility; hold these seminars. If people don't come, at least they got a notice that I was there.

CARR: And deliver on defense.

DYMALLY: Yes.

CARR: Anything that had to do with . . .

DYMALLY: And aerospace people liked me because I was responsive.

CARR: Moving on: one of the interesting labor issues that came up in the early eighties was the whole issue of the air traffic controllers.

DYMALLY: Yup, that was the beginning of the death of the air controllers union and the descendency of labor. They're now catching up. Reagan won that

battle. There's no questioning it. He played hardball and he won that battle.

CARR: Did you see it coming?

DYMALLY: No, not that particular. . . . I knew that labor was not going to have its way.

CARR: Why?

DYMALLY: Well, because Reagan was not very pro-labor, even though he was president of the Screen Actors Guild. But the conservative movement wasn't pro-labor. They were right-to-work, etc. But that particular controllers union--I didn't know that he was going to strike so hard. And that was the first display of toughness towards unions, and things started going down for them.

CARR: Now, the question then becomes, although you were pretty much very supportive of trying to get the fired air traffic controllers back into their jobs--unsuccessfully--you had also always been very much in support of the whole notion of improving conditions for air traffic controllers and improving the technology that they needed.

DYMALLY: Don't forget, I had that forum on the Science and Technology Committee.

CARR: Right.

DYMALLY: And that was one of the important reasons for

being on the Science and Technology [Committee], because part of the [air traffic controllers'] operation came under that.

CARR: When did you become aware of the plight of air traffic controllers, meaning that they were laboring under very adverse conditions . . .

DYMALLY: Only when I went on the committee. There were hearings, and I think I was on that subcommittee. So it was a learning process for me, and I wasn't aware of that until I got to Congress.

CARR: Yeah, because you supported, way back then, getting them a whole new computer system to deal with air traffic controllers. You supported the whole issue of work hours, decreased work hours.

DYMALLY: I didn't know that they were so overworked and so stressed out and so underpaid.

CARR: How could that situation have been handled differently, in your opinion?

DYMALLY: I don't know, very frankly, because no one anticipated . . .

CARR: Either from the labor side or the executive branch--Reagan's side.

DYMALLY: The executive branch--I thought they were too cruel. They could have sent it to arbitration. But that was Reagan's signal. Don't forget, they

were federal employees, and he knew that, in a large measure, the public did not like federal employees striking, and certainly not the controllers, because the image of that was that they are jeopardizing passenger safety by not working. The public has a very unsympathetic view of federal employees striking. It's OK to strike GM [General Motors Corporation], but not big brother.

CARR: So it was a well-placed blow in that sense?

DYMALLY: Yes. These guys had been doing polling almost every day, certainly every week. A guy by the name of [Richard] Wirthlin did the polling.

CARR: For the Republicans.

DYMALLY: Yeah, for the White House.

CARR: So they had a good idea what was coming up. Since we're on the subject of Reagan, one of the immigration issues that comes up right around that time is the issue of Haitian refugees.

DYMALLY: You know, Jesse and I went . . .

CARR: Jesse Jackson?

DYMALLY: Yes. [He] and I went to Miami, in Krone refugee camp? Krone Camp?

CARR: Yeah.

DYMALLY: And I don't know what were the symptoms there,

but a lot of the men were sick, and the situation there was very crowded.

CARR: What prompted your visit?

DYMALLY: I had organized a Caribbean Action Lobby, coming from the Caribbean as I did. Walter Fauntroy headed an effort in Haiti. One of Walter's staff members was married to a Haitian, so they had firsthand knowledge. He kept me informed of what was going on there. I made several visits there, and Walter had a bipartisan committee, a bipartisan task force, of which I was a member, and [Congressman] Jack [F.] Kemp was the co-chairman.

CARR: So you went down there . . .

DYMALLY: Several times.

CARR: Before this visit, did you have any particular opinion on the whole notion of Haitian refugees and how they should be treated and what status they should be given in the . . . One moment.

[Interruption]

So we were talking about your interest in the whole Haitian . . .

DYMALLY: The Haitian [issue]. And don't forget, I'm of Caribbean heritage.

CARR: What did the Caribbean governments, in general,

think about the U.S. handling of the situation?

DYMALLY: They never sent that message to Congress.

CARR: Really?

DYMALLY: If they did, I surely didn't hear of it too much. Our staff members went down there looking at the situation. One time former attorney general Ramsey Clark had a visitation down there. We sent people. It took a lot of, lot of interest. In those days Haiti was on the back burner. [Father Jean-Bertrand] Aristide brought it up front. Jesse Jackson and the Congressional Black Caucus, Randall Robinson. . . . And Clinton felt under some pressure to do that.

CARR: But way before this--we're talking about the seventies, early eighties--there was clearly a difficult road to walk with Haiti, in the sense, on the one hand, you're dealing with clearly advocating for the refugees who leave. But there's the other side of it: dealing with the whole history of brutality of the Duvalier regimes.

DYMALLY: Well, it was a case of benign neglect. Haiti was not of primary concern. It's only when the boat people started to come to Miami that we began to focus attention. The Aristide ouster really was

the instrument by which the Haitian agenda came to the front burner.

CARR: Now, the thing is, though, and this is just an open question, why was it always difficult for. . . . CARICOM, right?

DYMALLY: I don't think Haiti was a full member of CARICOM. They were observers then.

CARR: But before: CARICOM in general to come up with an articulated political platform?

DYMALLY: For the same reason that the OAU [Organization of African Unity], in the past, used to stay away from internal conflicts. Because remember, you're talking about heads of state who don't want to get into other people's business because they don't want anybody to get into their business.

CARR: OK, precisely. But the issue of IMF [International Monetary Fund], did that have any . . .

DYMALLY: On Haiti? No.

CARR: No. On the Caribbean nations in general?

DYMALLY: Because IMF doesn't deal with CARICOM as a group. They deal with individual nations.

CARR: Individual nations. But at the same time, did individual nations have any fear that, if they

became too aggressive in putting across any international political agendas against the United States, that could essentially hurt them when it came to the International Monetary Fund?

DYMALLY: No, because the IMF deals specifically with domestic affairs in that particular country. They don't deal with it on a regional basis. They go into country X and they say, "Cut the civil service back. Stop the bread subsidies. Divest all of your state holdings."

CARR: Yeah. Things like that.

Now, go through this whole process. Within the whole notion of dealing with aliens is also your fight for special status for immigrants or aliens from the Virgin Islands.

DYMALLY: Not too much.

CARR: Well, you wanted to grant permanent resident status to certain non-immigrants in the Virgin Islands.

DYMALLY: Can we skip that for a while and go back to '81? When the Reagan administration came over, the head of the Immigration [and Naturalization Service] was a Californian, and they talked about deporting the Ethiopians who were here on asylum. Julian Dixon and I had to remind them that the

Ethiopians were granted the same entry conditions that the Cubans did.

CARR: Exactly. Cuban and Haitian nationals had the same kind of refugee admission status.

DYMALLY: No, not the Haitians, and that's part of the problem. I'll get back to it.

But the Ethiopians had status because they came from a communist regime. We always viewed the Haitian refugee system as an economic, not a political problem, and our bias had to do with refugees coming from communist countries. And so Ethiopia was deemed to be a communist country, and so was Cuba, but the Haitians were not deemed to be communist. That was a fascist operation. So we had no similar policy.

CARR: But you were trying to get the Haitians to somewhat of the same refugee status.

DYMALLY: Never succeeded.

CARR: Never.

DYMALLY: By the way, Julian and I were able to stop the deportation of the Ethiopians.

CARR: Now, how did you become involved in developing a medal, or a prize, in memory of Anwar Sadat?

DYMALLY: I don't think that I was the initiator of that.

CARR: It's called the Sadat Medal.

DYMALLY: I was just part of the group. If you look in the back, there is his picture there with me. I have to hang it up.

Don't forget, the Egyptians and North Africans are put into Europe, in the State Department organization, but they also liked the notion of being in Africa. They see themselves as Africans, members of the OAU, and so I treated them as Africans, as a result of which I got very close to the Egyptians. I did a lot of work in Africa. I went to Egypt several times; got to know each one of the ambassadors here; was strongly in support of the Palestinians.

CARR: During that process, how much did you learn about the peculiar position Egypt finds itself in, in the Middle East?

DYMALLY: Oh, very much. They were ostracized when Sadat made that visit to Israel.

CARR: For the peace accords?

DYMALLY: That dramatic visit to Jerusalem. Egypt was persona non grata with the other Arab countries. It took them a long time to get back into the Arab League.

CARR: Why do you think Egypt, at least from the perspective of the people you were dealing with,

made that kind of move?

DYMALLY: Well, Sadat was a man who was deeply committed to peace, and he was willing to take a chance. We view the Egyptians as our best friend in the Middle East. He was a very deeply committed man, and he felt very deeply committed to the notion of peace. He felt that if he made this move, all else would follow. It did not quite happen that way. He finally paid with his life for it.

CARR: Yeah. What was your reaction when he was assassinated?

DYMALLY: Oh, it was very sad. I knew it was a major setback for peace in the Middle East. But it reflected the anger of the Arab world towards him for going to Israel.

CARR: When you say it was a major setback, elaborate.

DYMALLY: Well, because there was the example of Egypt and Israel working together as part of a friendship pact with the United States. And in the Congress, Egypt's and Israel's appropriations are tied together.

CARR: I didn't know that. So as Israel goes, Egypt goes, or vice versa.

DYMALLY: That's correct. Not the same amount.

CARR: In proportion.

DYMALLY: Yeah, it's tied together.

CARR: Why is that?

DYMALLY: It's politics. It shows that the members of Congress, the Jewish members of Congress-- supporters of Israel--also support Egypt. Well, they acted as partners. The fact that we were doing as much for Egypt as we were doing for Israel, it showed that this was not just an Israeli initiative.

CARR: Moving a little bit away from the foreign affairs and back to domestic issues, one of the labor issues you got involved with--not successfully, but you got involved in it--was you wanted to have the antitrust exemption removed from baseball.

DYMALLY: I may have supported it, but I wasn't big into that.

CARR: Repeal of antitrust exemption for baseball.

DYMALLY: Yeah, I probably supported it, but I wasn't an up-front supporter.

CARR: You were not?

DYMALLY: No.

CARR: OK. My research shows that you were one of the . . . You were up-front. Do you have any recollections why you would have been involved in

something like that?

DYMALLY: I know CBC [Congressional Black Caucus] invited the baseball commissioner to meet with them. That one escapes me.

CARR: OK. Here's another one, and I find this one very unique, and interesting. It's one of those issues that's always there, but it never gets a lot of national attention. The fight to get the District of Columbia . . .

DYMALLY: Oh, oh . . .

CARR: . . . self-government. For it to become its own . . .

DYMALLY: Forgive this showering of self-praise, but the people in the District really liked me. I was one of the very few freshmen to get a committee chair in his first year. It was a District of Columbia committee, no one ever wrote about it. But as a freshman I became a chair, thanks to Ron Dellums, who invited me to be chairman, and come on the committee.

CARR: And what was the name of the committee?

DYMALLY: The Committee on the District of Columbia.

CARR: And this was a committee to discuss the whole notion of how it should be governed?

DYMALLY: No, no, more than that. Just everything in the

District except Howard University. The University of the District of Columbia, the jails, all came through my subcommittee. I chaired the Subcommittee on Judiciary and Education. In fact, I made up the jurisdiction, so I had to deal with the courts. I dealt with the UDC [University of the District of Columbia].

In fact, two days ago there was a story about Nira Harden Lons in the L.A. Times, about putting together a coalition for a charter school. She was chair of the board of trustees of LIDC. I had known her way back at UCLA when she attended there as an undergraduate. So it was a natural for us to work together.

Yeah, I was very much into the District of Columbia, and as I said, people liked my support.

CARR: Why were they so responsive to you as opposed to any other politician?

DYMALLY: Well, they were responsive to Ron Dellums, too. But for me, I was very, very active. Of all the subcommittees, I held hearings on just about every conceivable issue in the District of Columbia--the university, the prisons, the police. Just name it and I was there.

CARR: Talk to me a bit--and this is again from your own

point of view--about the kind of peculiar development and kind of political attitude in the District.

DYMALLY: Well, the District is a funny, funny place. Well, the people in the district . . .

CARR: If you would compare the District to Compton.

DYMALLY: Boy, I wish you hadn't done that, but it's so damn true. It is so true. The bureaucracy in the District is what killed the initiative. It wasn't the politicians; it wasn't the mayor. The bureaucracy--just to hire one person there takes six months to clear the paperwork.

CARR: This is the whole civil service.

DYMALLY: Civil service, yeah. The whole civil service. The inertia is there. I mean, it was just an impossible situation.

CARR: Now, that's a good place for us to be right now because, in the sense that, basically Congress is in charge of the District.

DYMALLY: And Congress had a most colonial attitude towards the District. The southern members and Republicans didn't give a shit about the District. They look at it as a pain in the head.

CARR: But then, why not let this District govern itself?

DYMALLY: Because they had no confidence in the people there to govern, and they didn't want a black to be governing such a major city. So they gave them half a loaf. They gave them enough autonomy to fail, because they never had enough money. And don't forget, it has no tax base as such. Most of the property is federal property, and most of the people working in the District live outside of the District. And every time they talked about a commuter tax, oh, all hell broke loose--or that you have to have residence in the District to work in the District. They've gone to court and, you know, tried to stop it.

I'm telling you, it was just one of the saddest experiences in Congress--the attitude of the members of Congress towards the District of Columbia. A case of total neglect. You're not going to solve the problems of the District of Columbia unless the whole structure is changed. I'm sure that statehood would help solve the problem. They lack adequate resources, and raising taxes is not a very popular way to go, and I don't know how you raise money. It's not a city that can encourage industry because they are landlocked. They have no space. I support

statehood, of course.

CARR: Now, going back to this whole notion of the bureaucracy there, it seems to me that, if in fact there's this kind of very glacial movement of the bureaucracy there, doesn't it also have to do with something that, technically, no one is really accountable to anyone?

DYMALLY: Yeah, because the civil service system is so strong. You can't fire anybody. And the bureaucracy is so overwhelming. It's a city that is crippled by bureaucracy. And then you have an unfriendly newspaper constantly digging into the District--no breathing room at all.

CARR: So with that taken into account, you have the District, what is your opinion of the whole position of shadow senators? Is that what it's called?

DYMALLY: It's symbolic. I think Jesse Jackson has even given it up now--he went back to Chicago.

CARR: I know he had it.

DYMALLY: It had no effect at all on the body politic.

CARR: Well, what was even the purpose of it?

DYMALLY: Symbolism.

CARR: Symbolism?

DYMALLY: At one time there was a movement towards

statehood, but that died out. That was a bold gesture.

CARR: I gather that it is a kind of a non-partisan sense that the District should not be . . .

DYMALLY: Besides, the district was heavily Democratic, and the Republicans resented that.

CARR: Moving on from the District of Columbia. Let's stay on domestic issues for the moment. The Freedom of Information Act. . . . This is after all of your FBI problems in California. You became very involved in speeding up the whole process for people to get their information back.

DYMALLY: Well, I don't know what influence I had, really, although I was there. I sought my own record.

CARR: When did you begin to seek your own record?

DYMALLY: I can't remember the year, but what was interesting . . .

CARR: Was this the early eighties?

DYMALLY: I got back from them the Carter economic report, the Security Pacific Bank economic report, the Bank of America economic report, the state of California Department of Finance economic report. All of these things I had gathered as chairman of the Commission for Economic Development--they seized the damn thing, and kept it. So I had to

pay for copies of those when I asked for my record. I'm paying for these damn copies of these stupid economic reports. It was a matter of public record. That's what they got.

CARR: Did they have anything on you that shocked you, surprised you?

DYMALLY: No, they had nothing. I mean, they inked out whatever scurrilous stuff was in their report.

CARR: What kind of surveillance did they have on you?

DYMALLY: Well, I happen to know there was. . . . It's coming out. A guy's writing a book about the [Black] Panthers, and they had a guy assigned to me. He broke into my office a couple of times. That's a fact. They had somebody on me. It's no joke. I'll get the documentation.

CARR: Did they tap your phones?

DYMALLY: I don't know if they did while I was in office, but I did have my phones swept by a friend of mine who brought some engineers from New York to sweep my place in Washington.

CARR: And nothing was found.

DYMALLY: No.

CARR: Again, on the domestic side. You became involved on two issues that you had been involved in in the state senate. One was anti-discrimination

bills to support the handicapped, and to also support gays. These were two issues that you continued to support while you were in Congress.

DYMALLY: The gays were very active. They had the Human Rights Caucus, and they were very active on the Hill. They knew of my record, so I continued that support.

Well, you tell me I was a busybody in Congress. Some of the things you're bringing up I've almost forgotten.

So yes, I continued that.

CARR: I mean, for a freshman, you were very busy.

DYMALLY: I'm now finding out. [Laughter] I had a good staff, too, a very hardworking staff. My staff wasn't into ideology.

CARR: Really?

DYMALLY: Not the clerical staff, maybe the administrative staff.

CARR: So when you say they were not into ideology, what did that mean to you?

DYMALLY: Well, they just did the work, what they had to do. But some of the upper-level staff were very liberal: David Johnson, who had his Ph.D., and Marwan Burgan, who is Palestinian; [Victor O.] Vic Fazer, from the Virgin Islands. I had a good

mix. Bernadette Palo was active. Faye Williams was an activist lawyer.

CARR: The early fight for the celebration of Martin Luther King's birthday as a national holiday . . .

DYMALLY: That's an interesting fight. Let me tell you what happened, very sad story. [Congressman] John Conyers [Jr.] had been carrying that bill for years and could not get it out of the Post Office Committee. Then a woman--I forget her name now; the first black congresswoman from Indiana--came on the scene and was on the subcommittee, and the chair later. . . . Rather than Conyers, she [Katie B. Hall] became the author of the bill. It didn't help her any, because she was defeated the next year. Conyers never became the author of the bill, even though he had been carrying it for years. And she was not, in my judgment, gracious enough to say, "Hey, this has been John's issue. Let him carry it." So she carried it, it passed, but it didn't help her at all in her district.

CARR: What was her motivation?

DYMALLY: Well, gee, who wouldn't want to carry the Martin Luther King bill? That was a major piece of

legislation.

CARR: What was the motivation of the chairman of the subcommittee to let her carry it?

DYMALLY: That's a good question, because he was from Michigan, and so was John.

CARR: So perhaps there was some personal things in there?

DYMALLY: I don't know. [Congressman William D.] Bill Ford. . . . And I don't know why not, but she got it, after years of Conyers trying. She ended up authoring the legislation.

CARR: What was the reaction to certain states not wanting a national holiday?

DYMALLY: I wasn't surprised.

CARR: No?

DYMALLY: I wasn't surprised, no.

CARR: Why not?

DYMALLY: Because the white status quo, the white reactionary, saw Martin Luther King as a devil. They did not care for him. The FBI hounded him, investigated him all the time, put bugs in his rooms.

CARR: From your perspective . . .

DYMALLY: One thing about that, he was never intimidated by that. That was [J. Edgar] Hoover's modus

operandi, and understand, he intimidated senators and presidents, with all this information he gathered on them. And King wouldn't succumb to that sort of blackmail.

[End Tape 14, Side A]

[Begin Tape 14, Side B]

CARR: About the King birthday bill: How significant of a victory was that for the Black Caucus?

DYMALLY: Major victory. Major victory. One of the persons, by the way, who gave an eloquent speech on the floor, and that shocked everybody, was [the current California] Attorney General [Daniel E.] Lungren. Absolutely, because he was opposed to reparation, and the Asian community viewed him as a very conservative person. He was for redress, but he wasn't for reparations.

CARR: And he was very much for the Martin Luther King . . .

DYMALLY: Yeah, which was very surprising.

CARR: On what ground?

DYMALLY: Well, I have to just tell you what he said. He said, growing up as a college student, he was inspired by him and what he did. And it was a very eloquent statement and, gee, everybody listened. Here's this conservative, very pro-

Reagan--and Reagan was opposed to the bill--
coming forth with this eloquent statement.

CARR: For the old-timers who didn't support the bill,
how. . . . From your vantage point as a
congressman on Capitol Hill, what were they
saying?

DYMALLY: The opposition was not very vocal. The
opposition went something like this: that we
don't need another holiday, and others were
quietly suggesting he was a tool of the
communists, and all sorts of things. But when it
came on the floor, the votes were there, because
the speaker of the House, who was a southerner,
was very much for it--[James C.] Jim Wright
[Jr.].

CARR: One other domestic issue before we move on to
some other foreign issues: you became involved--
like dealing with issues on sexuality, the
handicapped--with issues of the aging, the
elderly, the Gray Panther movement, things like
that. Was this a calculated thing? Was there a
personal reason why you became involved with this
stuff?

DYMALLY: No, it started off in California. I was very
close to the senior citizens. A woman came to me

here, in Hawthorne, and talked about the notch baby. Do you know what the notch baby is?

CARR: No.

DYMALLY: The notch baby is that when the Social Security [Administration] did their actuarial study on people who were born in the early 1900s, some people got left out. There was a notch in there. So she came to me and I started championing that cause. Roybal took it up later on because he was chairman of the Aging Committee.

CARR: Did you get to know [Congressman] Claude [D.] Pepper during . . .

DYMALLY: A very charming man. I was on the Parliamentary Committee. He was chair of the Parliamentary Committee, and I traveled with him. A very nice man.

CARR: Really?

DYMALLY: Don't forget, he got defeated as a senator because he was the first liberal southerner. He was so liberal, he was deemed to be. . . . They put the communist tag on him. That's how he was defeated.

CARR: Well, but he is one of those excellent examples of American political rebirth.

DYMALLY: Yes.

- CARR: Because in the 1940s, he was rabidly in favor of the KKK and many other kinds of factions in Florida.
- DYMALLY: I didn't know that, but later on, he was deemed to be so liberal that when he ran for reelection as a senator, he got defeated because of the communist scare.
- CARR: One moment.
[Interruption]
- DYMALLY: Pepper was a strong pillar of the Democratic party. He traveled all over the country, urging senior citizens to stay Democratic. So he was certainly missed. He was just a fine gentleman.
- CARR: Clearly this is kind of a constituency that has followed through up to the Clinton era, right now. So you're saying . . .
- DYMALLY: Don't forget that one of the trial balloons that the Republicans threw up--and it damaged them to no end--was to cut back on Social Security and Medicare, way back then, and that really damaged them with the senior citizens. But a number of them still voted for Reagan.
- CARR: Moving over to some foreign issues: the issue of divestment--you carried it through with you to Congress.

DYMALLY: I started that as a [University of California] regent, but when I got to Congress, Ron Dellums had been leading the charge and I just supported him for a couple of reasons. As a continuation of what I was doing, and don't forget I was one of his subcommittee chairmen.

CARR: To call it divestiture is kind of simple, in the sense that, first, you're saying that no U.S. officials should visit South Africa until apartheid ended. Second, you were saying you wanted a total ban on imports and exports with South Africa.

DYMALLY: And I must tell you. . . . Where do get all this information? The Congressional Record?

CARR: Yeah.

DYMALLY: Well, I got into trouble. One of the most embarrassing moments in my congressional history-- I don't think to this day I have overcome it--is that piece of legislation to ban the export of gold from South Africa. It was in the Subcommittee on Africa. I was not on the subcommittee at the time. It was headed by Howard [E.] Wolpe [III] of Michigan. And while there, the ambassador from Botswana came to see me and told me that my legislation would kill

their interest in gold with De Beers [Consolidated Mines], because they were in partnership with De Beers, and if De Beers got burned, they would too. And would I just make the resolution a study? Howard Wolpe, the chairman, then received a call from the minister of foreign affairs, who was a woman, who asked him . . .

CARR: Of Botswana?

DYMALLY: Yes. Who expressed the same concern. Just around that time, the number one gold dealer in the United States, Maurice Tempelsman, subsequently [Jacqueline] Jackie [Kennedy] Onassis's friend . . .

CARR: Not only gold, but diamond dealer.

DYMALLY: Yes. Went to the Congressional Black Caucus . . .

CARR: Maurice Tempelsman.

DYMALLY: Yes, and asked them, what could he do to help the Caucus? The director of the caucus, Amelia Parker, said that Mickey Leland had started a coalition with Hispanic schools, and I had taken it up, and the school most active was Metropolitan University in Puerto Rico. Tempelsman's eyes lit up, because Puerto Rico was

his grinding station way, way back, when they first started. That was their cutting station. So he made a contribution to the university. The university and I, in the meantime, developed a program to take kids from my district for a summer retreat there of science, language, and culture.

The Washington Post was tipped off about that by the staff director of the Africa Subcommittee, who hated Tempelsman because Tempelsman was also dealing in Zaire. And this staff director was thrown out of Zaire as a Fulbright scholar because the government claimed he was stirring up trouble. And so a front-page story in the Washington Post stated that I had watered down the bill because of this contribution. Now, understand that the contribution was tax-exempt. It wasn't given to me, it was given to the university. But the net effect of that story was to kill the program, because Tempelsman just backed off, and I just came out as a guy who was willing to sacrifice apartheid for a diamond dealer. It was a very hurting story.

CARR: Now, let me take it a step further. Say I'm a fellow congressman and I say, "But Dymally,

didn't you know about, have any idea about the kind of gargantuan power of the whole diamond and gold interest in southern Africa?"

DYMALLY: Yeah, but . . .

CARR: Did you have any idea it could come down that way though?

DYMALLY: No, because they didn't come down on me.

CARR: They did it . . .

DYMALLY: I came out as if I were on their side, because it appeared as if I watered down the resolution. Now understand, I wasn't on the committee, and I wasn't present when the committee did it. It was done by the committee, not by me. But the reporter made a case. He came out here, interviewed [Richard G.] Dick Griffey, went to my office, researched the scholarship fund, and. . . . Oh, it was a major story. It gave the impression that I had watered down the resolution just to please Tempelsman, in fact, when not Tempelsman, but his lobbyist, came to see me. I asked, "Who the hell is this guy? I don't even know him." So I wasn't influenced by that at all. I never heard of Tempelsman before.

CARR: Well, very few people in the United States . . .

DYMALLY: Know who Tempelsman is?

CARR: Not know who he is. Even if they know who he is, know his long and deep connections with De Beers.

DYMALLY: And Zaire.

CARR: Zaire, yes.

DYMALLY: Mobutu [Sese Seko]. Anyhow, so . . .

CARR: In fact, didn't he do some kind of power-brokering situation with Mobutu in order to gain favorable mining rights in Zaire?

DYMALLY: I don't know what's the deal, but he had rights in Zaire. I don't know what the deal was. He's a nice man. He wrote Mrs. [Katharine] Graham a letter, a lengthy letter. It was really a damaging story. I came out looking very bad in that story. We did some research on the reporter. Of fourteen stories he did, I think eleven were negative stories about members of the Congressional Black Caucus. He also did one on Representative Fauntroy, he did one on Representative [William H.] Bill Gray [III]. And when a group called the . . .

CARR: Who was the reporter?

DYMALLY: I forget his name. I'll get that for you.

CARR: Was it a white reporter?

DYMALLY: Yes, a white reporter.

When a group that was opposed to Mobutu and

DYMALLY: Tempelsman went to a Washington Post reporter to give them a story about me, he said, "Oh, you need to go see this guy. He's the anti-black on the Washington Post." The Roll Call, which is the Capitol Hill newspaper, ran a story of our press release when we pointed out, factually, that this guy had written eleven anti-black stories. That's why I told you the Post is a racist newspaper. So that was a very damaging story.

Now, I've made up for it because the Brazilians invited me to come and accept the peace award for [Nelson] Mandela in Brazil, and I went down there. And then, at a conference at the Aspen Institute [for Humanistic Studies] in Switzerland, the core of the participants there urged the South African representative there to permit me to go see Mandela. I went to South Africa, but they wouldn't let me go see Mandela. I met [State President Frederik W.] de Klerk, I met [Pieter W.] Botha on the Foreign Affairs [Committee], but they wouldn't give me permission to go see Mandela. But I ended up in Mandela's house--probably the only congressman I know of . . .

CARR: Before we get to Mandela's house, what was your interaction with de Klerk and Botha like?

DYMALLY: Botha said to me, "I understand you're a very pragmatic man and that we can deal with you." That's basically what he said.

CARR: And de Klerk?

DYMALLY: We didn't have any words. We were just there in the conference and I just met him. Didn't have a drink with him, so to speak.

CARR: So you ended up in Mandela's house.

DYMALLY: Yeah, I took the award, and gave it to his wife and daughter. I have pictures of it hung up there. I was able to do that through his private physician, whom I had met in Bermuda at this conference on apartheid. Now, the Aspen Institute, Africa section, which was headed by Senator [Richard C.] Dick Clark of the Clark Angola Amendment, held these regional meetings. I attended these meetings and met a lot of anti-apartheid South Africans. I met Mandela's doctor. God, I forget his full name now. Well, I'll think about it. But I met Mandela's physician and we became friends, went to his house. They live right across the street from Mandela. He is now a big businessman in post-

apartheid South Africa.

CARR: So on a personal level, emotional level, was this your first visit to South Africa?

DYMALLY: No, I was in South Africa in 1964, I believe, the year that Zambia got independence. And I went to Rhodesia, Northern Rhodesia, and went to South Africa. At the airport, you could see the segregation there. But this time I went back with some official status and with the support of the U.S. embassy. So it was quite different even within the context of apartheid.

CARR: Really? How so?

DYMALLY: Well, you get to go to the best places. You don't get to go to segregated places.

CARR: What was it like visiting without the comforts of U.S. diplomatic . . .

DYMALLY: When I went there in '64?

CARR: Yeah.

DYMALLY: Oh shit, it was very scary. I was scared as all hell.

CARR: Really?

DYMALLY: Yeah.

CARR: Where did you stay and what did you . . .

DYMALLY: I just stayed in the airport--segregated airport.

CARR: Personally, why did you want to get involved in

the whole South Africa issue?

DYMALLY: I was so horrified by this whole notion of apartheid and the treatment of blacks. I had lots of stories, and I was on the floor all the time talking about it. You know those people who were sentenced to death? I forget the name of the movement. [Sharpeville] They came to me. I was very up front, and the more up front that I was, the more people came to me on South Africa because it was so cruel. Now don't forget . . .

CARR: How did the Black Caucus as a whole. . . . What's their reaction?

DYMALLY: They were very supportive of the movement against apartheid. Don't forget now, it was Representative Walter Fauntroy who went to Mary Berry and Randall Robinson and said to them that Thanksgiving is a dull news day and we need to go and demonstrate before the South African embassy. He said we will get arrested but it will make news. That started the movement. That's how it started. So the Congressional Black Caucus was deeply committed. One of the problems with that deep commitment was that they neglected the rest of Africa. And that's how I came in, because I saw Africa as a larger entity than just

apartheid. So I got involved in the other parts of Africa, too.

CARR: When and how did you get involved with Zaire?

DYMALLY: Good question. Ron Brown told me he had a friend by the name of Mamade Dian, who would like to talk with me because I guess Mamade was seeing me in the papers, on the media, on my Africa visit. When I met Mamade at the Democratic Club for lunch, he would not eat lunch because he was observing Ramadan. And I was taken aback by that. It was the first time I had met an African black who was a Muslim, and observing Ramadan. I've known other Muslims and Arabs to observe Ramadan. I was stunned by that. So he wanted me to go and visit Zaire and meet Mobutu.

CARR: What was his connection with Mobutu?

DYMALLY: Mamade was the only minority person who had shipping contracts to ship P.L. 480 goods and Zaire was one of the recipients and that's how he got to know Mobutu.

CARR: P.L. 480?

DYMALLY: Yeah, P.L. 480 is the Humphrey Food for Peace Program, where you get food at a low-interest loan--like thirty years for 1 percent.

Now, I was fascinated by the notion of

meeting a dictator, from an academic point of view, from [the standpoint of] a student of politics. How does he live? What does he do? What kind of person is he? So I went there and there was this guy, big as life, and the protocol was very impressive. The pomp and ceremony--it blew my mind. It was the first time I've seen a dictator operate--with the band and the troops and the people lined up on the street.

CARR: Now, what year was this?

DYMALLY: Early eighties. And I'm saying to myself. . . .
When did Ron get elected as DNC chairman?
'Eighty-eight? 'Eighty-nine?

CARR: Either end of '88, early '89. Something like that.

DYMALLY: When did Mondale run? Mondale ran in '84, isn't it?

CARR: Yeah.

DYMALLY: Yeah, '84. So I think Ron was chairman in '84, '85?

CARR: Was it that early?

DYMALLY: No, later on, eh? Oh yeah.

CARR: It had to be later because basically he was behind the whole Clinton push.

DYMALLY: All right, fine. It was before Clinton. I went

there during the Reagan years.

CARR: So it would have been in the [George H.W.] Bush era, sometime at the end of the Bush era that he was DNC chairman.

DYMALLY: OK, all right. Well, probably he was not chairman yet, but anyhow that's how I met Diana. So Mamade took me. I was on the boat there, I mean in the game park, and really observing this man operate, and he was in total control. Very charming, very gracious.

The other thing is that my friend [Jeffrey M.] Elliot, with whom I did the Castro book,¹ wanted to do something with Mobutu, too. He is a prolific writer, so that was another opportunity. And he [Mobutu] made himself available.

CARR: Personally, when you started to talk to him, what kind of a person was he?

DYMALLY: Charming, very charming. He has a sense of humor.

CARR: Now, was the interview done in English? All English? Or was there a translator?

DYMALLY: It was in French, and Elliot brought it back here

1. Fidel Castro: Nothing Can Stop the Course of History.

and had it transcribed.

CARR: So he spoke French?

DYMALLY: Yes.

CARR: From a political point of view, what was your opinion of Zaire and the U.S.'s role . . .

DYMALLY: Well, politically I was opposed to our policy in Zaire. That was the contradiction. [Laughter] And here I met this man who was--as a human being, not as a politician--very interesting. A friend of mine wrote an article about it. I'm going to give it to you. . . . He was a friend of the United States. Don't forget, he was invited to the White House by Reagan, and he initiated the Angola peace initiative in [his] palace.

Now, I caught hell for going to Zaire . . .

CARR: Yeah, that was my next question.

DYMALLY: . . . but Howard Wolpe offered a resolution praising him, and Howard Wolpe has never been criticized for that. Out of my committee came a resolution by [Donald M.] Payne, which we virtually gave Payne, criticizing him [Mobutu].

And I went down there with the urging of the State Department and convinced him to get the Kinshasa Catholic bishop to head the national conference. You know, all the French countries

were having these national conferences, and I convinced him to take the bishop. The bishop said to me, "Lunch or not, he'll never have me." So I called him in the presence of reporters, and in the presence of the U.S. ambassador, and I said, "Look, this is a good thing to do." But I was not supportive of Mobutu's policies. I was just trying to see if I could bring him into the world of democracy.

CARR: Did he have any interest in that?

DYMALLY: Well, he pretended to, but not really.

But I was really studying the nature of a dictatorship. Don't forget, I had been to Cuba, been to Haiti, looking at these different models. A lot of people don't think that politicians have any right to be serious about their work, or to take an academic look--that these forays are designed exclusively for professors. But I had a professorial interest in how dictators operate. And each one is different: Daniel Ortega, Castro, Chun [Doo Hwan] of [South] Korea, Mobutu.

CARR: Now, didn't you pass a resolution praising Chun?

DYMALLY: No. Did I? No, I don't think so.

CARR: Let me check my notes.

Did your opinion of Mobutu and his regime

change at all after the visit?

DYMALLY: No, I knew his modus operandi. I was troubled by the poverty and the police state. Now, he and I talked about that.

CARR: Really, what was his . . .

DYMALLY: Well, I was saying that basically what the Congress was looking at is human rights, an open society. And that's been my position with all these countries I visited--to tell them what are the facts of life; not to support them, not to be an advocate.

For instance, when I went to Nigeria the other day for the local elections, my one regret is I didn't get to see [Sani] Abacha--not because of his faults. I decided to stay in Lagos when the team went up to see him in Abudja. I stayed to meet some activists. But if I had seen him, I would have told him what the others probably did not, because they were all gaga meeting him. I would have told him that he needed to have immediate elections, release all the prisoners, and stop harassing people for free speech. I would have said that without offending him, by not lecturing to him. I would have told him, as I tell all of these leaders, "This is what the

Congress wants. If you are courting the United States' friendship"--and everyone is--"this is what you have to do." Castro being the exception, because you don't tell Castro what to do.

CARR: You don't. Now . . .

DYMALLY: Because he knows.

CARR: The Castro interview. How did that come about? That was in 1984, '85?

DYMALLY: Yeah, I think. I went down there with Jesse Jackson. Gene Wheeler urged me to go with Jesse Jackson, and I went down there. Jesse is reported to have gotten the prisoners released. The real story is this: Jesse and Castro were head-to-head on a number of issues.

CARR: Were you present while they . . .

DYMALLY: Yeah, right, in a friendly, adversarial role. Jesse left to go to the bathroom, and while he was gone I said, "Commandant, he will suffer a major setback in the United States and we cannot help your cause if you don't release some prisoners." And I was selected, with a lawyer from Cleveland, to go process the release of the American prisoners. Then we left and we went to Nicaragua and we came back to bring the

prisoners. When we came back, he summoned me and Jesse. In the airport, someone said, "The commandant wants to see you." And he said, "I have some more prisoners for you." So he released some Cuban prisoners. Then I was selected by him personally to fly with the Cuban prisoners on Air Cubana and Jesse was on his plane with the American prisoners who were released--all of them for drugs. And when we got to Washington. . . . Well, we had to call Representative Walter Fauntroy to get Air Cubana to land on American soil. When we got there, they would not permit the pilots and stewardesses to get off the plane, and the prisoners came out. Jesse held a press conference, as he loves to do. He asked one of the prisoners to join him, and the guy denounced him right there in his presence. Denounced him. I have never met a group of people who were so ungracious and so ungrateful . . .

CARR: As?

DYMALLY: . . . as those two groups. I have never heard from any one of them. Not a single one ever wrote a letter and said, "Thanks for getting me out of prison."

CARR: Well, but is it possible to say, "Hey, this is just a Castro ploy to look good"?

DYMALLY: It doesn't make any difference--you got freed. What difference does it make whether. . . . Yeah, sure, Fidel wanted to look good and he wanted to make Jesse look good.

CARR: Well, yeah, if in the sense that this is political wheeling-dealing, why should I be grateful?

DYMALLY: Hey, you got freed. You were in prison for twenty years for transporting dope through Cuba, and we got you freed. A little note, "Dear Congressman, thanks very much for helping with my release. . . ." Jesse never got full credit. As I said, the guy right there at Dulles [International Airport] denounced him, although he got freed by Jesse.

CARR: Now, in your interview session that came out as the book. . . .

DYMALLY: Then on another occasion I went to Cuba. I mentioned to Fidel that we'd like to come and do a book. He said, "Fine. My best time is August because everything is quiet down here." So we went back with Jeffery Elliot. Ken Orduna operated the tape recorders. We worked. We

would stick around the hotel all day, all night, awaiting this call. About eleven o'clock you'd get a call . . .

CARR: P.M.?

DYMALLY: Yes, at night. There'd be a station wagon outside to take you to the palace. And you'd go in there and you'd start working a little after twelve [o'clock].

CARR: And this is in Havana?

DYMALLY: Yeah. Until three, four o'clock in the morning. I remember one time when the question of apartheid came up, boy, he got up and hit the desk and denounced South Africans. He also denounced Bernard Coard as having caused the death of Maurice Bishop.

CARR: Maurice Bishop.

DYMALLY: Of all the leaders I have met, Castro is the most profound. He knew American history like any history professor at Harvard. I mean, he was knowledgeable.

CARR: Now, your interview was conducted in Spanish?

DYMALLY: Yes, in Spanish, and we transcribed the tape.

CARR: Now, do you speak Spanish or do you understand most of it?

DYMALLY: No. We had an interpreter. So we had Spanish

and English going for us.

CARR: What about the notion that Fidel's support of issues dealing with race, particularly blacks-- Angola for instance--had much to do with him getting a kind of positive global perception of his regime, and to dim his human rights abuses?

DYMALLY: There was a professor in Guadalupe--Carlos Moore.

CARR: Yes, Carlos Moore. He wrote a very famous book on . . .

DYMALLY: He will probably disagree with you. Now, interesting thing about it, to tell you how. . . . I don't get involved in personalities. . . .

CARR: You know Moore?

DYMALLY: Very well. We became very good friends. He came to Congress. The other day we met each other in Trinidad, and he calls me every now and then.

Carlos claims that Castro has not done as much as he could, because the foreign affairs ministry is still white. Others would disagree with him, of course. And what people misunderstood about Carlos: he wasn't anti-communist necessarily, or anti-socialist. He was anti-Cuba's race policy.

CARR: Well, explain that, because many people who denounce the Carlos Moore book--was it Castro and

the Blacks?¹ I forget the title of the book--
denounce it because he comes off precisely as
being anti-communist.

DYMALLY: Well, he suffered some personal indignities in
France. They tried to kidnap him and lots of
things. Yeah, he [had problems] but when you
talk with him, he's not all that anti-communist.
He's anti-racial policy of Castro. As I said, we
got to know each other very well and communicated
with each other. I think I have his phone number
in Guadalupe.

CARR: So you didn't think he was some kind of . . .

DYMALLY: By the way, he's for reconciliation with Castro
now.

CARR: You didn't think he was--Castro himself--was so
calculating and cynical in his attitudes towards
race, and policies towards race.

DYMALLY: Well, if you look at the refugees, they're mostly
white. There are some blacks who have come over
more recently, not very many. But blacks were
under virtual servitude under [Fulgencio] Batista

1. Carlos Moore, Castro, the Blacks, and Africa
(Los Angeles: Center for Afro-American Studies, University
of California, c. 1988).

[y Zaldívar]. They were the poorest of the poor. They had two societies in Cuba: one black, one white. And the blacks were in servitude. Castro changed that. So now blacks have a sense of dignity. In fact, the vice president is black. I met him.

CARR: Now, you're talking about the older general who was very much involved in the revolution?

DYMALLY: No, this guy was relatively young. One of his closest allies was a black man. But one of his vice presidents is black. Socialism has succeeded, to whatever extent--if one gives him [Castro] that much credit--in Cuba because people were with so little, and under Castro they had a sense of dignity, they had a job, they had something to eat. Things are rough now because we have put the squeeze on Cuba, but the whole lot of blacks improved.

Sometime ago they were talking about installing a president. The Cuban American National Foundation had a shadow government in Miami. The black Cubans in Florida came to me and wanted me to introduce them to the State Department and CIA and the National Security Council. Their message was that if the United

States installed a white government in Cuba, there'd be another revolution. I arranged these meetings for them, and I went to Florida and met with them. They had a party for me. And in that black group were some white Cubans who felt the same way too. They felt that these Cubans in Miami were so right-wing--which leads to a little anecdote.

There's a Cuban restaurant in Hollywood, on Fountain [Avenue] and Vine [Street], and my wife and I go there. And one night she went there with her girlfriend, without me, and the owner's son came to her and said, "Mrs. Dymally, was your husband a congressman?" She said, "Yes." "Is that the guy who comes here with you?" "Yes." He said, "Come, I want to show you something." In his office is a certificate from me-- Congressman Dymally--for his work as a veteran. He was a Purple Heart. The son thinks Castro is brilliant, but I'm sure the father doesn't share the son's view.

CARR: What interests me is the fact that very often the subtext of race in the whole debate over Cuba-- particularly in the United States and specifically in Florida--never deals with. . . .

The race thing never comes up.

DYMALLY: No, because they [whites] dominate the life, the economy, the politics [to the extent] that the black Cubans there who were exiled were completely out of it--left out--in the deliberations, etc., in the plans to go back. But the white, right-wing Cubans did have one black general in their group who they took around with them. But as I'm saying, the blacks are saying that if you go back there you're not going to have this fascist operation anymore.

CARR: Since we're on this topic anyway, why not just normalize relationships?

DYMALLY: It's an outrage. You should read Bob Scheer's column in the L.A. Times of Tuesday, the first [July 1, 1997], in which he points out the hypocrisy of the Secretary of State criticizing Vietnam and cozying up to China and being anti-Castro. It's an insane policy and one of stupidity. Every now and then, people who want to flatter me come and say, "Gee, I thought you were going to be an ambassador." And I said, "Well, I wouldn't leave Congress to be an ambassador." One, for economic reasons. Second, I could not support American foreign policy as it

relates to Cuba, and when you are a diplomat, you'd better carry the State Department line. And what has disappointed me about Clinton--and I'm a big fan of Clinton, by the way--is that he was a greater hard-liner than Reagan or Bush. He caused the two worst pieces of legislation against Cuba to be enacted. One was the [Robert G.] Torricelli Bill. Bush was against the Torricelli Bill. Clinton goes down to Florida, and supports the Torricelli Bill, and overnight Bush changes his position and the Torricelli Bill passed by two votes on the House floor. Then he comes and signs this outrageous Burton Bill.

CARR: The [Jesse] Helms-[Danny L.] Burton Bill.

DYMALLY: Yeah. He could have done something about the shooting without signing. . . . I mean, there is not a country in the world that supports the Helms-Burton Bill. It is such an outrageous piece of legislation. The CARICOM delegation went to the White House at one time. . . . The CARICOM had in the Bahamas developed a policy position in support of Cuba. And the U.S. raised all kinds of hell. The prime ministers went to the White House and explained what their position was. They supported Castro. Maurice Bishop

wasn't really a communist. He was just a socialist and opposed to the oppressive nature of the [Eric Matthew] Gairy regime. But they've never had a problem with Castro or communism in the Caribbean. But our Cuban policy is such an outrage.

CARR: Is it something that's taken on a life of its own?

DYMALLY: Of its own. Here we are recognizing Vietnam, in which thousands of American boys were killed, and we still are hunting bodies in Vietnam. We recognized China with one of the worst human rights policies. And on and on.

CARR: Having dialogue with North Korea.

DYMALLY: North Korea--and they are hard-liners. They would not ease up this restriction [against Cuba]. Castro's a survivor.

CARR: How much of it has to do with the American psyche--that something like this just happened a hundred miles away?

DYMALLY: I think it has to do more with American hypocrisy than the American psyche. I don't think that the American public would be opposed if we opened up doors to Cuba because. . . . I went down there one time and they gave me a list of companies,

DYMALLY: when Carter opened the window. They gave me a list, they showed me the list--IBM [International Business Machines Corporation], Xerox [Corporation], Citibank [International], AT & T [American Telephone and Telegraph Company], GM all rushed down there. I go down there and on the list is Chuck Manatt and Bob Moretti, the speaker of the California assembly. So the American business community would welcome opening up doors.

[End Tape 14, Side B]

[Session 13, July 7, 1997]

[Begin Tape 15, Side A]

CARR: Good afternoon, Congressman Dymally.

DYMALLY: Elston, before we start, in the last session you asked me, or just before we left the lieutenant governorship, you asked me a question about the Commission on [Food and] Nutrition, and I sort of just gave you a brief answer. But it was a more significant issue. California has pioneered in legislation and programs, many of which were adopted by the federal government--and I'm not trying to suggest to you that my little commission was adopted by the federal government. . . . But Senator McGovern had this Select Committee on Hunger, and caused quite a stir in the country, because he pointed out in his study that the foods we were eating were causing cancer and cholesterol, and that one in eight children in America was hungry. The farmers were opposed to it, the dairy farmers were opposed to it, the beef farmers were opposed to it, the producers,

and the American Medical Association testified against the report. Now everyone has come around.

CARR: On what grounds were people opposed to it then?

DYMALLY: If you're telling me that my beef can cause cancer, too much red meat is going to cause cancer . . .

CARR: Right.

DYMALLY: I think the part they liked about it was the hunger part because, as weird as that may seem, it provided an opportunity for the farmers to provide more food. But the rest of it, they were highly critical. So critical that the Senate dissolved the committee.

CARR: What year was this, do you recall?

DYMALLY: That was in the seventies.

In fact, Nixon spoke about nutrition and hunger. But McGovern's report was so hard-hitting that everybody was up in arms. What was ironic about this whole thing was that McGovern came from a farm state.

CARR: Did anything positive come of that report?

DYMALLY: Oh God, yes. One of the benefits of these hearings, these studies, is that it caused second reflections. And now everybody's talking about

high cholesterol as one of the reasons for heart attacks, that red meat is no longer good for you. Even too much milk is not all that great. Anyhow, so I thought I'd mention that to you. We were kind of visionary in a sense, and I'm not trying to be boastful about it, to have begun to look at that issue. But nobody took us very seriously, even in California then.

CARR: But from your commission here in California my question, I recall, was, what do you think that commission accomplished? Looking back within this context now . . .

DYMALLY: Public education. But as I said, there was no media. You can't educate the public if the media doesn't cover it. Nobody thought at that time that there was an issue. I suspect they looked at it as one of Dymally's gimmicks.

CARR: What if, for instance, your commission had said, "Let's look at how children are being fed through the public school program"?

DYMALLY: We didn't have money, and didn't have staff.

CARR: Was that a consideration back then?

DYMALLY: Well, it wasn't well-funded. You can't do a good in-depth commission or committee study unless you have staff, and this was all ad hoc.

CARR: And considering the background you've just given me on the McGovern report, there was really no corporate sponsorship for anything.

DYMALLY: No, no, no. But McGovern had Senate staff, but nobody knew that he was going to delve into that so seriously.

CARR: What do you think made him delve into that issue?

DYMALLY: McGovern is a very visionary man. I suspect people who had researchers who were looking at this issue usually look in the legislature for somebody who is courageous enough to carry an unpopular issue. In fact, was it [Edward R.] Ed Murrow, or somebody--I think it was ABC or NBC--did a major documentary on hunger in the United States as a result of that study. It caused quite a sensation and I just reflected on that. I must also confess, before we get into the substance of today's meeting, many of the issues you bring up. . . . I am so surprised that I was involved in these things. I have sort of forgotten that I was quite a busybody, and some of these things I forget. But go ahead.

CARR: I suppose sometimes, having been involved in so many things, it's difficult to . . .

DYMALLY: I thought I'd mention that.

CARR: I'd like to move directly into your congressional activities. As I said from our last meeting, these questions are basically either going to be dealing with domestic issues or foreign affairs.

First of all, within the context of your stance on divestment--the whole South Africa issue--one of the issues was you wanted the U.S. to require persons who had control in enterprises to comply with some kind of fair employment practice if they were going to do business in South Africa. This is right before the full . . .

DYMALLY: That was just a follow-up of the Sullivan principles, although Sullivan was voluntary and some corporations did comply. Others left. Some were very tricky, they went right next door to Swaziland, like Coca-Cola [Company]. They moved from South Africa to Swaziland. And when apartheid was declared over, they moved right back in. And more recently a group of prominent blacks--Whitney Houston, Johnnie [L.] Cochran, [Danny] Glover, the . . .

CARR: Louis Gossett Jr. probably, I think.

DYMALLY: I don't know. And Earl [G.] Graves, publisher of . . .

CARR: Black Enterprise.

DYMALLY: Lost a bundle. They went down there to promote Pepsi Cola. But Coca-Cola was so deeply entrenched, they just pulled out. Pepsi Cola [Company] just pulled out of South Africa.

CARR: So you're saying that many of the countries that supposedly had divested themselves really had just shifted their resources.

DYMALLY: They just moved next door, that's all.

CARR: So in that sense, Coca-Cola had never really left.

DYMALLY: No, not really. They left geographically--I mean, physically.

CARR: Did you feel it was somewhat of a quixotic kind of thing to support, back then?

DYMALLY: See, I do not believe in sanctions, because you can't be against sanctions in Cuba and Nicaragua and then be for sanctions in South Africa, philosophically, if you wanted to be consistent. But South Africa was such an extreme case. In politics you have got to be pragmatic. You can't be such a purist to say, "I'm philosophically opposed to sanctions and therefore I'm opposed to sanctions in South Africa." At first, it wasn't popular. A friend of mine in Sacramento, in the

senate, when we had a Martin Luther King resolution for a holiday, opposed it on the grounds that he was opposed to more holidays. He was consistent. When I went to Congress and joined him, he voted for the King holiday and told me he was wrong to do that in California. So what you're bringing out here is the pragmatism of politics. I believe that U.S. unilateral sanctions have never really worked well. It worked in South Africa because the whites were in the minority, and with the exception of the U.K. and the Japanese, everybody, especially the European Union, joined in the boycott. And the black majority supported it.

CARR: But what do you think really got the whole divestment issue over the hump, in terms of getting just about everyone on board?

DYMALLY: Well, it's like the Watts riots. Did you know it was coming? Everybody said, "I knew it was coming." Nobody knew the Watts riots were coming.

CARR: Right.

DYMALLY: What happened was a very strange experience. Representative Steve Solarz, chairman of the

Subcommittee on Asia [and the Pacific], Representative Howard Wolpe, chairman of the Subcommittee on Africa, Representative Bill Gray, now head of the United Negro [College Fund], had put together a moderate sanctions divestment bill. Ron Dellums had in the [old bill], total divestment. On the other side, you had the moderate Lugar, Senator [Richard G.] Lugar, coming across with a bill. Ron Dellums got up-- and I was just so fortunate to be on the floor-- and debated the bill, and when the Speaker called for opposition, there was no opposition on the Republican side, and the bill went out unanimously without any opposition.

CARR: Why do you say you were lucky to be on the floor?

DYMALLY: Because it was an historic occasion.

CARR: To witness this?

DYMALLY: To witness this. But what was more interesting is the fact that no Republican got up and started talking about the uselessness of sanctions and "This is not right." One expected opposition. Because Ron has had this measure for years and years.

CARR: And what year was this now?

DYMALLY: The year that the Congress overruled Reagan's

veto. I forget.

CARR: So it must have been '84, '85?

DYMALLY: Late in the eighties.

CARR: Later than that, so it might be '88.

DYMALLY: And so Ron was stunned, himself. The Washington Post carried a major article about this--years and years he's been trying and couldn't even get it out of committee.

CARR: Why didn't the Republicans oppose the bill? Speculate.

DYMALLY: All I can say, they must have gotten together in the caucus and said, "Look, this is not affecting us at home, here. We can't continue to appear to be supporting the South Africans. We have nothing to lose on this one by voting for it and we have everything to lose by opposing it." And nobody opposed it. Ron was in a state of shock.

CARR: After all those years.

What kind of issues did the whole divestment push awaken in terms of race here in the United States?

DYMALLY: Well, it rekindled that old coalition. Not quite as profound as the civil rights coalition, but students now had an issue that they could clearly join with blacks on this question. So a little

semblance of the old coalition. Student activism was aroused, and it gave the movement something to fight for. It was very, very dramatic, and interesting, and the whole bit.

CARR: What about the criticism that divestment was just basically a way to not deal with some serious racial issues here at home during the grip of the Reagan-Bush era?

DYMALLY: This is not an either-or situation.

CARR: But that was one of the criticisms that was floating out there.

DYMALLY: Yeah, but as a pragmatist I didn't see it as an either-or issue. It had to be done. Don't forget now that the president did not support divestment, so you cannot say he was trying to use divestment as a way to avoid the racial issue. Maybe you might want to accuse the Republicans of that.

CARR: But from a Democratic point of view, Democrats are basically. . . . You're dealing with a Republican president with the inability to get a lot done. Maybe this is an issue to deal with, far away, to kind of take away . . .

DYMALLY: Well, the southerners were leaving us. The old Republican North and the old New Deal Democratic

South opposition were resurrected under the Reagan years. But the core of the Democratic leadership was still in support of affirmative action, civil rights.

CARR: Moving over to a domestic issue: urban areas. You were a proponent of block grants and enterprise zones.

DYMALLY: Yes, although I was never really sold on enterprise zones because there were a lot of problems with enterprise zones. Enterprise zones reminded me of the Caribbean Basin Initiative, where you had legislation without money. Who's coming into the ghetto?

CARR: So you're saying there should have been more incentives?

DYMALLY: Yes. I mean, who's coming in without incentives?

CARR: What kind of incentives? A hard cash incentive to say, "Hey, look, you move there; not only are you going to get a tax break, you're going to get some cash also"?

DYMALLY: Training--"We'll pay for the training for your people."

CARR: OK.

DYMALLY: But there was a problem. Simple as it sounds, one of the major problems in coming back into the

DYMALLY: ghetto was open space. You'd have had to tear down a lot of houses. If you recall--you probably were too young to even follow that. . . . You will see when they embarked on their expansion program--in those days, urban renewal was a bad word--the case went all the way up to the state supreme court, because people saw that as encroaching upon their little homes. So USC had a tough time. At one time they thought about leaving, but they were not like Pepperdine. They had solid rock buildings, and many buildings. So they had no place to go. They decided to do what the University of Chicago did: if you can't beat them, join them. So they decided to change the ghetto and make it livable.

So let us assume that Douglas [Aircraft Company] wanted to open up a plant in the zone. Where are you going to find the parking? There was just so much. . . . I don't want to overplay this parking thing, but it's one of the reasons plants move out to the suburbs. There weren't enough incentives. Security was a problem. But I supported it, because how could you oppose something like that? But it was like CBI--it didn't have any muscle to it.

CARR: CBI?

DYMALLY: Caribbean Basin Initiative. Yeah.

CARR: What would have made it. . . . So these are the things you're telling me would have made it stronger. Anything else that would have made this really a viable possibility?

DYMALLY: When you start giving a lot of incentives to big business then the far left begin to criticize you. So there was a dilemma there. And I don't know of any major breakthrough in the enterprise zone. There is an empowerment zone now in Los Angeles, but the interest rates are still high and you still have to have collateral.

CARR: Yeah.

DYMALLY: I mean, it's not a gift.

CARR: Exactly.

DYMALLY: It ain't easy to get a loan. You have got to have collateral and the average start-up small business has no collateral.

CARR: But you were very pro-business. . . . Both pro-small business from . . .

DYMALLY: Yeah, from Sacramento.

CARR: . . . from Sacramento straight through . . .

DYMALLY: Because I had a theory, which was shared by Senator Bill Greene, that. . . . You can't be

anti-business and expect people to come into the ghetto to open up jobs. And the problem is that in the final analysis your constituents depend on these businesses for jobs.

CARR: And to your recollection, during your tenure in Congress especially, were you able to get some of these smaller businesses off the ground and . . .

DYMALLY: No, it wasn't that easy. In fact, what happened is that when Reagan came in they began de-emphasizing the Section 8 program. We had one major Section 8 manufacturer in the district. I remember it because the Pentagon leaked information that I was trying to get him a contract. He had the contract. He had the only portable water purifier. You could take his portable water purifier in the battlefield, and sink it in a mudhole, and the water would be purified. Well, when the Reagan people came in they put it out to bid. You can't compete with the large companies because they underbid, they take the loss for a year, and the second year they go back and say, "Look, we can't continue this way." And that's how you lost. You lost the bid. You lost out. You know, big story about how he lived. He had a Rolls-Royce. In

other words, if you're a small business you aren't supposed to own a Rolls-Royce. But anyhow, the Pentagon leaks information that I was pushing him and I had received a campaign contribution. And I said, "Yeah. He's in my district. He's supposed to contribute to me. Where am I going to get my funds from?"

CARR: Speaking of contributions, your support of the . . . Did your support of the divestment issue affect you in terms of congressional lobbyists who were coming around?

DYMALLY: No. I don't think so.

CARR: No?

DYMALLY: My money came from. . . . My money really came from small businesses, small businessmen and women, and friends.

CARR: What year did Phil Burton die? Was it '81 or '82?

DYMALLY: No, no. It must be '82, not '81. Maybe even later than that.¹

CARR: Okay. What did his death mean in just . . .

DYMALLY: His death was a major blow to the liberal

1. Phillip Burton died April 10, 1983.

movement because . . .

CARR: In California, you mean.

DYMALLY: In California. In the Congress, too. Because Phil slept, ate, drank politics. Politics was his whole life. He did nothing else. He could tell you how many precincts there are in District One in Maine. He was an expert on reapportionment. He had a conscience. His only weakness in my judgment. . . . And I did not know it until he came to me one day and said, "Merv, you've got to loosen up on this criticism of Israel." And I was stunned. What I didn't know, and it didn't matter, was his wife was Jewish and she was more favorably disposed to my criticism than he was. She finally succeeded him, and she died subsequently. What a beautiful woman. But I didn't know that. . . . You see, all of the liberals in the Congress were very pro-Israel. And here I come out of that liberal school. Phil Burton got me on the two committees, and then word got back to him. . . . I was on the Foreign Affairs Committee so I must have been discussed among the group that I was being critical of Israel.

CARR: But you must have known your position could have

been a political liability.

DYMALLY: Yeah, but I didn't care because I didn't think that. I was wrong.

CARR: Didn't any of your aides stop and say, "Hey, I know you feel this way, but look. . . ."

DYMALLY: Well, I had a. . . . No. They were all liberals, and I had a Palestinian on my staff.

CARR: Who was that?

DYMALLY: Marwan Burgan. I just talked with him today. He just came back from Bosnia. Oh, and then I had. . . . [Laughter] I had Margaret--Peggy McCormick. I think she's somewhere in the Ukraine. She was very pro-Palestine.

What happened is this. I innocently. . . . The American Friends [Service] Committee, that's the Quaker's legislative committee, gave Peg a question to ask Joe Dine, who was head of the American Israel [Public Affairs] Committee [AIPAC]. And all I asked Dine is, "Is any of this money going to Israel to be used for settlements on the West Bank?" It was a very naive question. I didn't know the implication. Oh my God. All hell broke loose.

CARR: How?

DYMALLY: Well, three members of the California delegation

told me they'd like to have breakfast with me.

CARR: Immediately.

DYMALLY: Yes.

CARR: Who?

DYMALLY: Berman, Waxman, and Levine, who were dear friends of mine. Still are. But they were surprised. . . . I mean, word got around that I was sticking it to Israel. I was just naive. And instead of coming to me and trying to make peace with me or asking me, AIPAC started attacking me in their publications.

CARR: Before they spoke to you?

DYMALLY: Not the legislators. Legislators were always very civil and they respected my point of view. But I wasn't anti-Israel. I was just pro-peace. But the AIPAC people. . . . A friend of mine who since passed--Don Muir--was on my staff and always raised money for me; he put a luncheon together in San Francisco. The number one fundraiser for the Democrats, Walter Shorenstein, in San Francisco said of me at a meeting one time, "Dymally's the only politician to whom I have loaned money who paid me back." So there was a close relationship there. And so Don put on this luncheon for me, and Walter said he could not

attend, and I was shocked. I was stunned. So Don arranged for me to go see him after the luncheon and I said, "Hey, Walter, what happened?" This close friendship. . . . Humphrey. . . . Out of the Humphrey team.

CARR: Right.

DYMALLY: He said, "Well . . ."

CARR: He raised money for Humphrey?

DYMALLY: Oh yes. Big, big, big. He said, "I've been reading this stuff about you in the AIPAC bulletins." Another big supporter of mine, Carmen Warschaw, came one day in Washington and stuck a finger in my chest and said, "I want my money back." In her case, she misconstrued a vote. It was one of those no votes that equals yes. Do you disapprove of motherhood? No, which is really a yes. And I had to write her a letter, send the Congressional Record for her. It didn't make any difference. So just being concerned about that problem on the West Bank cost me friends. I lost some of my Jewish friends.

But what really. . . . [Laughter] What really broke the camel's back for them was this. I went to Singapore to meet a Swamiji from India

DYMALLY: who had introduced me to the Gandhis and he was sponsoring a conference on peace and religion. And after the conference he said, "When are you leaving?" I said, "Tomorrow." "What airline?" "Singapore." He said, "Oh, I'm leaving on the same airline. But, you know, it stops in Dubai." "Oh." "Why don't you stop there and take the plane the next day?" I had never been to an Arab country, a desert Arab country. So I stopped and as I usually do, I went to visit the U.S. embassy. The ambassador was gone. I went to Abu Dhabi. The ambassador was gone and the chargé d'affaires took me to see the minister of planning, who was the former ambassador to the U.S. for the United Arab Emirates. He was a few minutes late and he apologized because he had to meet with the chairman. Well, I. . . . There's only one chairman in the Middle East, and it is [Yasser] Arafat. And I said, "Is Arafat in town?" And he said, "Yes, would you like to see him?" Well, I was too chicken to say no because I figured if I said yes I would never see him anyway. You know, freshman. Arafat's not going to see a freshman, unknown. So I'm talking to him and I see people running back and forth, and

a young lady came in and said, "The chairman will see the congressman." The chargé d'affaires got pale. He went outside, took the flag off the car, and told the driver to drop him home and take me to the palace, but don't go inside.

CARR: Since it wasn't an official visit.

DYMALLY: Yeah. I met Arafat in a little anteroom, we chatted, and then he asked me to join him for lunch. Talk about a spread. Oh my God. What a spread. I was overwhelmed. And so I finished and as I'm walking out . . .

CARR: Now, was Arafat at all. . . . Did you discuss your point of view with him?

DYMALLY: Now look, I'm a freshman. I don't have any power in Congress. I just listened to him politely. So as I was coming out the cameras. . . . You know, the usual stuff. I went back to the embassy . . .

CARR: So you and Arafat together and the cameras are rolling.

DYMALLY: I went back to the embassy and the phone rang. And they said, "Reuters is on the phone." The shortest press conference I have ever had. All the caller said was, "Did you meet with the chairman today?" I said, "Yes." That's all. At

eleven o'clock that night Peter Jennings, from London, broadcast that I had become the first member of Congress to break the Kissinger rule of not talking to Arafat and the PLO [Palestine Liberation Organization].

I had a friend of mine for many years, we were in the American Federation of Teachers together in the L.A. city school system, Stella Burwick Epstein. She was working for me because she had volunteered for a whole year in the campaign, and she quit after listening to that report. And none of my Jewish friends. . . . I remember one in particular, Barry Bender, said, "Mervyn, there's no way in the world that you could end up in the desert and have a private meeting with Arafat without having prearranged it. These accidents don't happen." And that was my decline with the Jewish organizations.

CARR: How did that affect you in terms of your political base? Waxman, Berman, Levine.

DYMALLY: Well, I must tell you this, that when I became a candidate. . . . You know, you get elected to a committee chairmanship by a secret ballot. I only had one no vote and I know who it came from-- I think I know who it came from.

CARR: From?

DYMALLY: A very hard-liner from New York. But all the California Jewish members voted for me. I had a good personal relationship with them, and I point out to them that there are times when I voted for the Israel package when some of them didn't. My record on Israel was more liberal than some of the Jews. Why? Because the foreign affairs package had the Contra money, Salvadoran money, and all of that stuff. You know, all that right-wing stuff in it. But Steve Solarz would say to me, "Merv, Israel's money is there," and I would vote for it. Whereas some of these other guys held their nose up because the foreign aid bill was so awful.

CARR: Now, talk to me a little bit about. . . . Why is it always contentious to try, at least from that historical process, to engage in any kind of constructive criticism of a Jewish state?

DYMALLY: Boy, I would advise you when you go to Congress to stay away from that one. Now it's OK. I think it's all right now, because [Yitzhak] Rabin opened up the door, made it easy and comfortable, and if I were there now I think I would be OK. But at that time the AIPAC had mastered the art

of targeting. You understand the concept of targeting?

CARR: Right.

DYMALLY: The most glaring example was a member of AIPAC left Orange County, moved to Illinois, and spent millions. Under the Buckley [v. Valeo] Supreme Court decision, an individual can spend as much money as he wants on a campaign, pro or con, as long as you have no communication with the candidate. So he moved in there and they targeted [Charles H.] Percy and defeated Percy with Paul [M.] Simon. They defeated Paul Findley. When [Paul N. "Pete"] McCloskey [Jr.] ran for the Senate they went after him.

CARR: Why weren't they successful with you?

DYMALLY: Because I threatened them. I called them and told them . . .

CARR: What did you do? Who did you call?

DYMALLY: I said, "Look, I'm not afraid of you." I called the AIPAC people. I said, "If you go after me I'm going across the country. . . ." See, I'm not like Jesse Jackson. I'm not apologizing. OK? "I'm going across the country and wherever there is one person who will listen to me I'm going to carry the message that you've targeted me." They

tried to get Compton mayor Tucker--not the son, the father--to run. He backed off.

CARR: To run against you?

DYMALLY: Against me. He didn't take it.

CARR: How did you hear about that?

DYMALLY: It came from a very confidential source who was close to the editor of one of the Jewish newspapers here who was one of the architects of targeting. A wife of a congressman told me that. I just called various key folks in the AIPAC hierarchy and said, "Look, I know you've been targeting me." My basic strength, though, was that there were no Jews in my district. So I wasn't worried about that. That was not an issue in the district.

CARR: Now, while all of this is going on, what kind of support were you getting from the Congressional Black Caucus?

DYMALLY: [Laughter] I wish you hadn't asked. The Congressional Black Caucus has one weak spot. It is . . .

CARR: Only one?

DYMALLY: One, in my judgment, and that's Israel.

CARR: And what do you mean by that?

DYMALLY: Very few of the members of the Congressional

Black Caucus would ever be critical of Israel. In fact, during my time there were only three of us. Judge [George W.] Crockett [Jr.] of Detroit, he's retired. My friend Gus Savage, from Chicago, who was defeated. He was defeated by them in Chicago, he was targeted. And myself.

CARR: So no one. . . . It's a hot potato.

DYMALLY: It's a hot potato. That's the one weak point with CBC. The Congressional Black Caucus is big on human rights in South Africa, but you'd never find them coming out in support of the Palestinians. So I was out there by myself.

CARR: And why is that?

DYMALLY: Oh, that's so obvious a question.

CARR: Well, it needs to be answered.

DYMALLY: Because Jews have done an outstanding job of organizing. They're numero uno. And they're generous in their political perspective. They give. They put their money where their mouth is. They're very helpful if you're with them and can be very destructive if you're not with them. And so I say this. . . . This comment I make here is one of admiration for their sense of loyalty to Israel and their generosity to friends of Israel and to the party.

CARR: Now, were there any Palestinian groups that you became close to because of your positions?

DYMALLY: Yeah, the American. . . . AAI. Arab American Institute was one and the other one was AADC, Arab Anti-Defamation Committee.

CARR: Do you think . . .

DYMALLY: And there's another one. There were three Arab groups here. But they were not good givers though.

CARR: Do you think in that chance meeting with Arafat, for him it was good to have had some contact with someone from the American government to essentially increase his . . .

DYMALLY: There was another meeting. I've got to tell you about the other one. We took a delegation to Lebanon when they were bombing Lebanon. There were two Lebanese, Nick Rayhall of West Virginia and Rose Okar of Cleveland. We went along with Pete McCloskey--yes, Pete was there--and a Jewish member from Atlanta who got off the plane and went on to Israel. He didn't join us. And while we were there we went to visit some members of Parliament and they asked if would we like to see Arafat. And we said, "Yes." The Jewish member did not go.

CARR: What year is this now?

DYMALLY: The year of the bombing of Lebanon.

CARR: OK.

DYMALLY: He took off for Israel. He didn't stay. So we went, and we drove here and there, and around and above, and up and down with guys in the cars with their guns pointing out of the window. Now, we finally ended up in a basement with Arafat. I was the last person in this narrow conclave to enter, so I'm the first person out. And who do you think is seen coming out from the basement with Arafat? Mervyn Dymally. The New York Times ran a major headline: "The gang of four." [David E.] Bonior, who is now minority whip. The gang of four was Bonior, Dymally, Okar, and McCloskey. Front page.

CARR: Now, this is the second time now.

DYMALLY: Yes, so how can you convince a Jewish member that I'm not into Arafat? You know, how could you have two accidents?

CARR: So by this time did you stop defending yourself?

DYMALLY: Yeah. There was no point. I had lost them all. It was immaterial.

CARR: How did these kinds of incidents, particularly on the Jewish situation or the Israel situation,

contribute to eroding your political base over a long period of time?

DYMALLY: I don't think it did. It didn't in the district. I may be wrong, but I didn't think so.

CARR: Not in the district.

DYMALLY: Just in fund-raising.

CARR: Yeah, well, that's what I mean.

DYMALLY: Not electorally.

CARR: Did hampering your ability to raise money at all eventually contribute to your decision to retire?

DYMALLY: No. I hated the fund-raising part of politics. I still do. Because it was easy to raise money in Sacramento; there were no limits and the contributors were local.

CARR: What do you mean by that?

DYMALLY: Because in Congress . . .

CARR: How would you compare Sacramento to Congress?

DYMALLY: Well, Sacramento, raising money was easy.

CARR: Because?

DYMALLY: I had a strong incumbency. I was in the leadership. I had almost a permanent fund-raiser. In Congress it was limited to \$1,000 and there was no money in the district, so it was a chore. Besides, I gave all my money away. I helped candidates all over the country. Black

candidates who were running and whoever came across as aspiring for public office. . . . I helped a black male in New Mexico, a woman in Louisiana. So I was always broke. First, because my position was that wasn't my money. It was public trust money. You know, why am I hoarding it? A lot of legislators hoard money, but I always use my money to help others.

CARR: But that's the way it's done now. You have a war chest.

DYMALLY: Just hold on to it?

CARR: And you hang on to it.

DYMALLY: Yeah. I never did. I was always broke. I always spent it all off.

CARR: Interesting.

DYMALLY: I mean, why are you hoarding it? You can't take it with you.

CARR: Right. On the issue of Lebanon you voted, or you very much supported, the notion of having some kind of relief package for Lebanon.

DYMALLY: Yep. In fact, I got some money for the American University of Beirut.

CARR: How did that come about and who . . .

DYMALLY: Well, the chairman of the subcommittee, [Lee H.] Hamilton, was favorably disposed.

CARR: To having a relief package . . .

DYMALLY: Helping the university, yeah. And helping with the package--the humanitarian package. Don't forget that. . . . I had visited the hospital. The child that the world saw in the arms of Mother Teresa, I had just left that child there a week before.

CARR: So you were favorably disposed to it, and again, you weren't really concern about how you would be perceived.

DYMALLY: No, it was too late then. There's no forgiveness in the AIPAC operation, you know.

CARR: Right.

DYMALLY: It's like Jesse Jackson. He's been apologizing ever since he made that faux pas and still hasn't been forgiven.

CARR: Right. Staying on this whole issue of human rights and now foreign affairs, you got very much involved in the whole issue of human rights with the Soviet Union--former Soviet Union.

DYMALLY: In fact, that's another thing that really pissed me off with my adversaries. I was one of the few, probably the only black member of Congress, to go visit the dissidents in Russia.

CARR: Jews in . . .

DYMALLY: What do they call them? The refuseniks. In fact, the protocol officer who took me to meet the refuseniks was criticized by the Soviets.

CARR: And where was this in the Soviet Union?

DYMALLY: In Moscow, way up in a very dark place. You had to go through a dark chamber and the whole bit. [The protocol officer] was recalled as persona non grata for doing that. So, you know, I had nothing against Israel. I had nothing against Jews. Very big on the refuseniks, supported them in Congress, went to Russia and visited with them. My question was the Palestinians had rights. You know, that was it. How could you be opposed to apartheid in South Africa and not be opposed to apartheid in the West Bank? But I must say, to their credit, the strongest anti-apartheid members in Congress were the Jewish members. They really gave strength to that divestment issue.

CARR: Any person in particular stands out in your memory?

DYMALLY: Yeah. Solarz, Wolpe, Berman, Levine, [Thomas P.] Lantos. They were all good.

CARR: From a political point of view, was there any point when an elected politician realized that it

was very important to keep the support of the students coming?

DYMALLY: Support of the . . .

CARR: Students. The student movement. The whole student divestment movement.

DYMALLY: There wasn't a connection.

CARR: There was never a connection.

DYMALLY: There was no connection. I don't know if. . . .
No, no. There was a connection to the Free Speech Movement a little bit in Sacramento but. . . .
. . . No, I don't think there was a connection there.

CARR: Back to the Soviet Union, there's a consideration of the boycott of certain Soviet bloc countries and African countries at the 1984 Olympic games.

DYMALLY: Yeah, but they did not eventually.

CARR: They did not.

DYMALLY: No. I went to Cuba and met with Fidel [Castro]. The Koreans heard I was going, and they asked me to ask him if he was going to participate. And in typical Fidel position, he gave me a one day's lecture on the Olympics. It went all the way back to the history of the Olympics and said it was immoral to be supporting a country like South Korea and he didn't go.

CARR: Let me just turn the tape over for the time being.

[End Tape 15, Side A]

[Begin Tape 15, Side B]

CARR: Could you tell me a little bit about your relationship, political or otherwise, with Roy Wilkins?

DYMALLY: I had none.

CARR: You had none?

DYMALLY: No, my only relationship was an adversarial one on one issue. When I voted to break up the school district, which is quite in vogue now, he came out here and criticized the effort--didn't criticize me per se, but he criticized the effort.

CARR: On behalf of. . . .

DYMALLY: The NAACP.

CARR: Really?

DYMALLY: Yeah.

CARR: They opposed it?

DYMALLY: They opposed the breakup there.

CARR: Moving on from that, we've already talked about your support of the Japanese internment, or reparations for internments for Japanese Americans and the Aleutian Islanders. Could we

talk a little bit about how you got involved in the whole issue of Cyprus?

DYMALLY: I wasn't big on Cyprus. No.

CARR: You weren't . . .

DYMALLY: No, I wasn't big on Cyprus.

CARR: So you were more of . . .

DYMALLY: Oh yeah, yeah, yeah. I'm sorry.

CARR: This is right after the Turkish invasion.

DYMALLY: I was very close. . . . My very best friend in the [California State] Senate was [Nicholas C.] Nick Petris. Through him I got to know the Greek community and they supported me financially. So that's how I got into the Cyprus thing. I went to Greece many times. In fact, I still have a dear friend in Greece that I communicate with. The last I heard from him. . . . A strange, strange request I had from him. He wanted some Anacin tablets, so I sent him some Anacin. So that's how I got into it.

CARR: And what was your position?

DYMALLY: Well, it was always a struggle in Congress between the Turks and the Greeks. And the Greeks with reference to foreign aid. There was a formula, and there was always a rivalry there, and so. . . . For instance, my good friend Solarz

stuck with the Turks when I was with the Greeks.

CARR: I'd like to move on from there and I'd like to talk about some of your educational packages when you were in Congress. One other thing, you were a big supporter of funds to support math and science education in Congress, and math and science teachers who wanted to further their education. Where did that come from? Was this . . .

DYMALLY: Well, because I was on the Foreign Affairs Committee I recognized that was a no-no. Domestically, there was nothing you could do for your district, except that Northrop always supported me and said that I was always a voice for sale of their products overseas. So I had to look at something that was relevant to the district. But more significantly blacks were so far behind in science and math, I felt that this was a national service that I was providing. So there's a motherhood issue, so to speak. Then I hooked up with Howard University when I was on the Science and Technology Committee. So that was my input into science and math, so to speak.

CARR: What was the success of this?

DYMALLY: Eminently successful.

CARR: And how was it implemented?

DYMALLY: We had seminars. We got a grant from the National Science Foundation. We had an advisory committee. We had a center--a project at Howard University. Unfortunately, when Howard revised their whole curricula they did not make room for it and it died. So it was a good one. I was honored by the historically black colleges for promoting science and technology. I was the only Black Caucus member on that committee.

CARR: Now, in a sense, this was a continuation of the summer program at the Science and Industry Museum.

DYMALLY: You remember that. What happened was I. . . . My opposition here. . . . Oh, I know what. Virna Canson, my friend in the NAACP, had heard that Wilson Riles, who ran the [California State] Compensatory Education Committee, was not getting the support he needed from Rafferty. And so knowing that I got along with all these people, she asked me to talk with Rafferty. My opposition heard about it and began making out as if I was supporting Rafferty and they kind of embarrassed me at the CDC meeting. So I went to him and with his help I was able to get some

state money to have that summer program. That's something I had forgotten.

CARR: So what I'm trying to say here is that in a certain sense your support of math and science education on a national level when you were in Congress was a continuation of what . . .

DYMALLY: Was a continuation. And I must say this, that the director, [William J.] Bill McCann, at the museum was most helpful. And the community, [regarding] science and technology, was very, very supportive of that effort. I also continued that in Congress. I had a group of students from the Thirty-first [Congressional] District go down to Puerto Rico for science, language, and environment.

CARR: It continued through them.

DYMALLY: Yeah. Don't forget after all is said and done, I'm really a teacher, you know.

CARR: Within the context of really delivering things directly to the district, you had a Job Training Partnership Act [JTPA] in 1982 that you tried to get enacted.

DYMALLY: I got an amendment. Very interesting story. I forget what the amendment was, but it was significant. And I got up here to give my maiden

speech. A major accomplishment, I felt.

CARR: This was your first speech?

DYMALLY: Yes, and Gus Hawkins, my mentor, said to me, "Mr. Dymally, there's no opposition." Usually you ask the other side, "Are there any objections to this, Mr. Chairman?" "I have no objection." And I had my speech prepared and he said to me, "Mr. Dymally, do you want the amendment or do you want the speech?" [Laughter] I said, "Thank you very much."

CARR: You took what you got and went for it.

DYMALLY: I've seen members kill their legislation with a lot of speeches. One night, at midnight, the last night of a session, Speaker Moretti came to me and asked me, could I amend a bill for Jerry Lewis's charity . . .

CARR: Muscular dystrophy? No. . . . Yeah, it is muscular dystrophy.

DYMALLY: For UCLA. And I said to my seatmate, Al Song, "Al, look at this." I got up and I mumbled something and nobody paid attention to what I said and voted a million dollars. It was the first time a million dollars was amended on the floor. And guess what. When UCLA got to honor those who helped them, they invited those who

represented the district and not me, and he raised hell about it. Tony Beilenson, a very decent man, said, "Look. This is Dymally who did this. It wasn't me."

CARR: Now, Beilenson, you've known him way back from Sacramento.

DYMALLY: Yeah. We used to drive together. Beilenson, Song, Dymally, and Charlie Warren. In those days when you drove home, you know, you only got one paid trip. It was one return trip per session. Now they've got one every week.

CARR: Yeah. Staying on this Job Training Partnership Act. Do you recall . . .

DYMALLY: That was Gus Hawkins's act. I was just amending it.

CARR: What did it do and what did it accomplish?

DYMALLY: I can't recall what the amendment was, but it was an important one as I recall. I am sort of vague.

CARR: What kind of job training was going on in your district, at the time?

DYMALLY: You see, you had to form a consortium of a population of about 250,000 people and then you were eligible to be a JTPA. And Compton and Lynwood were not in the JTPA because there

weren't sufficient people among the two cities. We tried to get some other cities, but they decided to go with Torrance.

CARR: Why?

DYMALLY: I'll be damned if I know. So Compton had to join the county program.

CARR: And the kind of training that went on, what was it? Was it clerical training--what?

DYMALLY: All kinds of training, yeah.

CARR: How much money was coming from the federal government for this?

DYMALLY: All of the money from the JPT.

CARR: But in terms of the sum. Do you recall?

DYMALLY: I don't recall. It was really a Gus Hawkins project.

CARR: OK. Going back to. . . . Two communities I'm curious about in your district: the Filipino community and the Samoan community.

DYMALLY: I was just. . . . I was honored recently by the Filipino community. I picked up the L.A. Times one day and read where the Supreme Court had ruled that those. . . . Let me go back. After the war, I think there was an executive order--I don't know if there was legislation--that permitted the Filipinos to seek citizenship for

being scouts in [General Douglas] MacArthur's army.

CARR: Exactly, yes.

DYMALLY: [Ferdinand E.] Marcos stopped it because he saw it as a brain drain and many people in the rural areas never heard of it.

CARR: Right.

DYMALLY: And when they did, they started coming here illegally. And there was a deportation of one of them, who fought it on the grounds that he was a veteran. And the case went all the way up to the Supreme Court and the Supreme Court ruled that he was--and they were--deportable. Not that you should deport them, but they're eligible for deportation because they came illegally and we never recognized them as veterans. Still don't. So my legislation took me three sessions. I know the staff member who worked for [Romano L.] Mazolli. She was such a mean sister.

CARR: Yeah. I think it started in 1983 when you began supporting them.

DYMALLY: And Mazolli wouldn't support it. Then [Daniel R.] Glickman, who is now Secretary of Agriculture. . . . I couldn't get it out of his committee. As soon as Barney Frank came on that

committee, boom, it went out. But what it did . . .

CARR: But what did that particular piece of legislation accomplish? Do you recall?

DYMALLY: Well, first, by the introduction it automatically stopped the deportation. And when it was passed, they became eligible for citizenship. OK?

CARR: But it didn't get as far as to recognize these men as veterans.

DYMALLY: That is correct, and Congressman [Bob] Filner of San Diego. . . . Well, first, a member of the Congressional Black Caucus from Philadelphia, Lucien [E.] Blackwell, introduced the legislation and I never could figure why, unless he served with some of these guys. Now Filner of San Diego is introducing that. Has introduced it, I'm sorry. He was guest speaker recently at a dinner where I was a special guest. The leadership is opposed to it, and I think the administration possibly, because of the cost. Now they want to hook in as veterans and receive all the benefits of veterans.

CARR: VA [Veterans Administration] benefits.

DYMALLY: Yes.

CARR: Basically the medical benefits more than anything

else, I assume.

DYMALLY: Yes. Educational benefits, although they're too old, some of them. Too old. Retirement. . . . The get retirement, death benefits. All kinds of stuff. One of them was fasting in . . .

CARR: MacArthur Park.

DYMALLY: Yeah, and Congresswoman [Lucille] Roybal-Allard went and made a pledge to them that if they stop fasting she will attempt to generate more support for them in Congress, and I think they stopped. So I just did the first part. And that was tough. That wasn't easy.

CARR: How did you get to know and get connected with the Filipino communities within your district?

DYMALLY: Well, don't forget, most of them lived in Carson. I represented Carson. And that introduction of a piece of legislation. . . . Boy, they came to Washington. They came to the office. We became very good friends. You know, they raised money for me and honored me several times.

CARR: Any particular representatives from that community that stand out in your memory who . . .

DYMALLY: They were mostly veterans. The mayor of Carson, when he ran, we supported him. He was a Filipino.

Now, you asked about the Samoan community. [Fofó I.F.] Sunia was on the Foreign Affairs Committee and of course we had joint affairs here with him. And then [Eni F.H.] Faleomavaega succeeded him and he was on the Foreign Affairs Committee. And so whenever he came out here I would join him at the Samoan community.

CARR: Now, there was a really big issue about easing citizenship requirements for American Samoans, which you supported.

DYMALLY: They had a passport, but they weren't citizens.

CARR: How's that?

DYMALLY: Very, very strange. Strange piece of legislation. They could come in here, but they weren't citizens.

CARR: Now, how would you compare that to the whole U.S. Virgin Islands?

DYMALLY: The Virgin Islands are citizens, but the Samoans were not citizens at the time. They had a passport to travel, but they weren't citizens.

CARR: They had an American passport to travel?

DYMALLY: Yes, but they weren't citizens.

CARR: Why?

DYMALLY: I don't know. That's when they. . . . It was before my time.

CARR: Were you ever successful in getting legislation to ease their ability to come?

DYMALLY: Well, they were doing that. Sunia, and I think Faleomavaega, worked on that. I don't know what ever happened.

CARR: OK. Two issues dealing with the environment I'd like to talk about. The first one is your vociferous support for calling for a limit on chemical weapons--limit of production, stockpiling. Was this just something you cosponsored or was it something that . . .

DYMALLY: No, I cosponsored that. Ron Dellums was the big champion on that sort of stuff when I was on his committee--not the Armed Forces Committee, the District of Columbia Committee. And I usually followed his lead. Although, at times it seemed to touch some sensitive nerves in the district because a lot of the aircraft part of that. . . . But I was not attacking the aircraft part. So no, I was able to get by without any major problem.

CARR: In your district, OK, you had Northrop, right? McDonnell Douglas [Corporation].

DYMALLY: Yes.

CARR: Lockheed.

DYMALLY: Lockheed. I had TRW [Thompson, Ramo, Wooldridge].

CARR: TRW.

DYMALLY: Rockwell [International Corporation].

CARR: Rockwell.

DYMALLY: Everybody except Boeing [Company].

CARR: Boeing. How did you communicate with these guys and how did they communicate with you?

DYMALLY: Very good question. There's an aerospace corporation on El Segundo [Boulevard] and Aviation [Boulevard], they would host a luncheon for me at my request. I've had Fauntroy, chairman of the Black Caucus, there. I've had Reverend Leon Sullivan. I had the president of Shaw University, Dr. Stanley [H.] Smith. And that's how I met them and was able to communicate with them. They were all great, great luncheons.

CARR: So every time you came to town and . . .

DYMALLY: Every time I requested they would put that together. Then they had very active lobbyists in Washington.

CARR: So was it the kind of thing where someone would come to you and say, "Hey, Congressman Dymally, we're not sure about your position on this," or "We would like more support on something like

this."

DYMALLY: Well, during the course of the campaign in '80, I looked around and a reporter said to me, "Gee, you're an old friend of Charlie Wilson." "Yes." "But where do you guys disagree?" And I said, "We don't disagree. Yeah, yeah, as an afterthought, I'm opposed to the MX missile." Just like that. So after I won the Northrop people came and saw me right away. And Mr. [] Jones, the chairman, who was a big Nixon supporter, invited me to come and meet him.

CARR: And what was that meeting like? What did they have to say?

DYMALLY: Well, that's an important part of their program and the number of employees they had, and number in the district. Well, I heard all, so it was impressive.

CARR: Was your relationship with these companies always a positive one throughout?

DYMALLY: Yeah, I would say so. Yes. Yeah, and then Northrop had a youth program. Then they gave me, I think, about \$120,000 to set up a jobs training program.

CARR: So if you asked, they were supportive, and so it was a very amicable . . .

- DYMALLY: Yes, it was a good relationship. Yes.
- CARR: Were there any particular business constituents within your district that you had conflictive relationships with?
- DYMALLY: Not really. The biggest one was the aerospace industry and I thought that my presence on the Science and Technology Committee was helpful. They liked that. They would have wanted me to get on the Appropriations Committee, but that was big time.
- CARR: You really would have to be around for a long time.
- DYMALLY: Well, I would have had. . . . Yeah, either luck or a lot of experience or connections to get there as a freshman. Yvonne [Brathwaite Burke] was on that committee, so there was a vacancy when she left. Those spots are given out by regions, so there was a vacancy. It was a natural for Julian Dixon to get the appointment.
- CARR: Right, because she had had it from that particular seat . . .
- DYMALLY: Yes, yes. It was a California seat, so to speak.
- CARR: So he took it. Back to apartheid for just a moment. You were opposed to the IMF [International Monetary Fund] giving money, or

loaning money, to South Africa, right?

DYMALLY: Yes.

CARR: How did that go?

DYMALLY: I don't know. I think eventually the United States stopped voting for the funds. That's one of the things that broke the back for South Africans, because we withdrew our support after the divestment bill.

CARR: Because the U.S. would have to vote . . .

DYMALLY: Could no longer support them.

CARR: . . . in support of a loan through the IMF.

DYMALLY: Yes. That's what broke the back of Rhodesia, too.

CARR: Because, in a sense, that kind of funding was the last ditch effort in terms of keeping a government going. How did you get that idea?

DYMALLY: I don't think it's exactly original. It just seemed to me the thing to do. I think Walter Fauntroy was on the subcommittee that had oversight responsibility for the IMF, the World Bank, Export-Import Bank.

CARR: Another thing, somewhat before a time, going back again to the environment. The Clean Air Act. Not only did you want to maintain it, you wanted to strengthen it.

DYMALLY: I had an amendment and I know [John D.] Dingell [Jr.] helped me get the amendment through. I forget what it was now. I can't remember. But I was not a main player, but I did get a significant amendment in there.

CARR: From a southern California perspective, how significant was your support of it?

DYMALLY: Well, my district wasn't all that hung up about that particular issue. This was basically a bread and butter district. Jobs were the big thing. The aircraft industry, aerospace.

CARR: We'll touch on one more somewhat environmental issue and then I'd like to move on to some more foreign affairs dealing specifically with Central America. Smoking. Very early on you wanted to establish some office dealing with the issue of smoking and public health. You were involved in it. You weren't the only congressman involved in it. Was it something that you just kind of . . .

DYMALLY: I was not a leader. I was not a leader in that. I was a follower, if at all I was involved. My position was basically individual rights that people had a right to smoke. My complaint, strong complaint, to the tobacco industry was simply this: if people were smoking in a

restaurant, I did not have to stay. There was a door for me to get out. But I had strong objections to smoking in the airplane because there was no escape. So that was my strong bit. You have a choice. You don't have to go to the XYZ restaurant in Hollywood if they have smoking. You go to ABC restaurant.

CARR: So you were for some kind of a conditional or optional choice whether to, say, have a non-smoking restaurant or a smoking restaurant.

DYMALLY: Yes. I wasn't a hard-liner, except for the aircraft because I suffered from allergies, asthma, all kinds of respiratory problems, and it was just hell. I remember I was coming from Jordan one time and just two of us were in first class, and this guy was walking around smoking a cigar. Just pacing up and down. Oh. I finally had to go and beg the stewardess to ask him to stop. Another time my wife and I were coming from Hong Kong and we were in the last seat in front of the smoking section. And two guys behind us smoked for eleven hours. We were sick when we got home. So that still is my position. I'm opposed to smoking but I'd like to have people exercise options.

CARR: Moving from domestic to foreign affairs. Could you tell me how you became involved in the whole issue of the Salvadoran revolution?

DYMALLY: In fact, I went down there and I'll tell you a little story. The president came up . . .

CARR: President Reagan.

DYMALLY: No, the president from El Salvador.

CARR: Who was that at the time?

DYMALLY: Oh gosh, I forget. A moderate guy. And he was talking to a group of congressmen, and they were urging him to release this guy and release that guy. And he said to them, "You ought to come and see me the way Dymally did." Because they thought that they were the ones who had gotten this guy released. I got him to release a labor leader whose children had come to see me, and he took exile in Holland. And then the INS [United States Immigration and Naturalization Service] was going to deport a student here from Dominguez and we read about it, we took up the case, and now he's a professor with a Ph.D. teaching in Texas.

But the killings were so obvious and so cruel down there. I went down there a couple of times, maybe more. I went with a delegation. There

were just five of us on the plane at the time, I remember. We went down there, met with the prisoners. See, when I was in the lieutenant governor's office I went to. . . . As chairman of the Commission for Economic Development, I went to San Diego to participate in the scheduling of Continental Airlines from San Diego to Denver. And there I met a woman. When she heard I was from Trinidad, she said, "My ex has a major share in Tesoro company. And I met the husband, and he introduced me to the chairman of the company, Bob West. And I went to the chairman and I said, "You're a Republican businessman. You are conservative, Republican. I'm West Indian, Democrat, liberal. Let's put [together] a committee for the Caribbean." So we started the Committee for the Caribbean. We got Humphrey to send a letter on our behalf. I called Andy Young, and he asked me to call him on a particular day, and then he got the State Department involved in it, and out of that came the Committee for the Caribbean. They later changed the name to Caribbean Latin American Council.

CARR: How did they get expanded to Latin America?

DYMALLY: That's the State Department. They assigned a guy by the name of Robert Johnson and they wanted to expand it to Latin America, to which I was opposed. But I eventually got dumped because I was considered to be controversial, and I was targeted for defeat by the Republicans.

CARR: Now, you were opposed to any kind of U.S. military assistance to the regime there?

DYMALLY: In El Salvador, yes. And to the Contras.

CARR: How popular was that stance at the time within Congress?

DYMALLY: Oh, among the liberals it was very popular. There was a bunch of us. There was strong support for that effort. We were just outnumbered. Don't forget, in the area of foreign affairs, unless there was legislation prohibiting certain programs, the administration claims executive privilege. We finally prohibited the government from giving any money to the Contras, which led to Conragate, etc. But historically, presidents have taken the position that that's their constitutional prerogative. So that was part of the problem we had.

CARR: But that's always been a point of conflict

between the Congress and the executive branch.

DYMALLY: Always, historically.

CARR: In fact, since we're on this subject, let's talk about Grenada. While it's not the same kind of thing in terms of funding, clearly the president took it upon himself to order troops down there.

DYMALLY: The president said that he had a request from the Caribbean leaders. What happened was there was a CARICOM meeting in Trinidad, which was inconclusive. Trinidad did not support such an effort and young Lester Bird of Antigua did not support such an effort. While he was flying from Trinidad to Antigua, his father voted on the telephone with the hawks, with Dominica and the other eastern Caribbean islands. And Reagan said that was the invitation he had to go in to Grenada.

CARR: Even if an invitation existed, that still didn't necessarily give the executive branch the clear power to order troops down there did it?

DYMALLY: Yeah, there's been a lot of precedence for it. President Johnson sent troops into the Dominican Republic. We sent troops many, many years ago to Haiti. The marines controlled Haiti for a long time. We were in Nicaragua, Panama.

CARR: So if it's a direct request from the executive branch then . . .

DYMALLY: Well, you don't even have to have a request. Bush wisely brought the matter up, the Desert Storm, to the Congress because he felt he had the votes. But presidents. . . . I was so emotionally charged with that Grenada issue. What troubled me more than anything else was we set a precedent of American troops going into a British territory. Even [Margaret] Thatcher was opposed to it. And she and Reagan were close. So that is what stressed me out. So much so that a colleague of mine came and talked to me about it--Harry Reid of Nevada--because he noticed how I was just so charged. He and I are still friends today. He's now in the Senate. Yeah, I was very upset about that.

CARR: Did it ever resolve itself for you on. . . .

[Laughter] I think at some point you cosponsored something to impeach Reagan for his. . . .

DYMALLY: [Laughter] I was strong for that one.

CARR: Were you?

DYMALLY: Yeah. A lot of criticism. I kind of forgot. New York, he died while in Congress. A very liberal guy, [Theodore S.] Ted Weiss from New

York, myself . . .

CARR: 1983 actually, you . . .

DYMALLY: . . . Dixon, too--Julian Dixon--to impeach
Reagan. [Laughter]

CARR: What was the reaction to that?

DYMALLY: Well, you know, everybody criticized us.

CARR: But this is how emotionally charged you were over
the issue.

DYMALLY: Yeah. But it turns out that I signed a petition
in Congress to pardon those who were found guilty
in the Bishop assassination. There's a different
word for it when you change from the death
sentence to life imprisonment. I collected
sixty-eight signatures and Radio Grenada made the
mistake of saying that the petition came from
Congress and not from members of Congress. And I
was told that influenced the committee to commute
the sentence from death to life. Subsequently I
had been down there to see Bernard Coard, whom I
had known when he was minister of finance. His
brother and I are very good friends--Dr. Floyd
Coard. I met several times very secretly, very
privately, with Prime Minister [Nicholas]
Brathwithe, urging him to grant clemency to them
and let them leave the island. This new Grenada

government threw up a trial balloon for Mrs. [] Coard, who is very ill, and there was so much protest that they backed off. They really went through a kangaroo court. It was just an awful, awful trial.

CARR: From your perspective, especially considering your concern for the Caribbean, what did the Grenadan invasion represent for the region?

DYMALLY: It was a different. . . . It caused the type of friction among states that never existed before. For instance, Trinidad was opposed to it. Jamaica supported it. Did [Edward] Seaga, prime minister, support it?

CARR: I don't recall.

DYMALLY: Yeah, Seaga was one of those hawks. Some of the islands were opposed to it, so it caused a lot of friction within CARICOM.

CARR: And then clearly Castro was absolutely. . . .

DYMALLY: Well, Castro was the fall guy. They tried to suggest that Castro was building a base. Oh, the State Department just went crazy about that. They claimed that Castro was building an airport there so he could use it to bomb Venezuela. And I said to them, "Why would he want to bomb Venezuela for crude oil when all the sweet oil is

in Trinidad? He doesn't even have to bomb Trinidad. He can just walk in and take control of the oil fields there." It was just awful. The propaganda was so strong. And actually, the airport project was started by [Eric M.] Gairy, the prime minister then. He went to Germany, no help. He went to U.K., no help. Canada, no. The U.S., no help. And Maurice Bishop went to visit Castro and told Castro about this project and the next day, almost, the tractors were there clearing. There was a hill that you had to cut and put it in the sea to level off the land. It's a beautiful airport.

CARR: So you voted to impeach Reagan. Back to one other foreign affairs issue. Back to South Africa for just a moment actually and then that may be it. How were you able to deal with the whole issue? I mean, you have. . . . You're pushing for divestment from South Africa and you were pushing for an end to apartheid. But then you also have this whole issue that South Africa annexed this whole country.

DYMALLY: Namibia.

CARR: Namibia.

DYMALLY: Yeah, and they were very stubborn about it

weren't they?

CARR: Well, they still have Walvis Bay don't they?

DYMALLY: Hmm?

CARR: They still have Walvis Bay, the whole little area.

DYMALLY: No, I think they gave that up. Yes. Since Mandela took over, they gave that up. It was tied in. The two were inexplicably tied together.

CARR: But not many people paid attention to Namibia.

DYMALLY: Namibia.

CARR: It almost seemed like the forgotten country there for a while.

DYMALLY: That's correct. That is absolutely correct. Everybody was focused on South Africa. But the feeling was if you got rid of the regime in South Africa, which you eventually will, then you'll get freedom for Namibia, which is eventually what happened. Namibia is now a very stable country.

CARR: Now, were you in support of any particular faction or group in Namibia?

DYMALLY: Yes, I visited the SWAPO [South West Africa People's Organization] camp in Angola.

CARR: OK, now who headed SWAPO at the time?

DYMALLY: The president of Namibia now. I forget.

CARR: Yeah.

DYMALLY: How could we forget his name? I forget his name and I had dinner with him in Namibia. I went to Ohio when he got his honorary degree at Central State [University]. [Sam] Nujoma.

CARR: Yeah.

DYMALLY: He got an honorary degree at Central State and I attended the ceremony too.

CARR: What was that meeting like and did it influence your position in any way?

DYMALLY: No, that's after they became independent.

CARR: OK, so you didn't meet him before.

DYMALLY: No, but I met. . . . I went to the SWAPO camp before they became independent. He wasn't there.

CARR: He wasn't there. OK. I think it might be a good time to stop for now and. . . . Actually, no. There's one other thing I'd like to touch on for today before we move on. A very significant person, Walt Bremond, died in 1980.

DYMALLY: Walt started Brotherhood Crusade, of which Danny Bakewell is the number one person now, and is very active in the movement. Walt died of a heart attack. He and I became good friends.

CARR: How did you become close? Because you eulogized him.

DYMALLY: I was very active in the movement. I was very active with the movement in support of the Panthers--I forget what his group was--and the Congress of Racial Equality. I was very, very supportive.

CARR: Now, the Congress of Racial Equality was kind of an umbrella group of all the various organizations.

DYMALLY: Yes.

CARR: Well, no. That's CORE. I'm thinking of . . .

DYMALLY: UCRC. United Civil Rights Committee.

CARR: There's United Civil Rights Committee, which became the umbrella for the Panthers, and US [Organization], and . . .

DYMALLY: No, no. Panthers and US were always kept out. They weren't involved. They were separate. In fact, there was friction between US and the Panthers.

CARR: Bremond is one of those leaders that kind of gets lost in the shuffle a lot when we talk about this period. What did he bring to the table and what made him a significant leader in the community?

DYMALLY: He was not jaded. He was not uptight. He was always conciliatory. He was always open to negotiations.

CARR: Interesting. And I guess you said a eulogy for
 him, or you wrote a eulogy for him?

DYMALLY: Yes.

CARR: OK. Great. Thank you very much.

[End Tape 15, Side B]

[Session 14, July 17, 1997]

[Begin Tape 16, Side A]

CARR: Good afternoon, Congressman Dymally. Today, what I'd like to start with, and perhaps focus on for most of the interview, is the inception of the idea for the Charles Drew Medical School, which led to basically the King-Drew hospital. . . . Medical complex.

DYMALLY: Just the opposite. The hospital first, the school after.

CARR: Exactly. And how the idea came to you, how you became involved, and how it developed over the years.

DYMALLY: Let's start off with the riots of. . . . Nineteen sixty-three?

CARR: 'Sixty-five.

DYMALLY: 'Sixty-five. OK, that's right. I ran for the senate in '66. Governor [Pat] Brown appointed a commission headed by Mr. [John A.] McCone, who was head of the CIA. The commission became known as the McCone Commission and several. . . .

Warren Christopher served either as a staff director or a member of the commission. Yvonne Burke was a staff person on the commission. They made several recommendations, two of which affected Watts. One was the absence of transportation. The other was the absence of health care. It turns out that a young doctor just before and after the riots was trying to organize a hospital for the area.

CARR: Do you recall the name of that doctor?

DYMALLY: Dr. [] White. I forget his first name. And so Kenny Hahn, Supervisor Kenny Hahn, put a measure on the ballot.

CARR: So it was a county measure.

DYMALLY: County measure, and the measure failed. And having failed, then he went to what was little known then as joint powers agreement. Through joint powers agreement you could issue bonds. And who were the joint powers I don't know--joint powers would suggest that there was another power other than the county or there were several powers within the county. And they issued bonds to build a hospital. The hospital was built and he wisely named it the King Hospital. That was Kenny Hahn's doing. Now, then. . . . I heard two

versions of this story, but I will tell you the version I know personally. Dr. Alfred Cannon was a young professor at the UCLA School of Medicine in the Department of Psychiatry. He and I became very close friends and he initiated a number of programs--the Frederick Douglass Preschool, the Central City Cultural Center. He went to Dr. Weekes, who was head of the Drew Medical Society and the patron of black medical doctors in this city, with the idea of a postgraduate medical school. The school was then initiated between UCLA, USC, and the county of Los Angeles and they started this postgraduate program.

CARR: Where was it located?

DYMALLY: There was a Quonset hut--now we call them modular houses--right across the street from the King Hospital. They ran out of money. They came to me under the mistaken notion that I represented the area. I did not go quite that far south. I represented Watts, but I wasn't into Willowbrook. Senator Ralph Dills represented [the area]. But it seemed to me quite a good challenge and we introduced legislation to study the effects of medical schools in California. The [California State] Department of Finance said, "Hey, we know

this. There's a surplus of doctors." What we did not articulate very well was there was a shortage of doctors in the inner city--a surplus of doctors in the affluent areas. So that didn't get any place. We tried a second one, didn't get any place. So I finally said to them, "What do you really want?" They said, "We want some money." I said, "Why didn't you say so." So we introduced a bill to hook up Drew school with UCLA.

First let me go back to some legal problems. The state of California's constitution prohibits the use of public funds for private schools. And so the state could not fund Drew. Thus, the reason for the affiliation with UC.

CARR: USC? Or UCLA?

DYMALLY: No, UCLA. As a matter of fact, I had UCLA in the bill and the lobbyist for the board of regents made me change it.

CARR: Why?

DYMALLY: The affiliation is the board of regents because UCLA is governed by the board of regents.

CARR: It is . . .

DYMALLY: Part of the UC system. The board of regents is the governing body. And I remember that

amendment very clearly. He said, "No, it has to come through the board of regents." So we introduced this bill. Now, the dean of the medical school. . . . The first dean, I forget his name now but a phone call would tell us--we haven't had that many--was a Republican who was close to the Reagan kitchen cabinet, one of whom was [Henry] Salvatori, who just died recently. And I said to him, "Why don't you go to Reagan's kitchen cabinet--you know them, you're a Republican--and tell them how important this bill is." So he went and the bill passed because now the Department of Finance had no opposition to it. Dr. [Mitchell] Spellman was the dean.

CARR: The California Department of Finance.

DYMALLY: Yes, and the governor signed the bill--S.B. 1026.¹ So the affiliation was really legally with the University of California. For practical reasons it was with UCLA. So that's the graduate school now. At that time now, because of the prohibition of state funds to a private school, USC dropped out.

1. S.B. 1026, 1973 Reg. Sess., Cal. Stat., ch. 1140.

CARR: Oh OK. I see.

DYMALLY: And they started this program and then just before the dean left for Harvard Medical School they came back to me with a proposal to have a four-year institution. And the question again rose about the absence of accreditation by Drew. So they had to use UCLA accreditation, which created some problems for the doctors at Drew because many of them could not get tenure. They couldn't get on the tenure track because they were kind of between and betwixt, so to speak. And so we offered a resolution at the board of regents.

CARR: What year was this?

DYMALLY: Oh gosh. I was lieutenant governor, so it has to be between '75 and '78.

CARR: 'Seventy-five. OK.

DYMALLY: Now, I should go back with a little anecdote. During the course. . . . As I indicated earlier in our discussions, the lobbyist for Los Angeles County, Mac--they called him Mac, I think it was McClellan--did not care too much about me. I don't know why. He views me as a radical communist. And he went to Assemblyman Bill Greene to tell Bill Greene to stay away from me,

DYMALLY: and Bill Greene says, "Hey, not only am I supporting him, I believe in everything he does." Bill Greene and I were as thick as corned beef and cabbage. He then passed word to Kenny Hahn's office. . . . Oh. Senator [Stephen P.] Steve Teale, who was an osteopath and had engineered the merger of the osteopaths and the M.D.'s in the state, introduced a bill to remove hospitals from the joint powers agreement. I get a call from Ted Watkins of the Watts Labor Community Action Committee about the fact that I had gotten Steve Teale to introduce this bill to kill the Watts hospital. Now, I had never heard about joint powers agreement before and I was too embarrassed to tell him I didn't know what he was talking about. So I faked it and I said, "Let me check with Steve." So I go to Senator Teale and I said, "Steve, what is this joint powers bill you have here? It's causing me some problems." And he burst out laughing. He said, "Merv, there's a little punitive measure I put in there to teach one of my hospital districts a lesson in my senatorial district." And I said, "It's causing problems in L.A. People think that you introduced that because of me." Unfortunately,

Ted really believed that. When we offered the resolution to develop the four-year school he came to testify, and [William French] Smith, the regent and former attorney general, turned to me and said, "Is he for or against UCLA?" Because he began testifying for Drew, but ended up criticizing UCLA. And when he went outside he said to Virna Canson. . . . He repeated this story about the joint powers agreement with Virna Canson, who was head of the NAACP, and Virna, of course, defended me. So that was a total misunderstanding there. So anyhow. . . . Because Virna used to work out of my office. We got the resolution passed so there was a four-year program. The students went to UCLA for the first two years and they came to Drew for the last two clinical years.

CARR: OK. But they applied to Drew?

DYMALLY: Yes, they applied to Drew. And one time Drew selected a taxi cab driver from Columbia who was driving taxis in Los Angeles who wanted to be a doctor all his life. They accepted him because he qualified. He just didn't have the opportunity before. And Drew's edict was that if you are committed enough to come here with us and

DYMALLY: promise to spend some time in the inner city or the barrio, we will guarantee that you will stay here, all things being equal.

One of the things I want to mention is something that got me into trouble with some of the doctors. It was during a very militant period and the doctors wanted Drew to be independent. Well, under the Master Plan for Higher Education. . . . They wanted to affiliate with [California State University] Dominguez [Hills]. Under the Master Plan for Higher Education state colleges could not have postgraduate classes or that kind of affiliation. They didn't quite understand that.

Second, they didn't quite understand that if they went private they couldn't get state funding. Now, they didn't understand that because Meharry [Medical College] and Morehouse [School of Medicine] were receiving state funds. But it was happening at the same time when Meharry was almost about to close down because they were in such dire need for funds. So I said to them, "Look, you guys can't save Meharry and you want to go private here. Where are you going to get the money to run the school?" They didn't

quite understand California's constitutional provisions. Now, I would add that Senator [Donald L.] Grunsky introduced legislation to provide direct aid for the students in the private medical schools--Stanford, Loma Linda [University], USC. Someone took the case to the district court of appeals and won.

Now, I had UCLA research all of the court cases for me, the constitutional provisions, the Master Plan for Higher Education, and I took them to Drew--they have since lost it--to show them what the problems were because most of these doctors were out-of-state doctors and they didn't quite understand the prohibitions against public funds to a private school. So Drew is a private school with an affiliation with the University of California, in particular UCLA. And the funds go to the regents, from the regents to UCLA, and from UCLA to Drew.

CARR: Now, technically, Drew is the only historically black college in the state of California.

DYMALLY: Compton [Community College] at one time tried to get such a classification, but at the time Compton had so many Iranian students and so many Hispanic students I don't think they qualified.

But I am the one who offered legislation in Congress to make them a historically black school.

CARR: Drew or Compton?

DYMALLY: Drew.

CARR: How did that work? Explain that.

DYMALLY: It was just a couple of words to a health bill that Representative Waxman was carrying and we got it in as an amendment.

CARR: But before the existence of Drew and [Watts-] Willowbrook [Regional Medical Program], it had not existed really as an entity unto itself, did it?

DYMALLY: No, the hospital started first, and after the hospital the school.

CARR: Let's go back a bit. Did Senator Dills have any trouble with you basically stepping into his territory and kind of taking over?

DYMALLY: That's a very good question. Because for whatever reason I cannot understand to this day, the senator became very unhappy with me. Long after that I. . . . When I announced my retirement, a woman who's on the board of Drew, Caffie Greene, who felt that Drew had never recognized my efforts, had a recognition day for

DYMALLY: me. I recall very clearly. Northrop came and Dills came. And I said in accepting all of these awards and everything that were it not for Senator Dills you wouldn't have a school here because Ralph felt very strongly about the separation of the private sector and the state-- separation of church and state. Later on I heard he was very unhappy with me and I went to his office and I said, "Ralph, why are you unhappy?" "Well, you guys ignored me. Ignored me." I said, "But Ralph, that wasn't my affair. I was just a guest, a special guest as it is." And I said, "I gave you the recognition you deserve because had you got up and opposed this piece of legislation it would not have passed." To his credit he had at times a better record on NAACP rating than I did because he went down the line with them where I would have some disagreements. Well, certainly on the school breakup. That's one time he got 100 percent and I didn't. So he had a good record and was very, very attentive. But to this day I'm very, very distressed about it. And every time he gets ready to run he develops this paranoia that we are going to get somebody to run against him, but every time he

has run, we have supported him in our tabloid. So no, he wasn't unhappy, but on this particular day, he apparently was. In '92 during this recognition day for me, he partly felt that he wasn't given sufficient recognition. But it wasn't his day. It was my day.

CARR: Now, did you. . . . Before you got involved with the King-Drew situation, did you discuss it with him? Did you say, "Hey look, I've been approached on this," or did you just take the situation and run with it?

DYMALLY: I don't recall. I think somewhere along the line I discussed it with him, but I took the initiative and ran with it because I thought it was something that I wanted to do and something that would be a testimony to my contribution to the district I represented. And I say that because the patients obviously came from my district, too. And I knew all of the key doctors there. You know, I knew them very well and, as I said, Al Cannon. . . . Now, it was Al Cannon who came back to me. The head of the Drew Medical School was called the dean. And as you know, deans don't have a lot of prestige negotiating with the foundations because the dean is a dean

is a dean.

CARR: Right.

DYMALLY: Al told me I should write the board and have the board make the dean the president. So I wrote the board and then they started off with "president-dean"--hyphen dean--and then they eventually dropped "dean." Then I wrote Kenny Hahn and told Kenny Hahn that you have the [Los Angeles] County-USC Medical Center downtown, this should be the King-Drew Medical Center. And if you go to the lobby of the King Hospital you'll see a plaque as evidence of that. So that was my suggestion also. But Kenny Hahn was that kind of responsive supervisor. And that hospital, everybody knew that was his baby. So he took good care of that hospital.

CARR: Why, from your point of view, did the first legislation that he--I guess it was a measure or a proposition--tried to get through to fund the hospital fail?

DYMALLY: Well, I suspect that the community was very unhappy with the riots and they looked at it as a reward for the riots. You know, the county, the conservative section of the county. And don't forget, most of the county was conservative

except for Kenny Hahn's district. Kenny Hahn represented the black community and the Hispanic community was represented by a very conservative Republican, [Peter F.] Schabarum.

CARR: Yeah, so . . .

DYMALLY: I don't know if Schabarum was supervisor around that time, but basically the east side had a very liberal district, but a conservative representative.

CARR: So Kenny Hahn was behind it. What other things did Kenny Hahn do to facilitate the hospital coming into being and/or the medical school later?

DYMALLY: Well, mostly the hospital. He provided adequate funds and moral support, as I said earlier, and political and fiscal support for the hospital. He was behind all of their initiatives. They had a supervisor who was responsive and who listened. The school was mostly state funded. The county didn't fund the school, so he wasn't quite as visible with the school as he was with the hospital. But everybody knew how important he was.

CARR: How did the location of the hospital get chosen?

DYMALLY: That was an old navy housing project during the

war, and after the war a number of people left. The county exercised eminent domain. I think the land belonged to some federal agency and the houses were not of that great quality.

CARR: OK, so no one really got displaced.

DYMALLY: I understand that some of the houses. . . . Somebody told me they bought a house there for \$4,500 in '46.

CARR: So the land was secured, the hospital was underway. Was there a particular community group that was really behind the effort to build a hospital?

DYMALLY: Yeah, and they're still around there. What they did they. . . . In structuring the board they got some community people, so they always had strong community support. Always have and still do right now.

CARR: Any one particular person stands out in your memory that . . .

DYMALLY: Well, Mary Henry was one and Caffie Greene another, and they're still on the board. And then of course the Drew Medical Society, which included all of the black doctors, was strongly behind the school. So all of us had great support. It seems that they've had one, two,

three deans. [David] Satcher, who is now going to be surgeon general and is now head of the CDC [Centers for Disease Control] in Atlanta, was acting dean.

CARR: The first acting dean?

DYMALLY: No, he was third. It was Dr. Spellman, who is now at Harvard, then another doctor, Dr. [M. Alfred Haynes]. Satcher was acting dean and he got this spot at Morehouse when the dean there became Secretary of Health under Reagan.

CARR: From the more philosophical perspective, why was this hospital important for the community?

DYMALLY: Well, they had to go all the way down to the east side and there was not even adequate transportation. You used to take a private bus, the Atkinson Red Bus, from Watts to Broadway and Manchester. And from Broadway and Manchester take another bus downtown. And from there take another bus to County Hospital.

CARR: And how did that affect emergency services in that area?

DYMALLY: Oh my God, it was disastrous. As you reflect now you begin to ask yourself the question, "How did people get all the way down here in times of emergency?" You find some cousin, some brother-

in-law to take you down here.

CARR: Right. Why the name Charles Drew for the name of the . . .

DYMALLY: Well, there's a myth about it. The story goes, and I understand it has been debunked by a person who knew better, that Charles Drew discovered blood plasma at Howard University. He was traveling in the South and he was in an accident and he bled to death because the hospital wouldn't provide him blood plasma. Subsequent stories have come out that it's not true. So he became very famous, Charles Drew. And one of his nieces, I think . . .

CARR: His daughter actually.

DYMALLY: His niece, or somebody, is a city councilwoman in Washington, D.C. Is it his daughter?

CARR: Oh, well, then it's his daughter who runs a medical association or something . . .

DYMALLY: Oh, is that right here now?

CARR: . . . here in Los Angeles as well. And then the other thing, what was the appeal of having a medical school right there?

DYMALLY: Well, it started because of the inadequacy of health care services in the inner city. And it started as a postgraduate school. In other

words, back in the old days you used to go and be assigned to a hospital and you wandered around the halls until you worked your way out. There was no guidance for fellowships. You worked sixteen, eighteen hours a day and you learned by doing. They put a little class into this by giving some instruction along with the practical training. So it was designed originally for doctors who had finished college and who were now doing their fellowship to move into specialties. And that was so successful they decided to have the four-year program where they went to UCLA two and Drew two. Now, Drew subsequently got accreditation. It was Drew Postgraduate Medical School and then they changed it to the [Charles R.] Drew University of Medicine and Science. They're accredited now.

- CARR: So before, its accreditation came through UCLA.
- DYMALLY: At first. Now they have their own accreditation.
- CARR: But UCLA students still do their first two years at UCLA, correct?
- DYMALLY: Yes. That is my understanding. I don't know if any developments have taken place since they got accreditation. But in its early stage, yes.
- CARR: Has anyone at any point. . . . Was there any

protest on the part of UCLA to essentially take Drew students?

DYMALLY: No. In fact, some of the black doctors became very paranoid about UCLA taking control, and they complained about it all the time. And I always had to tell them, "That's the law." They had to have oversight responsibility because it was state funds. They didn't want UCLA. And a lot of resentment developed against UCLA because its own medical school practices were at question about admission of blacks. And they saw this as a way for UCLA having an easy way out and saying, "All the black students can go to Drew." So there was always a measure of controversy. But from a practical point of view they could not exist then or now without UC--financially. They could break away now, but they can't get any state funds. It would be like USC or Loma Linda or Stanford.

CARR: So it's still to their benefit from a financial point of view.

DYMALLY: Without that I don't think they could survive.

CARR: Al Cannon. You said you knew him very well.

DYMALLY: Oh, very well. Al Cannon is one guy. . . . When the Times attacked me, you could find a letter

from Al Cannon defending me.

CARR: How did you meet him?

DYMALLY: Oh my God, I forget how I met Al. But, I mean, he was so active in the movement it would have been impossible to miss him.

CARR: To not know him.

DYMALLY: To not know him. Oh, I know what. Reagan started the whole managed care system through a young doctor from Stanford by the name of Brian-- Dr. Earl Brian. And Al was into it. He came to me to see that the black doctors could get a start, because what was happening was the large medical clinics were coming into Watts to sign up patients, taking them away from the local doctors.

CARR: Over the years. . . . Well, let's stop there for a moment, just on a personal note. What kind of person was Cannon? I mean, I've heard a lot about him in many different places.

DYMALLY: Well, he was a very visionary person. By the way, he finally had to leave UCLA because he didn't publish, so he perished. And then he ran an African program for Drew. He got funds from the Congress to run programs in Liberia and some other parts of Africa. He had a separate

operation. And so when I went to Congress I was very supportive of that action. I visited with him. He went to Zimbabwe. He went to study herbal medicine at the university. Then [when] they found out who he was, he started to teach there. Then he became the doctor for Mrs. Mugabe. He bought a beautiful piece of rolling hills from the Rhodesians who left for South Africa. And one day he was eating an ice cream cone and rocking in the chair and he just had a massive heart attack and died.

CARR: Now, his involvement in terms of. . . . You told the story about it was his idea to start this hospital.

DYMALLY: Not the hospital, the school.

CARR: The school. How did he remain involved through the process of getting the school built?

DYMALLY: Well, he was head of psychiatry and he was always pushing for change. As I said, on this question of the title, he came to me about it, and I wrote them, told them they should change the title.

CARR: Did the location of the school, that is the Watts-Willowbrook area, make it a particular magnet for grassroots organizations that wanted to have a voice?

DYMALLY: Yes, absolutely, because, don't forget, this was probably the only shining product of the riots. So a lot of grassroots people were involved and joined in the construction of the administration building. I remember we had a big to-do with UCLA because of the absence of minority contractors. So all of that created resentment. UCLA laid out bare that minority contractors didn't qualify financially because you had to have bonding capacity and a lot of other things. Many of them at that time, when the administration building was being constructed, were actually going out of business because the construction business had slowed down. So all of this controversy led to resentment against UCLA.

CARR: I see. Now, you have the hospital itself on one hand. You have said, somewhat cynically, that you didn't feel legislation really helped your constituents.

DYMALLY: That's an exception.

CARR: This is the exception.

DYMALLY: This is the exception that makes the rule relevant. Yeah, that was an exception and that's why I was very anxious to have something. . . . Dymally was instrumental in getting this. And

every now and then they. . . . Drew has never really recognized me for that effort. They gave me a couple of plaques here and there. Caffie Greene, who is still on the board, is the one who organized this day for me. It was a very impressive showing of support.

CARR: I assume it brought some employment to your constituents in the broader area.

DYMALLY: Lots of employment, yeah. Drew. . . . I forget what was the per capita income there, and the amount of money that circulates in that hospital and that medical school. One needs to call the medical center.

CARR: Do you have any misgivings about how the whole thing came about? And if you were to do it or be involved in it over again, is there any way you'd do it differently?

DYMALLY: No. But the one thing I would have done, and I did do it. . . . After I left Congress, Bill Greene had legislation to create the Hawkins Applied Research Institute. And in a conference committee Maxine Waters killed it.

CARR: Why?

DYMALLY: It was in the Times.

CARR: Yeah, and why did Maxine kill that?

DYMALLY: Because she didn't want . . .

CARR: It to be named after . . .

DYMALLY: No, no. She didn't want Bill and I to have an institute that we might control. It just says that in the Los Angeles Times; I'm not telling you anything private. Bill appeared before the conference committee and he went home. And when he went home she got the money taken out. So subsequently, the Drew administration came to me about getting some funds for an institute. And I told them, where were they when. . . . They were very silent when she did that. Nobody protested. So they still don't have an institute to this day. It passed the [state] senate, but died in the conference committee.

CARR: Now, when you were a regent, as lieutenant governor, was there anything you were able to do to help the school?

DYMALLY: Help Drew?

CARR: Yeah.

DYMALLY: Well, I carried a resolution to create the four-year affiliation.

CARR: OK, four-year affiliation. Now, within the context of affirmative action and certain things going on with . . .

DYMALLY: And then, you know, when I went to Congress, Gus and I had. . . . When they were having financial problems we got Chancellor [Charles E.] Young to come over there and meet with them. We had a roundtable discussion about the future of Drew.

CARR: What kinds of problems were they having during that time?

DYMALLY: Well, there has always been a squeeze for money.

CARR: Now, is it simply because of the state funding or . . .

DYMALLY: Well, the state funding was not adequate and their private fund-raising was not very prolific.

CARR: Now, technically as a private institution, because they are technically a private institution, hypothetically that should be one of their strong pursuits, to raise money for themselves.

DYMALLY: Well, that's a big problem. They've never done a good job of that. They have a little jazz festival and they have little banquets, but that's not the way you raise money. You've got to go for some big bucks. Well, they did get some money from the [Robert Wood] Johnson Foundation in New Jersey to build the administration building. So every now and then

they pick up some money, but they've never had a lot of money. They don't have an endowment fund, one. And they don't have an alumni association with an age attached to it, and that's the important thing in alumni work. And they don't have any tuition.

CARR: Why? Because the tuition is paid to UCLA, correct?

DYMALLY: Yes. But most of the students, they go on scholarships. So they don't have much money. You've got to have an endowment fund if your university is to grow. You look at all of the schools that are constantly building and growing; large endowment funds. They have special portfolio managers on campus--money managers.

CARR: Right. Now, was that. . . . When the process started, did anyone give that any serious consideration?

DYMALLY: Not that I know of. Not that I know of. I always talked about it, but I don't know that. They tried little dinners here and there. But I don't know that they had any top-notch fundraiser, what they call a program development officer.

CARR: So you get through this whole process. If you

were to, say, rate this on a scale of one to ten, in terms of your career accomplishments, where would you put Drew?

DYMALLY: Nine.

CARR: Nine.

DYMALLY: Yeah, I'm really proud. They frequently mention S.B. 1026 and Dymally, and I always feel good about that.

CARR: You still didn't attach your name to that one. Why not?

DYMALLY: I always thought it was so lame. If I had significant legislation I always thought it was vain to attach it. Usually, to attach it you've got somebody to attach it for you. And I felt sort of embarrassed to tell somebody, "You go name this after me." Yesterday my niece [Jackie Williams] called me. She works for the [United States] Department of Commerce. And I have another niece [Atara Dymally] who works for Jesse [L.] Jackson [Jr.]--the congressman. My niece calls me and says, "There's a rumor in Washington they're going to be naming a post office after you." I said, "Oh, they probably have the D's wrong. It probably is Dellums because he was chairman of the committee. I was just chairman

of a subcommittee." So I said, "No, no, no." She said, "OK." And I go home and there's a letter from Congresswoman [Juanita Millender-] McDonald saying that she's proposing to name a post office after me.

CARR: In Washington?

DYMALLY: No, no. Here in Compton. So I called my niece and she said, "I called you back to tell you it's true because your niece saw it on the Internet." She was gathering signatures. So I wrote Juanita back and said, "I'm overwhelmed. I'm deeply grateful, but I'm always nervous about these things because I would be very disappointed if it were rejected."

They named a park after me in Lynwood. And one day I went by and the sign was taken down and I thought, "Wow, maybe they changed their minds." [laughter] But, no. They were redecorating the place. They subsequently changed the name.

CARR: Now, Ted Watkins. What was his involvement in the whole process?

DYMALLY: Ted was one of the main pillars. When you asked me for people who really pushed that project, that hospital, I really should have mentioned Ted, although he wasn't on the board. But he was

as close to Kenny Hahn as anybody in the community. And Kenny Hahn supported him and he supported Kenny. And so he was deeply committed to the hospital and was very, very influential there.

CARR: This is one of the things I don't understand. Kenny Hahn. . . . Given the fact that through especially that portion of his career he was surrounded by very conservative supervisors, how was he able to get the funds out of the board?

DYMALLY: For years it was a known fact here that Kenny Hahn was never elected as chairman of the board of supervisors. They would absolutely not. He was too liberal for them and they prevented him from being supervisor.

CARR: From being chairman of the board.

DYMALLY: I'm sorry, for being chairman. Late in his career he became chairman. That was a big milestone when he became chairman. But he was always a good district person. In those days, each one of the members of the board had a piece of pork that they were able to dish out themselves. They each got an area. And he may have in my judgment--this is purely guesswork--he may have had hospitals.

CARR: Yeah. One of the things that has struck me about him over the years is that if you see him speak, like in a given neighborhood or something, he can list just off the top of his head, "Oh yes, remember the toys I got for you at Christmas?"
Or . . .

DYMALLY: Yeah, he goes all the way back. He starts telling you about the time he met President Truman on the train at Union Station and told the president that he was going to win. He had lots of stories. And he had. . . . He was a Bible-preaching politician. So that appealed to the church folks. He was very popular among black ministers.

Let me tell you a little story. My lesson with Kenny Hahn. Councilman Billy Mills was a very ambitious young man and determined that he was going to run for supervisor, without really having his friends counsel him about that decision. So he announced, and invited those of us who were his friends to a press conference. And we thought, "Hey, here's our chance to unseat Kenny Hahn." Because when Billy ran for city council Kenny Hahn's brother, Gordon, was a member of the city council. And by Billy's

announcement his brother just dropped out because his brother was a Republican in a black district. So Billy thought that he could really topple Kenny Hahn. We thought so too. But Gil Lindsay stuck with Kenny Hahn because, don't forget, Gil Lindsay came out of Kenny Hahn's school.

CARR: Right, in fact, he was a staff person.
Field . . .

DYMALLY: Field deputy.

CARR: Field deputy for Kenny Hahn.

DYMALLY: He whipped the shit out of us. He beat Billy in his own precinct. He beat us in Watts. Taught me a lesson that I shall never forget. But he . . .

CARR: And what was that lesson, from your perspective?

DYMALLY: That you just don't jump in a campaign against an incumbent because he's white representing a black district. But he never held that against us. He never displayed it. Some people hold these things against you for life. Not Kenny. So he forgot. Over the years he and I became very good friends.

CARR: Is it possible to even begin to do a study of black politics in the Los Angeles area without starting somewhere with Kenny Hahn?

DYMALLY: No, because you can't escape Kenny Hahn. He was on the city council representing a black district. He brought Gil Lindsay along. Went to the board of supervisors. He defeated an incumbent. No. No. You would be guilty of omission.

CARR: How many of the black . . .

DYMALLY: There's a guy who wrote a book--at Fullerton--about black politics and never mentioned me once. Yeah, so you know.

CARR: How many other politicians besides Lindsay do you feel, if they weren't directly influenced by Hahn, were indirectly influenced by the way he handled things?

DYMALLY: I don't know. I don't think so. I don't know. I've never heard anyone praise him privately or publicly the way I do. Maybe Yvonne [Brathwaite Burke] might be grateful for the help she got from him. But I try to be objective about it. You study his modus operandi. He had an instant crowd there, something that we couldn't deliver. If a vice president came to town or a senator came to town, Drew Medical School, King-Drew Medical Center, and boom, the crowd was there.

CARR: Now, that's another issue that I've always found

interesting about him. It was that it seems like he was one of the earliest local politicians to court statewide and national allegiances.

DYMALLY: Although he didn't do that well when he ran for statewide office. He ran for U.S. senator one time. But his specialty was his district. They couldn't touch him in this district. He served his district well. I mean, you could always expect a plaque from Kenny Hahn if you requested one from somebody from his office. He had a full-time photographer.

CARR: That seemed to be one of the inside jokes, that you could always find a picture of Kenny Hahn with whoever. You know, Big Bird . . .

DYMALLY: He's the only politician I know who had a full-time photographer. And the photographer would take pictures of you and anybody else you wanted at that party, and they sent it to you. So not just pictures with Kenny Hahn. If Senator X or President Y were there, you'd just tell the photographer you'd like to get a picture, and the next thing you know a beautiful picture is in the mail.

CARR: But what this photographer also did, he was a master at getting things out to the local press.

DYMALLY: Yes. But the local press liked Kenny Hahn too. They liked him. And the Sentinel was. . . . You know, the Sentinel. . . . He was one of their favorite guys. But the thing that Kenny Hahn did so well, he named several buildings and parks after prominent blacks, which is an easy thing to do and nobody ever thinks about it. He had that power. A golf course named after . . .

CARR: Chester Washington.

DYMALLY: Chester.

CARR: There's the H. Claude Hudson Building.

DYMALLY: Leon Washington got something. I don't know what he got, but wherever. If he were alive today he'd still be doing that.

CARR: Let me turn over our tape and then we'll continue.

[End Tape 16, Side A]

[Begin Tape 16, Side B]

CARR: Now, you were saying.

DYMALLY: I'm saying, if he were active and on the board he probably would have named something after me.

CARR: Yeah. Let's move from this a bit and start to head back into your congressional career. One footnote, you've mentioned Johnny Otis here and there during these interviews. I think you've

mentioned him once actually. Did he work for you at one point?

DYMALLY: Yes, after I got elected Johnny gave up music and went into the ministry and then he came to work for me. And then the "oldies but goodies" decided to come back on the scene and he began getting gigs and just went on. His brother was an ambassador. You know, Johnny Otis's name is Veliotes, you know that.

CARR: No, I didn't know that.

DYMALLY: Well, it's a very interesting story. Johnny ran for the assembly against a guy named Don [A.] Allen [Sr.], and after the election people said to him, "Gee, I didn't see your name on the ballot. That's why I didn't vote for you." His name on the ballot was Veliotes. He never thought about putting Otis on the ballot. And so from then he went and changed it to Otis, legally. His brother was assistant secretary of state for the Middle East and subsequently ambassador to Egypt. He was considered an Arabist, a very good man, and now he's head of the publisher's association. So Johnny ran for the assembly. And then--that was back in the sixties--when I went to Congress he had given up

music and converted his house, the downstairs of his house, into a church and became a minister.

CARR: Why did he give up music? Did he ever talk to you about that?

DYMALLY: Well, the Brits had taken over rock 'n roll. He was one of the originals in rock 'n roll. The Brits had taken it over. The white musicians had taken over rock 'n roll. And even though Johnny was white, he was considered black because he lived a black life. His wife, his children, his music, his life, his culture. He and I became very friendly and he came to work for me.

CARR: What did he do for you?

DYMALLY: Just fieldwork. Fieldwork.

CARR: What area did he cover for you?

DYMALLY: Hawthorne. He worked out of the Hawthorne office.

CARR: And how did it come about that he got. . . . Did he just come to you for a job one day?

DYMALLY: I think we mentioned this in passing, and I knew that he would not have been. . . . He would not have asked me if he were not serious.

CARR: Let's move ahead a bit to about 1983, in terms of your congressional activities. Central America is a big thing around this time. Reagan is

pushing very hard for the funding, direct funding, for Central America.

DYMALLY: For the Contras.

CARR: For the Contras. And you're part of one of those factions that just thoroughly opposed it.

DYMALLY: Well, it was stopped by the Boland Act--chairman of the Rules Committee--which prohibited the CIA from using any funds. That's the beginning of the Watergate scandal.

CARR: You mean Iran-Contra.

DYMALLY: I'm sorry, Iran-Contra. Because in the absence of federal funds they had to go to the private sector. And so the Boland Act. . . . Now, I was not an initiator of anything. I don't consider myself a leader in that fight. I was just mostly a supporter in that effort to withhold funds. I was very vocal against the Contras in committee. I remember one time I called them a bunch of pimps, and Congressman [John S.] McCain [III], now a senator, said, "What do you mean by calling them pimps?" I said, "They are sucking the financial blood out of Americans."

CARR: From your perspective of being there at the time, try to put some reason to passion, if you will, of why the Reagan administration was so bent on

supporting the Contras. It could not have been just the issue of the specter of communism.

DYMALLY: Absolutely, it was.

CARR: Really?

DYMALLY: Our whole foreign policy was geared to crush communism--from the forties--and Reagan escalated it. Evidence being his invasion of Grenada, his support of the Contras, calling the Russians an evil empire, his advocacy of tearing down the Berlin Wall. You know, they really went after communism. And they did not want any communist influence in the Western Hemisphere. Their position was that Castro was one too many. So yes, they were motivated by anti-communism.

CARR: If you were . . .

DYMALLY: They'd have you believe, the Reagan administration, that the communists were in Tijuana, just ready to cross the border.

CARR: By part of this anti-communism. . . . I mean, by the eighties, wasn't there a sense that really the cold war had really been won?

DYMALLY: The difference with Reagan anti-communism and the fifties anti-communism of [Joseph R.] McCarthy is that McCarthy was personal, Reagan was ideological. Reagan didn't call you a communist

because you disagreed with him. They fought the communist state, not the individuals. Besides, everybody had been scared off by then, individuals and organizations had been outlawed.

CARR: Given the fact that you have gotten so involved in foreign affairs--and I know you've already expressed to me that you really didn't have an interest in being involved in the State Department after leaving Congress--but what would your alternative foreign policy have been?

DYMALLY: Just one major one. Two. I would have certainly recognized Cuba and reconciled our differences.

CARR: Why?

DYMALLY: Because the opposition became irrational and they were really out for territorial gain. And besides, the neighboring countries didn't see Castro as a threat. Besides, we were recognizing Russia, the evil empire, and all the communist states in Eastern Europe, recognizing China. Our Cuba policy was influenced not by any State Department grand policy to contain communism, but rather by the anti-Castro Cubans in Miami. And then I would have gone down in history as an initiator of peace. I would go to all the so-called rogue states and make peace and be the

peace initiator.

CARR: Rogue states such as?

DYMALLY: Vietnam. North Korea, Iran, Iraq, Syria. There has to be an exception to the rule, I told you, in politics. The rule is not effective unless there's an exception. South Africa would have been the exception.

CARR: South Africa would have been an exception.

DYMALLY: Angola. I would have made peace with Angola.

CARR: Now what would you . . .

DYMALLY: Because the end result of our position in Angola has been suffering for so many young people who are crippled for the rest of their lives because of our involvement in that war. And that's what's sad about it.

CARR: During your travels, what was your involvement in Angola?

DYMALLY: Well, I was a supporter of MPLA [Movimento Popular de Libertacao de Angola], and opposed to UNITA [Uniao Nacional para a Independencia Total de Angola] and [Jonas] Savimbi, even though I knew their people, and since getting out of Congress I've met with them a couple of times. I just felt that we should not have been there. We were not there until the Clarke Amendment was

eliminated.

CARR: The Clarke Amendment? I don't . . .

DYMALLY: The Clarke Amendment prevented us from giving aid to the opposition--UNITA. And when that was repealed, then we started giving aid by way of Zaire to Savimbi. And that caused great, great misery and still is causing it. Even to this day they're having fights about territorial imperatives.

CARR: Now, when Castro got involved . . .

DYMALLY: Well, Castro saved the MPLA. The MPLA could never have survived the onslaught from Savimbi if Castro were not around. But what was ironic about the whole Castro presence there, Castro, whom we were trying to put out of business, prevented the oil fields from going to Savimbi. And Cabinda. . . . Castro's troops prevented the rebels from taking over the oil fields while at the same time we are doing everything to kill him.

CARR: Coming back on the local front, just some names that come up over the years. How did you come to know Alex Haley?

DYMALLY: Very good question. Oh yes. I went to Delta Theta sorority. [They] invited me to their

regional conference in Seattle. At the time I was the only black senator. And that's when I first met Alex Haley, and over the years we touched bases. I remember when the president of Gambia came here I was one of those people who was invited to a private dinner with him and the president of Gambia. I had gone to Gambia also. And when he had his lectures at UC Berkeley, I was invited as a special guest. So I kind of followed him around in California.

CARR: Now, going to some local issues: District of Columbia. You had supported the changing of how judges were appointed in the District of Columbia. What was behind that and . . .

DYMALLY: It was just a reform that came out of study. I chaired the Subcommittee on Judiciary and Education. How I happened to get those jurisdictions is really kind of comical. When we were organizing, everybody chose an area in which they had an interest. And I chose education, but education wasn't enough. Judiciary didn't have a committee, so they combined judiciary and education.

CARR: Also, one of the things that's coming more into on a Caribbean front, coming more into kind of an

international sight, is the whole issue of Haiti. From the mid-eighties on, Haiti really almost starts to. . . . It starts the attention of kind of. . . . The human rights atrocities of [François Duvalier] "Papa Doc," and later [Jean-Claude Duvalier] "Baby Doc," really come into sharp focus.

DYMALLY: Well, Walter Fauntroy had a member of his staff who was a former CIA agent who was married to a Haitian. So he had all of the dope and he got Walter very much interested in Haiti. And I, of course, was chairman of the Caribbean Action Lobby. I was never one to compete for leadership position, so Walter and I worked very well. We went down to Haiti several times, met a lot of the military people there, trying to get them to have open elections, stop the slaughter that was taking place there.

CARR: What kind of reception did you get?

DYMALLY: These dictators are very, very cultured people. They're very polite people. They're not obnoxious, not at all, in private. I have never met one who was obnoxious. I mean, they were always charming. Chun [Doo Hwan] of Korea, Mobutu of Zaire, Castro of Cuba, Ortega of El

Salvador, Bishop of Grenada. They were all charming people.

CARR: So they just wined and dined you [Inaudible]?

DYMALLY: Not really. Even de Klerk and Botha, the foreign minister, were very charming when I met them. [Laughter] The most obnoxious people I know of are in American politics--the far right--but most of these autocratic leaders are very polite, cultured people. And they would welcome your taking time to come and talk to them. I remember . . .

CARR: How did they respond to criticism?

DYMALLY: Well, you don't go to a man's house and criticize him for God's sake.

CARR: Well, right, but I obviously--in a kind of diplomatic way--I assume you must have raised some kind of issues.

DYMALLY: Well, I'll tell you what my modus operandi was. I remember the president of Togo. . . . Remember, one time he was out and one time he was in. I had met him in Washington. The other thing is that people who represent these African countries knew when these autocrats came to town that I would see them. But my modus operandi was always in the man's house and in his country I would

never say, "You are a dictator. You have a bad record on human rights." I would say, "The Congress is concerned about human rights abuses in your country. And may I suggest to you, if something is not done about it they will probably withhold aid from you." That's how I approached them.

CARR: And what kind of response would you get from someone like a Duvalier?

DYMALLY: I didn't meet Duvalier until after he was deposed. I met Duvalier in France.

CARR: Really?

DYMALLY: Yeah.

CARR: When did that meeting happen, and how did. . .

DYMALLY: Well, I was in Nice. I had gone there to see Mobutu in his palace to talk about Tshisekedi, who was . . .

CARR: Etienne Tshisekedi.

DYMALLY: . . . who was under house arrest in Zaire. And someone told me that Duvalier was there, would I like to see him. I think the protocol officer. I said, "Yeah." I thought it was interesting. I went and he was there with his sister. His sister did most of the talking.

CARR: Because he doesn't speak English.

DYMALLY: A little bit. But his sister did most of the talking. And his big thing was he wanted to go back home.

CARR: The Tshisekedi thing is fascinating because Tshisekedi was at one time embraced by Mobutu and then for his criticism of Mobutu I think he put him under house . . .

DYMALLY: They had a love-hate relationship all the time. He was always Mobutu's critic. Mobutu would try to make amends with him and then he would try to exercise power, which Mobutu felt was reserved for himself. And Mobutu would fire him. This last time with [Laurent-Desire] Kabila, Mobutu brought him back in, he dismissed the Parliament, he got fired the next day. Did I tell you the story about what I've seen and how I saw him?

CARR: Yes, you've mentioned a bit of it. If you'd go into more detail I'd appreciate it.

DYMALLY: Well, some human rights people came to me and said that Tshisekedi had been moved from where he was, his village, to some other place. And they found out that Mobutu was in Nice, would I go and talk to Mobutu about his health and his safety. So I went there, and Mobutu said to me, "Well, why don't you go see for yourself?" So I said to

him, "Well, I came here on my own and I don't have any resources." So he arranged for me . . . He had his plane fly me from Nice to Brussels. And then I took Air Zaire from Brussels to Kinshasa. Then his other plane took me from Kinshasa to Bdolite.

Let me skip a little piece. That got me in trouble because I had to report it and then once you report. . . . And the groups came down on me-- the anti-side--that I took a free ride from Mobutu. If I didn't report it, I would get into trouble.

CARR: Because it would have gotten out eventually.

DYMALLY: So anyhow. So the chief of police for Bdolite picked me up and said, "Well, I don't know if Mr. Tshisekedi is ready to see you. He might be still resting." I said, "Oh, this late in the day?" He said, "Yeah, he and I were nightclubbing until this morning." So I said to the chief, "Well, if I do anything wrong in Zaire I hope you will be my police officer so you can take me nightclubbing." [Laughter] So I saw Tshisekedi.

CARR: What did Tshisekedi have to say?

DYMALLY: Oh, it was the same old story about the lack of

human rights, etc. But what troubled me about Tshisekedi. . . . Fortunately I had the conversation taped in the presence of an American Embassy official and had it published. But Tshisekedi said that I came there to convince him to join with Mobutu, which was a total lie. Fortunately the conversation was taped. But Tshisekedi was very popular in Brussels and the United States among the anti-Mobutu people. I subsequently went to visit with him in his house and on my way out--boy, that's the only time that I was ever frightened--the crowds there, seeing the American diplomatic plates, began rocking the jeep. I thought they were going to overturn it. And Tshisekedi's guy just came out, boom.

CARR: Everything stopped.

DYMALLY: Stopped just like that.

CARR: Now, if there was this love-hate relationship between Mobutu and Tshisekedi, why didn't he just kill him like he did a lot of other opponents?

DYMALLY: Yes, it's very interesting. He was too popular. He was too popular. He really controlled the popular vote in Kinshasa. I don't know about the rural areas, but in Kinshasa. . . . You know.

CARR: Moving back to the domestic front for a while,

you were one of the first people in the mid-eighties to really be a gun control advocate.

DYMALLY: I wasn't one of the first. Yes, I was out there.

CARR: You were out there?

DYMALLY: Yeah. There were people who preceded me.

CARR: You wanted to strongly regulate the manufacture and importation of guns.

DYMALLY: Yeah, but I was a strong follower. I would not consider myself to be a leader, because there were other people who had more information. See, I know very little about guns. I've never had a gun. I've never fired a gun in my life. I really don't know the technology of guns. I was just opposed to the killings that were taking place. So I wouldn't consider myself a leader. I was a strong follower. And the handgun control people did come and talk to me.

CARR: In terms of crime in your particular district, was this of any immediate concern for you?

DYMALLY: The drive-by shootings had just begun in Compton. Every week there were some stories about drive-by shootings. Senseless killings.

CARR: How were your field people dealing with that?

DYMALLY: They didn't deal with anything. It was just too volatile an issue. Afraid they might get killed

themselves. They did not like Compton.

CARR: Though your office was in Compton?

DYMALLY: Yeah, they did not like being there in Compton.

CARR: What was your opinion on gun control? What was your position?

DYMALLY: A lot of this philosophy, and a lot of these positions, and ideology, really stem from your background. I grew up in a background where guns were just used for hunting. Things have changed since.

CARR: Right.

DYMALLY: So I was never into the gun thing. I always felt that it was causing too many deaths.

CARR: Another thing on the domestic front. About '84 we're just beginning. . . . Reagan is slowly, but surely, dismantling all of these federal programs. What effect is that having on you at home?

DYMALLY: Disastrous effect in Compton. There was a piece of legislation, the Economic Development Act, which provided funds to rebuild the cities and commercial centers. Their criticism was that the private sector was using those funds to create private enterprises. But as the cities saw that, it brought in revenue, sales tax revenue. That

was killed. Housing, public housing, was killed. There was a halt in youth programs. All federally funded job programs were killed. It had a devastating effect on central cities.

CARR: Did you feel you had any power to do anything?

DYMALLY: Uh-uh. I was just overwhelmed. It was one of the sad things in Congress. The committee system and the administration are so strong that it's tough to buck that tide. Besides, Reagan had put a good coalition of Republicans and southern Democrats. . . .

CARR: Together. Now, with this . . .

DYMALLY: Interestingly, it was the same coalition that fought the New Deal.

CARR: Right. But now they had a president behind them. Consequently, they could accomplish a lot more. What were the long-term effects? The immediate and long-term effects.

DYMALLY: Well, I could tell you two that I talk about all the time. We created, first, a society of homeless people. And how did that happen? Well, here's how it happens. You're in public or private housing. Your wife is pregnant, she can't work. You're downsizing the aerospace industry. Your husband is laid off. Two, three

months go by, no rent. The landlord gives an eviction notice. They put your stuff out on the street. You find some shelter for the children or the wife, she goes back to the South with her parents. You have senior citizens now taking care of grown-up men and women because they do have a little house, a little shack, and he's out there. She's out there. The second one was the community of poor children. Because their parents became poor--the absence of income--they became poorer. So those two new dynamics were created by the Reagan administration.

Homelessness and youth poverty.

CARR: The long-term effect?

DYMALLY: The long-term effect was the rise of crime and the absence of jobs--the increase of drug trafficking. It's an easy way to make a dollar. What many runners did, they had juvenile delinquents. . . . I'm sorry, they had young juveniles serve as runners, and they did that because if a juvenile is caught as a mule, he's treated as a juvenile, not as an adult. But that juvenile goes home with a big stereo, a BMW, and the parents don't ask anything because he's now in a position to help them. And so there was a

total lack of control over that economic development of these young people because it was out of the parents' hand, in another underground structure. So you had this dismantling of the family unit. You had this early and illegal independence of these young people--having resources. And in some instances, parents never questioned the source of those incomes.

CARR: So what does one do as Congressman Mervyn Dymally, who has been elected, supposedly, to serve constituents in an area with his hands suddenly tied?

DYMALLY: You retire. [Laughter] [Inaudible]

CARR: Well, you retire, but we're still in 1984-85, so we have five or six years to go yet.

DYMALLY: You become very frustrated. You come home and you criticize Reagan, you hold these seminars, and you know deep down in your heart that you aren't producing. You send out these newsletters about what a great guy you are, about some co-authorship, about some plaque you gave somebody. It was just an intellectually dishonest position in which you found yourself, having to make out about something that was really nothing.

CARR: So in a sense, you've been very much into this

notion of delivering something to your constituents.

DYMALLY: Oh, I've been used to that in California.

CARR: And all of a sudden . . .

DYMALLY: You can't deliver anymore.

CARR: You're not delivering anything.

DYMALLY: There are those who believe that Reagan's people deliberately set up this deficit so the liberals would never have the money to help anybody. And this is true. We're sacrificing everything to balance the budget. There are economists who believe that that's not such an imperative. A deficit is a deficit is a deficit. The country's not going anywhere. Take care of it, but not at the expense of the poor, which is what's happening now.

CARR: On another level, what changes about the nature of getting elected as a politician?

DYMALLY; Oh, the cost. I hated it.

CARR: If you could compare the cost of your running for lieutenant governor in 1974 . . .

DYMALLY: That was a glass of milk. That was a glass of milk.

CARR: . . . compared to running for Congress your second term?

DYMALLY: Or for reelection in the state senate. That was a glass of milk. First place, you were limited in Congress. A friend or a PAC could only give you so much. A PAC could give you \$5,000 as a supporter. What was just aggravating, you had to go back to the same people. You get elected in '96, but in '97 you begin to raise funds for '98.

CARR: Right.

DYMALLY: You never stopped. And oh, I hated it. I went to these parties at the Democratic National Committee or these fund-raisers at the Beverly Wilshire [Hotel]. The same people you're tapping. And in my case, I gave all my money away to aspiring black candidates. Wherever they were, whoever wrote me or called me, I just gave them money.

CARR: You said that before. Who were some of the candidates you feel proud to have supported?

DYMALLY: Faye Williams, who was the first black woman to run for Congress in Louisiana--lost by less than 1 percent. I supported Shirley Chisholm when I was in the state, before I even knew her. I was the most generous giver in the Congressional Black Caucus. People all over would write me, call me. I helped, when he ran for Congress, the

mayor of Seattle. I forget his name now.

CARR: I forget his name, too.

DYMALLY: Doing an outstanding job there.

CARR: Now, so you're feeling frustrated, it's getting more difficult to raise funds, Reagan is just dismantling every kind of federal program coming along.

DYMALLY: I'm having difficulty getting up in the morning. So I knew. For the first time in my life I'm having difficulty getting up. I'm not that anxious to go to work before the employees. I've always gone and opened up the office. Now they're beating me to it. I'm falling out of love with the profession, becoming very tired traveling back and forth, because during the absence of production you want to come home and have some visibility because some people view the visibility with a greater degree of importance than your production. Then I discovered I had high blood pressure. Then I had prostate surgery. I knew then that I had to begin to take care of my health. My view is. . . . Considering how well I feel and what people tell me--I look so well--I began to wonder, "Was I ever looking bad?" I don't believe I would have survived had

I stayed in Congress. I'd probably have died of a stroke or heart attack.

CARR: Was that prostate cancer you had?

DYMALLY: Yes.

CARR: Now, you're dealing with all of this. There's kind of an irony here, at least in your district. The aircraft industry . . .

DYMALLY: Doing very well.

CARR: . . . is booming under Reagan.

DYMALLY: Doing very well. Very well. And that was a frustration because I never felt the wealth on the east side of the district--Compton, Lynwood. Yes, and Hawthorne, Gardena, Carson did well. So I was always frustrated.

CARR: Bellflower. You had part of Bellflower?

DYMALLY: Yes. I always felt there was never a transfer of economic power on the east side of the district.

CARR: And so as long as the contracts were coming in, from the Reagan perspective, those guys were happy.

DYMALLY: Oh, they were very happy with me. Well, first I voted against the MX [missile] one time, and they came and talked to me about it. How many jobs they got. . . . They had some blacks come and talk to me also about it. So I said, "OK, that's

DYMALLY: what you want me to do. I represent you."

I just received a notice to come and participate in a review of the redress and reparations. They sent a long form for me to fill out, lots of questions--at UCLA. I was unable to do it because I played a small and different role. What happened was that I was holding these forums, and at the one in Gardena a young woman came up to me and asked me if I knew anything about redress and reparations. I said, "No." She said, "Would you like to know?" I said, "Yes." So she arranged a meeting for me. And I met these young Japanese Americans who were just opposed to what was being proposed. The Japanese American Citizens League and Hayakawa did not want any reparations. They just wanted redress. They just wanted an apology. And they asked me how do I feel about carrying legislation for them over the opposition of the establishment. I said, "If you were from the NAACP I wouldn't hesitate to carry it. And I don't see why I should hesitate now, because you're from the district." There were more Japanese Americans in my district than any other district except Hawaii. Certainly more than

Mineta, certainly more than [Robert T.] Matsui.

CARR: You had Hawthorne, Torrance, and Gardena. Did you have Torrance?

DYMALLY: A little part of Torrance. After reapportionment I lost it.

They drafted this legislation, some UCLA scholars, etc., etc. Miya Iwataki then came to work for me, because I wanted to strengthen that link. I introduced the legislation fully aware that it wasn't going to pass because, first, it was late in the session. But what was happening. . . . I don't know if they had a secret pipeline or what, but they wanted to influence the commission's report by asking for redress and reparation. So my legislation was designed to show the other side of the story. It's the new, young Japanese American--who were children of the internees--who differed with their parents, and they wanted reparations. So my legislation was introduced late in the session. I think it was after the election in '82-'83. After the election, around December . . .

CARR: Yeah, it would have been in '82.

DYMALLY: It made a tremendous impact because I had the Aleutians in it. All over the country. . . . And

one--I said this to you before--some prominent Japanese Americans just scoffed at it, didn't think it was going to go any place, or that the Congress would ever vote for reparations. Lo and behold, the next year the commission came out for reparations. I don't know who went to Jim Wright, whether it was Matsui or Mineta or both because they were both influential.

CARR: Well, what about. . . Was [Daniel K.] Inouye in . . .

DYMALLY: Well, Inouye was on the other side, in the Senate. I am talking about the House. I don't know how strong his position was. . . . Jim Wright carried the legislation and assured its passage. Southerners and veterans were pushing this piece of legislation. And I wrote Miya the other day, "Look, Miya, I can't answer all of these questions because I wasn't in on the beginning of this whole movement, but my role was simply to accommodate you to carry legislation for you to send a message, make a statement about what the younger Japanese Americans wanted." So that was my role.

CARR: Philosophically speaking, what did you support? Reparations or . . .

DYMALLY: Both, because I knew very little about the issue of redress and reparations, the whole concept. And when they came to me I said, "Look, I don't know anything about the issue, but I'm willing to learn." So I became a student of their interests.

CARR: Now, redress is a very cultural thing, on a certain level, for older generation Japanese.

DYMALLY: They did not want reparation. They thought it was . . .

CARR: Beneath them.

DYMALLY: . . . beneath them. Yes. Hayakawa opposed it publicly. The Japanese American Citizens League opposed it.

CARR: Why did you support reparations?

DYMALLY: Because these people came to me.

CARR: And that's what they wanted.

DYMALLY: Yeah, that's what they wanted. They were constituents. They were young, forward-looking, visionary young people. By all means.

CARR: Now, I'm going to be horrible. What about the whole movement within the African American community dealing with that issue?

DYMALLY: Well, after I introduced the legislation I began getting a lot of mail. "Why didn't you do it for

the ancestors of the slaves?" And I said. . . . My answer was published in Jet magazine. It was very blunt. I said, "The Japanese worked on this for forty years. For forty years they never gave up. This is not a movement they started in the eighties. There are people who have been working on this and never gave up." And I said, "If you want this, you need to do what they did. You need to develop a movement." And then they went to Conyers, because he was on the appropriate committee. They went to Conyers, who introduced legislation to create a study commission. Never got any place, I don't know why, because at one time he was chairman of the committee. Why it never got out of committee. . . . But there is no large body of support for it. There were various groups around the country. In fact, since retiring a young man came to me several times to resurrect a movement. But there's never been a groundswell of support for that.

CARR: Why do you think that is?

DYMALLY: Well, because our conditions were somewhat different than the Japanese. Theirs was very current. They were very isolated. It was one group. We have since. . . . Slaves have emerged

into half-white, into a different mix of Irish and different so on. So I never felt that there was a great deal of support for the issue. They didn't take off, so to speak.

CARR: To convene a consensus and support.

DYMALLY: Yeah. There were some groups that were interested, and I kept saying to them, "You need to organize as the Japanese Americans did."

CARR: While you were supporting the amendment did you see the irony? Or did you kind of see . . .

DYMALLY: Oh, some people. . . . I don't know if they were unhappy with me, but they felt that I should be doing this for the blacks, not for the Japanese Americans. And I said to them, "Look, I represent them as well." This is not some issue that I just picked up. You know, by representing them. Just like the Filipino vets as I told you, they came from Carson. So it was a district response too, although it had national implications.

CARR: During this period, again, we have a theme: dismantling of federal programs, difficulty raising money for campaigns, rise of crime, blah, blah, blah. You're becoming increasingly frustrated with the notion of politics. What's

happening to the Democrats on a state level?

DYMALLY: Well, my view is that when we failed to support Jim Wright as the Republicans supported Newt Gingrich, it was the beginning of the end for us. And if you look, all the leadership just vanished after Jim Wright went. Rostenkowski and [Jack B.] Brooks, etc., etc. We just got defeated. We did not show the kind of courage that the Republicans have shown in supporting Gingrich. Had we done that with Jim Wright. . . . We fell into a Republican trap. The Republicans were unhappy with Jim Wright for supporting the Sandinistas and they were out to get him. And Gingrich just stayed on it. Stayed on it. Gingrich's theory was if enough raindrops fall on the rock a hole would be punched. I mean, you look at the people who were on that committee. I am just amazed that somebody didn't say, "Hey, why are we doing this?" The case against Jim Wright was very, very weak.

CARR: And what does that. . . . Is that an indictment of the character of the Democrats or is it more an occasion of political survival in the face of this growing and seemingly impervious Republican . . .

DYMALLY: Liberals always respond to editorials. Because many of the people who were silent about Jim Wright, who did not support him, came from districts in which that was not an issue and nobody really cared. . . . Jim Wright was not an issue in the districts. Jim Wright was an issue in Washington.

CARR: So in a certain sense, no one would have been held accountable if they voted one way or the other.

DYMALLY: If they had supported him nobody would have gotten hurt by that. But a lot of Congress is influenced by eastern editorials. The eastern media has a great deal of influence over Congress. A lot of guys pick up the Washington Post and New York Times, the evening news. That's what influences them.

CARR: To finish off for today, one thing. When you had previously considered running for Congress you really hated the idea of going to Washington, D.C.

DYMALLY: I had a bad case of hay fever. I went there in inclement weather. The place was very impersonal. That was in the seventies, but here it is in the eighties. I've got no place to go.

Here's a chance to get back into politics. It was a case of vindication more than anything else, to be honest with you.

CARR: Vindication. Talk to me about that. What is Mervyn Dymally saying by not only running for Congress in a district in which he is not expected to win but winning?

DYMALLY: I felt I got screwed by the media and the law enforcement agencies. And as I campaigned, the little old ladies would squeeze my hand and say, "I'm glad to see you back." And I knew that was an indication that they had some empathy about my position. I did not know what the sentiment in the black community was about me. There weren't very many Al Cannons that came out publicly, even though a number of people subsequently told me that they thought I got a raw deal. But nobody came out there and supported me as they would have supported Bradley. One of the ironies of black life is that we do not trust the media, but the media influences us. That's the great puzzle. You put something in the white man's paper about a black man and that's it. And that same person would turn around and tell you that the newspapers are racist. But yet they believe

DYMALLY: that same story written by a racist newspaper. So it was a vindication. I did not think such an opportunity would have ever risen. And I never thought about a future in politics. I thought I would have made a living in consulting. I didn't know how tough it was out there. I don't know what the hell I would have done, probably gone back to teaching. But I'll tell you something, the life of a defeated black politician isn't a very glamorous one.

[End Tape 16, Side B]

[Session 15, July 23, 1997]

[Begin Tape 17, Side A]

DYMALLY: Before I begin, let me pass on this little tidbit to you. Today I did an hour interview on the Voice of America [VOA]--beamed to the Caribbean--about myself, West Indian values, etc., etc. And then did something on waste energy with another person. So they're going to send me a copy of that tape and I'll turn it over to you.

CARR: Good. In terms of West Indian values, is there anything particular you . . .

DYMALLY: Yes, I identified the values which inspired me. And they were not necessarily in this order, but almost: education, hard work, family, and religion.

CARR: Religion. Let's speak about those family bonds. You've talked about helping to bring your family over, and so on and so forth. What precisely about this notion of collectivity within the West Indian value system is so important?

DYMALLY: While America was experiencing its Depression, we

didn't know very much about the suffering which occurred in the U.S., because under the extended family there was always an abundance of food. One, the Christians killed meat, the Indians had fish, the Africans had gardens along with the Indians. And so there was always a fresh supply of food: vegetables, provisions, and fish, and, on the weekends, meat.

CARR: Now, one of the things that occurs to me is this . . .

DYMALLY: That was sharing, not buying.

CARR: Some of the "trouble," and I put that in quotes, that you've gotten into over the years, politically speaking, did almost come because you helped family.

DYMALLY: Yeah, family in a large sense. You have to include friends in that. I told you this before. I just don't know how to say no to someone who comes to me for help. I suspect if I were a lawyer I'd either be very famous or very poor because I would probably take on just about every case that came to me. And so that doesn't work quite the way it does in the legal fraternity, because in politics you have to be perfect. A lawyer, a famous lawyer, could argue a terrible

case and his client goes to the gallows and he's still a brilliant lawyer because of his argument. A politician, as long as he's associated with a measure, even though he has no control over what people do, he takes some of the blame for it. But that is the nature of this business, and if you're not prepared to take that blame then you would end up doing nothing.

CARR: Now, growing up in a society in which the extended family really is kind of the backbone of society, how does that affect one's notion of trust?

DYMALLY: Well, there's a great deal of trust. And I think inherent in trust is tolerance, and tolerance for religion, tolerance for race. So these phenomena never emerged as negative circumstances, growing up. In fact, the VOA asked me today, "How was it growing up?" I said, "Well, it was a lot of fun as a boy. Fish and fruits and cricket and soccer."

CARR: Switching to pretty much the middle eighties and a bit beyond actually to the late eighties and 1990, I'd like to discuss some issues that were really at the forefront of your career at the time. One, I'd like to discuss some of your

business involvements with Angola. Two, I'd like to discuss two African agencies you were involved in. Actually, no. There's only one agency involved in Africa and the other was the Mervyn Dymally Scholarship Fund, which you've mentioned here before.

DYMALLY: What was the agency in Africa?

CARR: The agency in Africa, that would have been the . . . That would have been a committee . . .

DYMALLY: Constituency for Africa? Not that?

CARR: No, the Coalition for a Free Africa.

DYMALLY: Oh, OK. Fine. All right. Fine.

CARR: Coalition for a Free Africa.

DYMALLY: First, I did not have any business operations in Angola. What I did. . . . Jesse Jackson, after he left the presidential race. . . . What year was that? 'Eighty-two, was it? 'Eighty-four?

CARR: 'Eighty-four.

DYMALLY: Yeah, '84. He took a delegation to Angola, and the Angolans asked him to set up a committee of businessmen and women to negotiate with them about some business enterprises. Jesse appointed such a committee and left out his best friend and the only genuine businessman on the trip.

CARR: Who was that?

DYMALLY: Dick Griffey, who was a sort of financial guru in '84, and put in a lot of time and money and effort and advice. And so Dick wrote him a letter and said, "Gee, I came all the way here. You put the committee together and you left me out." So Dick was included on the committee. And Dick had a lot of experience in Africa. All not fortunate ones, but that's the nature of African business. So he sent his young lawyer down there, who spent a considerable amount of time in Angola.

CARR: Who was that?

DYMALLY: Umm. Gosh . . .

CARR: Was he also with Solar Records?

DYMALLY: Yes, yes.

CARR: Roberts?

DYMALLY: God. Van Brunt. Peter Van Brunt. And Peter went to Angola, and finally got a contract for an allocation.

CARR: Allocation of what?

DYMALLY: Of oil.

CARR: Now, what were they planning to do with this oil?

DYMALLY: I'll tell you about it in a minute.

CARR: OK.

DYMALLY: So the Angolans did not live up to their

contract, and Dick Griffey was brought to me. Now I'm chairman of the Congressional Black Caucus. He came to me, and he and I went to Ethiopia as guests of the OAU [Organization of African Unity]--big reception. Then we flew to Angola, and [José Eduardo] dos Santos, the president, had just left for Cuba. So we met with the number one general there. We talked about the case, about the contract. But that wasn't the right person. Then we went back again, and this time we talked with the people who were in charge of the oil company. And I forget, Sonangol [Angola Oil Company] or something like that. And I said to him, "You reneged on a contract because someone from California called you and put the bad mouth on Griffey, didn't he?" And he says, "How do you know that?" And I said, "I am a voodoo man." And he laughed. So you know, I didn't know that, but I got it out of him. Apparently their number one guy here . . .

CARR: You just took a guess.

DYMALLY: Yeah. The number one guy here, who was their adviser and had been going down there in rough times, apparently called and raised some

questions about Griffey. So nothing happened again.

Then I went to South Africa to the Aspen Conference with de Klerk and Botha and Mandela.

CARR: What year was this?

DYMALLY: Oh gosh, just after Mandela was freed. And there I met the Russians who were attending the conference on the whole question of peace in southern Africa. And they invited me to Portugal, because they were mediators in the peace conference in Portugal between Savimbi and MPLA. So I went there, to the peace conference, and when I came back and things were partially settled--never settled in Angola, still is not--Assistant Secretary for Africa Hank Cohen came to me and said did I have any objection to providing aid to Angola, and I said, "Yes." And he was somewhat surprised because I was a big MPLA supporter. He said, "Why?" I said, "Well, they don't live up to their word." And I told him about this contract, and Griffey sent him copies of the contract and a video. Now, he had his emissary, a young ambassador, go down to Angola. They said to the ambassador that Griffey was supposed to do public relations in the African

American community and he didn't do it. Well, that was a little ridiculous because that's Griffey's strength. Marketing in the black community is his strength. That's how he markets his records. So he sent the contract to Hank Cohen to see there was no such agreement in the contract.

CARR: Now, how did Hank Cohen get involved?

DYMALLY: He was the assistant secretary for Africa and he came to me about giving aid to Angola. And I said, "They don't live up to their word," that they signed a contract with a constituent of mine and never lived up to it. And they're not going to live up to anything else if they don't do this one. So he sent his guy. And his guy told the president, "You have problems with the Congressional Black Caucus, one, and the black community, two." So as a result of that, Griffey sent them copies of the agreement--the State Department--and they . . .

CARR: How big was the agreement that they did sign? I mean, what I've read is it was like a \$12 million agreement, or something like that.

DYMALLY: I shall be honest with you. I don't recall. And so as a result of that, dos Santos gets

personally involved with this. He instructed the Sonangol to give Griffey the allocation and Griffey got a contract for three years. Now, the Committee for a Free Africa was the political arm of ADPIC. ADPIC was the corporation--African Development Public Investment Corporation.

CARR: And this was Griffey's group.

DYMALLY: Yes.

CARR: OK. What did Griffey intend to do with all of this oil? Resell it on the international market for a profit?

DYMALLY: Yes, he did. But you see, there's always a danger. . . Not a danger, but always a disadvantage when you have an allocation without a refinery. Indeed, some countries will not sell you oil unless you have a refinery, what they call downstream. So Griffey had to sell it to a broker. I think he sold it to Merrill Lynch [and Company].

CARR: So that's how he made his . . .

DYMALLY: Yeah, but he didn't make a lot of money because he had to sell it to somebody. Had he gone directly to a refinery, or his refinery, it would have realized more profit. But Griffey had a major, major program. Very ambitious program.

His program was if the Angolans would supply him oil he would find a refinery. And he would go back into the ghetto and reopen up all the closed stations, because, as you recall, a lot of the companies began closing stations.

CARR: The gas stations?

DYMALLY: Yes. His idea was to promote it as he promotes his concerts. It was to get Jesse Jackson, Michael Jackson, Stevie Wonder, and some other stars to open up each one of these stations and go across the country with a string of black stations. But to do that you have to have a steady flow of oil. We threw that proposal to the Sonangol. But I had no economic interest and did not benefit from that at all because I was in Congress.

CARR: How did dos Santos react to this proposal of, I don't know, having African oil stream directly into urban centers to help black people?

DYMALLY: They were all excited about it, but there was no follow-up. And that's one of the problems with African business. You know, unless you're in the ground there for several years. . . . But Griffey had a major dream, and his position was that this would be the first black oil marketing coming in.

Marketing is his strength. So that was what was behind all of that.

CARR: The Washington Post didn't present it that way.

DYMALLY: No, the Washington Post gave you the impression that I was involved in this enterprise. You see, this guy wrote about thirteen stories, eleven of which were anti-black. What's his name again?

CARR: I don't know.

DYMALLY: He's not on the byline there?

CARR: No, this is the L.A. Times. It was originally reported by the Washington Post and then the L.A. Times picked it up. So William [J.] Eaton was the L.A. Times guy, but the Washington Post person I'm not sure.

DYMALLY: Yeah, so they gave the impression that I had an interest in this because I was on the board of ADPIC.

CARR: Well, the way it was presented was that you secured a contract for Griffey through your connections with dos Santos, who was very much labeled a Marxist head of government.

DYMALLY: Well, I was flattered to know that I had that much power, but, yes, indeed I was influential. But I did not benefit from it. I mean, I was proud that it happened. I also got in trouble

with the Post because [Yoweri] Museveni of Uganda came to the Congressional Black Caucus and asked us to get Stingers. Stingers? Is that the . . .

CARR: The missiles?

DYMALLY: The missiles? Stingers?

CARR: Yeah.

DYMALLY: I said this guy couldn't be for real because here's Ron Dellums, who's opposed to distribution of arms, and then they turn around, after asking the Black Caucus to help them to get Stingers, turn around and give a contract to a white firm. There were two competing parties, one black, one white. They gave the white person the contract, and I wrote him a nasty letter. The letter was leaked by the ambassador to the press, so I came out like I was beating the bushes for Mamade Diane, which I was. He had given me campaign contributions. I always took the position that if your friends don't give you campaign contributions the Republicans sure in hell wouldn't give it to you. So I held to my guns. Now, the vice president came to see me and right in the presence of the ambassador I embarrassed the hell out of him.

CARR: Vice President Bush?

DYMALLY: No, of Uganda.

CARR: Uganda.

DYMALLY: And I said, "Your guy here embarrassed the hell out of me by leaking information to the press that I had written him a letter in support of a black man." He subsequently apologized to me.

CARR: Now, the problem or the perception--and we'll go back to this whole notion of perception--was that, one, Griffey had donated money to your previous campaign, and two, he had paid for some of your trips abroad . . .

DYMALLY: Yes.

CARR: . . . partially. So whether or not there really was a conflict of interest, there was the appearance of a conflict of interest.

DYMALLY: Well, I didn't see it that way. There's only a conflict of interest when you benefit from the enterprise. I didn't benefit from the enterprise. He paid my way. Who was going to pay my way? Myself? Now, let's be serious. One never gets credit for being honest. I reported it. Other people hide those things. I reported that, yeah, he paid my way. You sure in the hell couldn't ask the Congress to pay your way to help a businessman.

CARR: One of the interesting things about this is that this is about 1989-1990. You've basically managed to stay out of the press, positively or negatively, for a good long time, in terms of the national media.

DYMALLY: Well, yeah. That was deliberate.

CARR: And you talked about it.

DYMALLY: I figured no press was good press for me.

CARR: So all of a sudden this is something that comes up. Does it remind you of what you'd gone through with the L.A. Times in the seventies at all, or were you more experienced in some way to deal with something like this?

DYMALLY: You never are.

CARR: Really?

DYMALLY: You never are. It's always troubling. This guy--I forget his name now--who did the Post story just came out here, came into my office without an announcement, sat down there, and requested papers from the Dymally Scholarship Fund. This story was leaked by the staff of the Subcommittee on Africa.

CARR: Yeah, but how could he get access to papers on the Dymally . . .

DYMALLY: Very good question. Very good question. It was

leaked by the staff of the Subcommittee on Africa, the head of which--I mean the staff head, not the congressman--was in Zaire and was thrown out of Zaire by Mobutu. And when word was leaked that Jackie's boyfriend, Tempelsman, gave this grant to the school, he tried to hook it, you know.

CARR: He tried to . . .

DYMALLY: Make a whole big thing out of it.

CARR: And we'll get back to the Tempelsman issue because you've brought that up before in these interviews. So it comes up.

One of the things that strikes me as different, though, between the issues you had to deal with pretty much from the late sixties up through the mid to late seventies with the L.A. Times is that you seemed a lot less defensive this time around.

DYMALLY: That's right, because I was proud of these accomplishments. I was proud helping the guy whom the Pentagon leaked word out that I was helping him get a contract, because he was in my district. I think that's what I was elected for. I was proud of helping Dick Griffey. I thought, "Gee, there's a sense of accomplishment that some

head of state responded to me and a black man benefited." Yes, they tried to play it as a conflict because he paid my way. But a conflict. . . . You see, there are different interpretations of conflict. In my judgment a conflict is when you benefit. If I had benefited, not only would it have been a conflict, it would have been illegal.

CARR: Right. Well, you could also say his contributions were a form of benefit to you. His paying for trips that didn't have anything to do with . . .

DYMALLY: That's where I disagree with the media. Campaign contributions do not pay my rent. They are public moneys that I expended and reported to enhance my reelection. That is part of Americana. That's part of the political system. Without campaign contributions, how can you get elected? Is a writer going to send you a check? So at some point you've got to stand up for what you believe.

CARR: So your notion of benefiting--to make sure I'm interpreting [what you said]--is if a check had gone into your personal bank account, then that would be. . . .

DYMALLY: That's right. I don't regard campaign contributions as benefiting me because I personally, Mervyn Dymally, use my campaign contributions to help black and Latino and women candidates across the country. So I was doing good with campaign contributions. Some people hoarded their campaign contributions and they were grandfathered in and they used it for themselves. But that's a very interesting point you raised. Editorial writers would say, or reporters would say, "He received a campaign contribution from John Doe and he did him a favor, therefore he was paid off." I don't see it that way and I beg to disagree with those people. And if I'm in the minority I shall stay there.

CARR: Now, the help you had given to Diane. . . .
Right? Was it Mamade?

DYMALLY: Mamade Diane.

CARR: Was essentially to get him a contract for food shipments or something to Uganda?

DYMALLY: That's correct.

CARR: That was a direct request from him?

DYMALLY: Mamade was the only minority shipper of PL 480 goods in the country. Here was an African young

man who came here and did something no other African American did. I was very proud of that and I was hell-bent on helping him wherever I could. And I was really pissed with Museveni to come and ask the Congressional Black Caucus for Stingers and then you go and give the contract to a white man, with a black man there, an African man, as the only one in the country.

CARR: So you wrote a letter on his behalf to Uganda?

DYMALLY: That's correct.

CARR: And he did succeed in getting . . .

DYMALLY: No. No, the competitor won. The white competitor won and the ambassador gave him a copy of my letter and he leaked it to the press.

CARR: So essentially to thwart any [competition] for Mamade.

DYMALLY: He had won. I don't know why they wanted to discredit Mamade and myself. People don't know when to quit. But in my position, you're right, I was self-righteous about the damn thing. I did the right thing and I'm very proud of the fact. If you appear to do the right thing you are going to have conflicts with the white media because there's a different sense of values, a different concept of ethics. They believe that helping

somebody is a conflict of interest because a person gave you a campaign contribution. Why don't the publishers set up a fund and give us some of their profits so that we don't have to take from friends? Where do we get it from? Friend. Where would you get it from? A black friend. You know, a small businessman. No, I felt no pain about that.

CARR: So you go through this.

DYMALLY: As a matter of fact I felt a little proud. I felt a little bit like Adam Clayton Powell doing these things.

CARR: Did you? Well, it's interesting because listen to the tone of one of the quotes from the Times at the time. This is, in a nutshell, how you responded. I quote, "The Department of State is pleased with my work in Africa and more than thirty million African Americans will benefit when we are able to do business in Africa."

DYMALLY: And Griffey was a starter. See, Griffey started. . . . He's in Africa right now. This guy wouldn't give up. He really believes that if we could make this connection between Africans and African Americans we could make many millionaires in this country. And he's there right now. I

was supposed to meet him in Liberia to observe the election, but my host ended up in the United States on urgent business. So I didn't go, even though I had the ticket and everything.

CARR: Finish off with Griffey.

DYMALLY: I'm sorry?

CARR: You . . .

DYMALLY: By the way, Griffey had some nice things to say. One time a politician called him for a campaign contribution and he said, "The only politician who has ever responded to me has been Dymally." He and I are still friends to this day.

CARR: During this time you're also in a primary race. You're running against Lawrence [A.] Grigsby and Carl [E.] Robinson [Sr.].

DYMALLY: Well, Lawrence Grigsby belonged to a group called the Rainbow Lobby, which was very anti- . . .

CARR: No, it was the New Alliance Party wasn't it?

DYMALLY: Yeah, but the group behind it . . .

CARR: They were connected to . . .

DYMALLY: Yes. The group behind it was the Rainbow Lobby. They selected the name to confuse people . . .

CARR: With the Rainbow Coalition.

DYMALLY: Coalition. It was no accident. They were opposed to Mobutu and they were supporting

Tshisekedi, who is now on kind of house arrest by Kabila. And we were good friends. We started off as friends.

CARR: Lawrence Grigsby?

DYMALLY: No, no. The Rainbow Lobby.

CARR: OK.

DYMALLY: And they resented . . .

CARR: But hadn't they been connected to Lyndon [H.] LaRouche?

DYMALLY: At one time, yes. A long time ago. They were a spin-off. And they resented my making independent decisions about Zaire. They wanted me to go through them, and I took the position. . . Well, I was curious about what was going on and how would I get to meet Mobutu and talk to him and find out the other side of life. Not just the liberal side, the conservative right-wing dictatorship side. I was just curious. Pretty soon I would want to teach a class in a college. I mean I'm still a student.

CARR: Now, the question becomes this. One of the problems, the wedge that they used against you, is that in 1987 you split with the Congressional Black Caucus. You support Mobutu when they vote, essentially, to cut off all aid, all U.S. aid, to

Mobutu.

DYMALLY: That's not accurate. That's not accurate. Up until I was there Mobutu was still getting aid. There never was a vote. In fact, I'll tell you about the double standard.

CARR: Well, this is the Congressional Black Caucus, not Congress.

DYMALLY: No, they never did that. They never did that, no.

CARR: So you're telling me you did not have a difference of opinion with others in the Congressional Black Caucus.

DYMALLY: I went to each Congressional Black Caucus member and said, "Mobutu has requested a meeting with the caucus." And I went to Ron Dellums and he was a little uptight and . . .

CARR: Uptight how?

DYMALLY: "Why are you asking me?" And Mickey Leland says, "Look, he's asking everybody." Because Dellums was anti-Mobutu. He had introduced. . . . He was the one who had the resolution every year against Mobutu.

CARR: To cut off U.S. aid.

DYMALLY: Yes. So there was no disagreement. Don't believe everything you read. Ron Dellums and I :

were close friends. He made me chairman of his subcommittee as a freshman. OK? We were closer than the press would have you believe. Now, Howard Wolpe. . . . Listen to this now. Howard Wolpe, a white, introduced a resolution on the floor of the Congress praising Mobutu for his peace initiative between the MPLA and UNITA. Nobody ever criticized him to this day for that. I just went out to Zaire and caught hell.

CARR: No, but I ask these questions in a broader context. And a broader context is the somewhat hypocritical U.S. stance on . . .

DYMALLY: The other thing is Mobutu was the U.S.'s best friend. They were using him to ship arms to Savimbi by way of Zaire. No. But my exploration with Mobutu was purely one of learning how this whole system operates, how the dictatorship operates. But let me just finish. The first resolution against Mobutu came out of the subcommittee that I chaired. My staff wrote the resolution and gave it to Don Payne. These things you don't read in the papers. Now, Wolpe, my predecessor, praised Mobutu and my subcommittee resolution came out.

CARR: And what did that resolution. . . . What was the

crux?

DYMALLY: It was critical of Mobutu, you know.

CARR: But this was after your visit to . . .

DYMALLY: During my visits. I went down there right after. The other thing, Hank Cohen had used me to try and see if we could get Mobutu to join what was sweeping Franco-Africa. That was these national conferences, most of which turned out to be disastrous. And Mobutu. . . . I did get him to accept the bishop, and the ambassador was there-- whose name I forget, but her first name was Melanie []. She would tell you that right in the presence of many reporters I called him and. . . . Well, first I had lunch with the bishop []. And I said, "Why don't you accept the chairmanship of the national conference?" And he said, "Mobutu would never have me." And I said, "Well, let's see." And I called Mobutu and said, "You need to put the bishop on." And he put the bishop on.

I also got several thousand dollars for some pilots in Dante [B.] Fascell's--the chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee's--district. I went there and Mobutu said to me, "What can I do to improve my image?" And I said, "Well, you

need to pay Dante's constituents." And Dante Fascell called and said, "Hey, Merv, how did you that? I've been trying for years to get this money." They used to fly for Air Zaire, and when Sabena [Belgian World Airlines] took over that route they got laid off and the money was owed them by Air Zaire, and he paid them. Some of the pilots thanked me for the help I gave them.

CARR: How did your relationship with Mobutu evolve?

DYMALLY: I went down there with Mamade. Mamade and I became friends, and he was shipping to Zaire. Well, attention was focused on Zaire because of the opposition to Zaire by the Rainbow Lobby. But he also took me to several other African countries where he was doing business. Morocco, and. . . . He was well-heeled in the Ivory Coast. Everybody knew him, his mother was there. It was really not so much my relationship with Mobutu, but the opposition to Mobutu which turned on me. They picketed me in New York. They picketed me in Compton. Grigsby's people picketed me in Compton.

CARR: Yes, they went to your field office.

DYMALLY: Yeah. But they're dead now and I'm still alive.

CARR: More precisely. . . . [Laughter] I guess, from

that initial meeting with Mobutu, how did your. . .
. . . It's obvious that from that initial meeting .
you're able to have access to this guy.

DYMALLY: Because my position was always to tell him the
truth. "Look, you have problems in the
Congress." The Dellums resolution could pass at
any given time. And the reason why it didn't get
anyplace at that time. . . . He was very popular
with the Reagan administration, after the Clarke
Amendment was voided.

CARR: How did the Republicans view you?

DYMALLY: I got along very well with them.

CARR: Especially in light of the fact that the
Republicans were always very supportive of
Mobutu, at least in . . .

DYMALLY: They viewed me as practical. I remember when I
saw Botha, the foreign minister in South Africa,
he said to me, "I understand you're a very
practical man and we can work with you."

CARR: Did you consider that a compliment from someone
like him?

DYMALLY: Not really. They knew my position on apartheid,
but they also knew that they could sit down and
talk to me. A good example was I was opposed to
Radio Marti, opposed to TV Marti. Yet all the

anti-Castro people said I was a decent guy because I wouldn't go out of my way to block their legislation. First, it was Dante Fascell's legislation and, second, they had the votes and, third, they would have pulled the bill out of my committee and embarrassed me and taken it straight to the full committee. So I gave them a hearing, they had the votes, I voted no. Most chairmen don't do that in Congress. If they don't like the bill they just sit on it.

You take the Filipino bill that I passed to give them the right to become citizens. Representative Dan Glickman, who is now the Secretary of Agriculture, sat on it. Before him, Ron Mazolli sat on it. It took me a long time before I could get results. I went to Glickman and Glickman says to me, "I've got to check with the Pentagon." I said, "Dan, we aren't working for the Pentagon. We're working for the people. They're the enemy. What do you mean you're going to check with the Pentagon?" As soon as Barney Frank from Massachusetts came in, first year it went out, no question.

CARR: Your positions, as a practical politician, how did they affect your relationship with Jesse

Jackson, who oftentimes came off as kind of a strident ideologue, especially on issues dealing with South Africa?

DYMALLY: Jesse. . . . Well, my position on South Africa was always good. Jesse knew that I was very responsive to him. In fact, there was a meeting with members of the Congressional Black Caucus when I was home during a recess. And they said to him, "If you want to get this done, raise some money, and you ought to see Dymally." After I became caucus chairman he called me just about every morning around six o'clock, because I was able to take his message to the caucus and do some things for him in Congress. I went to Cuba with him, I went to Nicaragua, Panama.

CARR: There's an aspect of Jesse Jackson's personality that I think a lot of people don't like. That is, while he may appear to be an ideologue, he's actually a very good tactical politician.

DYMALLY: Well, you cannot disagree with Jackson's public policies. As a person, he's very self-contained.

CARR: What do you mean by that?

DYMALLY: Well, he's for Jesse. On a personal basis.

CARR: Elaborate.

DYMALLY: Well, if you're not of constant use to him he

doesn't maintain the relationship. Since my friendship with Griffey started, through turbulent times, we're still friends. He and his friends and my wife go out to a Cuban place maybe once a month. He likes Cuban music, so do I. He has Cuban friends. But he and Jesse were tight as corned beef and cabbage, but there's little relationship now. For someone who has been that friendly with me, that helpful, when they don't call me I call them because my sense of loyalty is very profound. My sense of gratitude is equally deep. But when Jesse gets through with you. . . . I think Maxine Waters is about the only person from California with whom he kept up a relationship, because Maxine spells power, and she's very, very effective in what she does and very supportive of Jesse.

CARR: So we finish off with Jesse. . . . Actually, no. We're not done with Jesse. To be philosophical for the moment, what did his run in 1984 represent?

DYMALLY: Oh, I think it was a significant breakthrough. It reminded me of 1960 when Kennedy ran and inspired so many young people and so many independents. Jesse inspired a lot of black

people to get involved in politics and the interest was piqued. It was very high.

CARR: Now, given what you've said and what I know, how much of it was ego driven?

DYMALLY: Well, I think he was sincere. I think he was sincere. He has a big ego, yes. But I think this was a serious run on his part.

CARR: Serious run for the purpose of at least raising awareness?

DYMALLY: Yes, and opening some doors and articulating issues and getting some influence. I think his running resulted in large measure in Ron Brown being DNC chairman, which resulted in Clinton's election.

CARR: Yeah, that was going to be my next question. How much did his run, which essentially solidified a bloc of votes, help him to trade with the Democratic party?

DYMALLY: Well, he didn't trade.

CARR: I mean make deals with.

DYMALLY: He didn't make any deals. He came in with Mondale kind of at the last minute really. He wasn't an early supporter of Mondale.

CARR: Now, we're going to shift back to local politics. You became a reluctant supporter of Dianne

Feinstein.

DYMALLY: No, on the contrary, a most enthusiastic supporter of Dianne Feinstein. The second time around she wouldn't meet with me. When I called wanting to meet her, the staff said to me she'd rather talk to me on the phone. When she first ran we met at the Beverly Wilshire for lunch. Then we set up a committee here with the elected officials mostly in south L.A. County. We had a major press conference at the Inglewood City Hall, and had receptions and raised money. At one time we raised about \$45,000 for her. She was the first candidate for whom we raised money like that.

CARR: When you say "we," who are you referring to?

DYMALLY: Ken Orduna, myself, and our group. Mostly Ken and myself.

CARR: Why did she come to you?

DYMALLY: I don't think she came to me. I went to her. Well, I became very distressed with the educational system under Deukmejian.

[Interruption]

CARR: So . . .

DYMALLY: By the way, I should say about Jesse. . . . Juan Williams was a major reporter for the Washington

Post.

CARR: Exactly.

DYMALLY: And he was given an assignment in a magazine of which I was a member of the advisory council. It was a magazine that was published by a Barbadian, American Heritage, through the Smithsonian Institution. It had to do with black culture. And I wrote the editor and said, "Why would you give Juan an assignment to write about Jesse when he's been anti-Jesse? He's been writing some very critical articles about Jesse." But Juan went off on me. [Laughter] I mean, it would make headlines all over. He claimed that I was a hatchet man for Jesse, you know, but it didn't enhance my relationship with Jesse one bit.

CARR: But Juan Williams's reputation within black political circles has always been a bit questionable.

DYMALLY: Fine, but the point was that you were asking about Jesse. You would think that having come to his defense that would have enhanced my relationship with Jesse. And after Jesse went to Cuba and got the prisoners, I nominated him for a Nobel Peace Prize, but it didn't make any difference.

CARR: Yeah, let me just turn this over for a moment.

[End Tape 17, Side A]

[Begin Tape 17, Side B]

DYMALLY: Now, I wasn't going to be influenced by leftist groups or newspaper articles. I'm going to do what I think is right and what I want to do so long as it was legal. And I was going to make the decision about ethics on my own. I'm not going to let any editorial writer or reporter determine what my ethics ought to be. My position was that in none of these enterprises did I benefit nor did I violate the law. So to hell with it.

CARR: Now, but unfortunately your Mobutu position or your relationship, however you'd like to term it, was used against you, or attempted to be used against you, politically.

DYMALLY: Well, after the Washington Post article came out I resigned. They raised the question about the Dymally Scholarship Fund, which was broke. I resigned from the fund, and the Roll Call wrote an article and said, "It's a sad commentary that these days in politics a man has to give up his own foundation to avoid so-called conflict."

CARR: Now, did your daughter [Lynn Dymally] take over

that foundation?

DYMALLY: Yeah. And Bill Eaton of the L.A. Times came and interviewed me about that resignation. But he ended up writing a Mobutu story two days before my primary, in which he said that I had circulated a letter on behalf of Mobutu. So I wrote the Times and said to them, "I'll make you an offer you should not refuse. If you could produce that letter, I'll resign from Congress in twenty-four hours." They wrote me a letter of apology that they were mistaken, but they never published my letter or their letter. I hope it's somewhere in the file. But what happened is that I was there when a certain incident took place and I went and talked to Mobutu.

CARR: Where were you?

DYMALLY: In Zaire, when someone was supposed to have been beaten up. And I went and talked to Mobutu about releasing the guy from prison, and the Rainbow Lobby got a member of Congress from New York to write a letter, which was contrary to the facts that I had experienced on the ground. And I wrote that letter to him saying, "This is what really happened."

CARR: Now, there was a whole movement to boycott

diamonds shipped out of South Africa, Botswana, all southern Africa basically, and you opposed it around this time.

DYMALLY: No. No, no, no. See, the story was totally untrue. I had a resolution to stop the shipment of diamonds from South Africa. The ambassador went to . . .

CARR: Which ambassador?

DYMALLY: The ambassador from Botswana to the United States went to Chairman Howard Wolpe and said, "My foreign minister is opposed to this legislation, because you cannot tell the difference between Botswana diamonds and South Africa diamonds because they're both owned by De Beers and Botswana.

CARR: Right.

DYMALLY: Wolpe did not believe him and called the foreign minister in Botswana, who was a woman at the time, and she said, "Yes." I was not on the subcommittee and the resolution was amended to do a study. The director of the subcommittee, who was anti-Tempelsman, anti-Mobutu, anti-Dymally, released this story to the Washington Post that I had changed it. Wolpe told them, first, I wasn't on the subcommittee so I couldn't have amended

it. Wolpe told them that it was his doing and he had called the foreign minister of Botswana, and she said it would hurt them, and he made the changes.

CARR: Now, with that in mind, this is the weird connection that the Washington Post reporter made with you and Maurice Tempelsman, because Tempelsman had a connection with De Beers.

DYMALLY: I didn't know that.

CARR: And he had also donated money, this \$34,000 or so, to your scholarship fund.

DYMALLY: No, no. That is the falsehood. He donated the money to the Metropolitan University in Puerto Rico because that's where they cut their diamonds. He went to the Congressional Black Caucus--God, I keep forgetting her name--and asked what could he do to help. The director [Amelia Parker] told him that Representative Mickey Leland had started a relationship with the historically black colleges and the historically Hispanic colleges. And there was this program at Metropolitan to which I was sending black and Hispanic students from Los Angeles for a summer, and he donated the money to Metropolitan.

CARR: So he never directly donated any money to your

scholarship fund.

DYMALLY: That is correct.

CARR: But it was presented as if he had.

DYMALLY: Yeah. What can I do? I don't know why. He wrote Mrs. Graham a long letter, because apparently they were social friends. So it was totally distorted. And the engineer behind that. . . . The Rainbow Lobby had the Subcommittee on Africa staff go to the Library of Congress to research any information on Jackie and Tempelsman. I mean, that's how deep they got into the anti-Tempelsman thing. And Wolpe wrote Tempelsman a letter of apology for saying he was a CIA agent. It got a little nasty. It got a little nasty there.

CARR: But aside from that, Tempelsman had always been very good at keeping himself out of the press. So that was one of the few times . . .

DYMALLY: Yes, that was one of the few times. Yes.

CARR: First and perhaps only time he ever . . .

DYMALLY: And it killed his summer program in Puerto Rico.

CARR: Had it not been for the press, would it have been likely that he would have continued to . . .

DYMALLY: Yeah. He and I are still friends. When Jackie passed I called him and he returned my call.

Anytime I call him he returns my phone calls. So he understood that there was nothing involved, that it was just a made-up story. There's one story that was pieced together. It took all kinds of circumstantial stuff and made a big deal about it, the money he gave to the university.

The other thing is this, here's another case of different interpretations about conflict. He gave the money for some black kids and some Hispanic kids. They benefited, not me. Even if he had given the money to the Dymally Scholarship Fund, which is a tax-exempt foundation, I didn't benefit from it. Some black kids. . . . And by the way, of one of those classes, thirteen of the fourteen people we sent to Puerto Rico went to college. We supported them in college for four years. We didn't totally support them, we gave them a scholarship for four years and followed them for four years. We studied them for four years. The fourteenth person was a bright girl. Regretfully, she had to go to work to help her parents who had become ill. So it was a very good program, but that publicity killed it.

CARR: Let's go back a bit to local politics. What did you bring to the table in terms of helping Dianne

Feinstein?

DYMALLY: Oh hell, for the first time we published the Community Democrat all over the state. I went in my car. Clarence Wong, Ken Orduna, and I, we drove to every Central Valley city where two blacks lived. We had a meeting, organized a committee or a reception, or distributed the paper all the way up to Sacramento, the Bay Area.

CARR: Why you? Didn't she have. . . . It's presented as if you were her entree into getting the black vote.

DYMALLY: No, you know . . .

CARR: I didn't mean to make it sound so crass, but . . .

DYMALLY: Let's say we were the most active of supporters and we did not get any money from her.

CARR: Why not Bradley?

DYMALLY: Why not what? Bradley was the biggest image supporting her, but when it comes to practical terms we published a tabloid for her all over the state. And it was very effective. It reminded me of the tabloid that we did for Jerry Brown. I told you about it--the North Carolina Conference. Everyplace we took the tabloid many people had seen it for the first time.

CARR: Now, what about helping her build relationships or at least meet with the black clergy?

DYMALLY: Yeah, we took her to the churches. Oh yes, indeed, every Sunday. I remember one Sunday Marguerite Archie-Hudson was with us too. She went to all the churches.

CARR: From your perspective at the time, what didn't white politicians understand about the black community in California, southern California specifically?

DYMALLY: Well, very few of them did. Jesse Unruh did, the Kennedys did, Humphrey did.

CARR: McGovern, maybe?

DYMALLY: McGovern, Johnson, Carter. It seemed like the higher they got, the better understanding they had.

CARR: So the local. . . . Feinstein is clearly local in the sense that . . .

DYMALLY: Well, she understood because she'd been supported by blacks in San Francisco.

CARR: Willie Brown.

DYMALLY: Willie Brown and the black community. Before I supported her I checked it out with Willie and Willie said, "Yeah." I wanted to be on the same ticket with Willie. Just before we broke, you

asked me why did I get so involved in the campaign. Well, Deukmejian had either vetoed or eliminated the urban factor funds for urban school districts, and Compton was in dire need of funds. The system was collapsing in Compton and I thought if she came in she'd be someone we could influence to help Compton.

CARR: So she meets the clergy. But again the question becomes, what is it that certain white politicians don't understand about the black community?

DYMALLY: Fine, very good question. To this day they don't. . . . Well, it's not so much the politicians anymore. It's their young post-civil-rights managers, the Watergate babies. The whole thing is they work for the TV. If I believed in conspiracy theories I would write an article that each one of them has been posted by NBC, ABC, and CBS in these campaigns. Ninety percent of the money is funneled through television. And when we tell them that the black community has to be a personal type of relationship they don't want to expend any money. They spend millions of dollars on TV and they wouldn't spend five cents to pay for a free

luncheon for the ministers. Every time we host a luncheon we have to pay for it ourselves. And that's very discouraging. They wouldn't pay for anything at all. It's very discouraging. Even now, every black political activist I know of, except the black legislators who are too quick to make endorsements, complains about the candidates not even hiring anybody or they don't buy. . . . I remember Leo [T.] McCarthy and I were very close. He and I broke because when he was running, I think for the Senate, I said, "Leo, you've got to buy some ads in the black newspapers." And he said, "I don't buy ads." And I said, "Well, this is a very different situation in the black community because they influence the black vote and they give us free publicity. Whereas you have to buy your ads in the white newspapers and in television." He wouldn't budge, so I said to hell with it.

CARR: Now, in terms of that, how much did this notion of walking around money, as it's been called . . .

DYMALLY: No more. No more. There's no such thing anymore. It used to be.

CARR: But it was a factor.

DYMALLY: Oh, absolutely.

CARR: Up until when?

DYMALLY: Up until. . . . I think up until Kennedy, Bobby Kennedy, was assassinated.

CARR: Really?

DYMALLY: Up until about '68.

CARR: Why did it end? Why did this notion of . . .

DYMALLY: Watergate followed. That's when Nixon was elected, and then Watergate followed and the whole thing just changed. Campaign laws changed on the state, local, and federal levels.

CARR: But it's been kind of like one of those mythological things that, "Hey, if you want to go to the black ministers, you'd better have some cash in hand."

DYMALLY: No, no. That's a total absolute lie. That's one of the big, big lies that our friend Ed Rollins told. Finally it was exposed that he was lying about it. That's the myth that white operatives put out about the black ministers. I've never had to pay any black minister. They do it because of their civic obligation and they believe, unlike white ministers, that the one way to get the message to the constituents is through the church. And that's the most effective way of

campaigning in my judgment. That's been my strength.

If I were running your campaign for statewide office, I would set aside a certain amount of money for the black community, which would go into newspaper ads and black radio, and I would host lunches and dinners for certain select groups. So the TV money I would use in a more direct way. I would send out some mailings. Totally different. . . . White campaign managers do not want to budget any funds for the black community. They regard you as a rip-off when you go to them with a budget. They think you're trying to steal their money, yet they see no pains in giving the money to a television station that editorializes against their candidate.

CARR: So in a sense, you think it's a waste of money in some cases if that television station isn't necessarily supporting. . . .

DYMALLY: No, I don't believe it's a waste. Well, beside [Michael] Huffington coming from zero to almost beating Dianne, but he still lost. He spent a fortune.

CARR: Yeah. Good. I think we'll put it to rest for now, here today, and then we'll pick up some

other time.

DYMALLY: Right. OK.

[End Tape 17, Side B]

[Session 16, August 8, 1997]

[Begin Tape 18, Side A]

CARR: Good morning, Congressman Dymally.

DYMALLY: Before we begin our questions, I have some unfinished business I want to take care of. We started talking about the role of blacks and campaigns, and the new approach by the young post-Watergate campaign managers. I ran for the lieutenant governor's office because I was a little fed up with the fact that I was relegated to the ghetto, and so were black legislators when it came to campaign time, state or national. I wanted to prove that a black could run a decent campaign and could win. So I planned to have a basically black staff and acquired office space on Olympic [Boulevard] for Willard Murray. But Willard, at the campaign steering committee meeting, referred to me as a whore because I was trying to work a deal with someone in San Diego, Moretti's people--Moretti was running for governor--to help me down there. Moretti's

manager was a friend of mine. The husband was on my dissertation committee. Willard offended the committee so much that they claimed that I had to make a choice between them and Willard Murray. In that vacuum emerged Teresa Hughes to succeed Bill Greene, who was going to succeed me. And that's how Teresa's candidacy was born. Now, in modern times . . .

CARR: And Teresa had been part of the Urban Affairs Institute.

DYMALLY: And then subsequently came to work for me.

Now, the new campaign managers do not believe in the kind of Humphrey and Kennedy campaigns in the black community.

CARR: And what do you mean by that?

DYMALLY: They want to treat the black community the same way they treat the white community, with a heavy dose of media. What they don't understand is the natural distrust of the media by blacks. And therefore that message is not taken seriously. We have been trying to get them to come in and make appearances, but those appearances don't make the five o'clock news. And therefore they don't consider those appearances important. In fact they consider it, from what I could see, as

DYMALLY: a nuisance. Besides, they don't want to even cover the cost of the luncheon or the breakfast, or the black media--black radio, black newsprint. Indeed, I did not support Leo McCarthy for the U.S. Senate, even though he and I were good friends, because he's flatly told me he doesn't buy [black] newspaper ads. And I said, "Leo, that's how we get our message in the black community." So if he wouldn't buy black newspaper ads or black radio I didn't see why I should invest my time with him.

These new guys look upon you as a rip-off by asking just to pay for the luncheon. So we covered those costs when I was an incumbent to avoid the embarrassment. In fact, in Dianne Feinstein's campaign we covered all the costs, including the statewide distribution of the Community Democrat. And even now one is experiencing that by the gubernatorial candidates. They don't make any effort to spend any money in the black community. They will, inevitably, put a black person on staff, and that black person is usually someone whom they like and with whom they're comfortable but who is not well-known in the black community. So that's one

problem. That's a very troubling problem with me.

The other thing I want to talk to you about is remember one time I told you that the news editors are a big hype. Well, here's a good one from one of the young bright staff. In the legislature. . . In anticipation of his candidacy for higher office, a candidate sends out a legislative update and, get this, highlights of bills passed by the assembly, not necessarily his bills. And when you examine this, impressive as it looks, you begin to ask yourself, "What portion of this legislative package affects the black community?" Well, let's go down the list really fast.

CARR: And you're referring here to Kevin Murray.

DYMALLY: Not necessarily.

CARR: OK.

DYMALLY: Striking, domestic violence, DMV internet transactions, digital electoral system, child care parental leave, HIV, workmen's compensation, crimes against places of worship--church arson. And that's for the media. I coauthored legislation by putting the Islamic mosques in the federal bill. Class Size Reduction Bond Act. By

the way, no black person will get a contract to promote this bond act, and yet we're expected to vote for it. Identity theft, Medicare and managed care patient protection, money laundering, recording industry counterfeiting, court employees, transportation comprehensive plan, MTA [Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority] reform, photovoltaic solar panels, whatever that is. Cal-DNA Databank Act of 1997. Civil Rights Initiative of 1998, now, that's a good one. State investments. Now, if you take this to South Central at the unemployment office and ask a literate person there, and they are all literate, what part of this package affects his unemployment status, his rent payment, and his child health care? Nothing. You see what I mean?

CARR: Yeah.

DYMALLY: But this brochure is being sent to a very sophisticated middle-class district, which would be impressed by that. Anybody would be impressed by this. As you see, it's well laid out. But when you examine it and ask the unemployed youth in Watts, how does this very impressive package affect him, it ain't there. So that's the point

I made, and this bulletin brought it home.

CARR: Now, going back a bit to. . . You were talking about the campaign finance issue and the post-Watergate campaign managers. You have been involved with many national political campaigns. Do you feel the same attitude is prevalent there as well?

DYMALLY: Oh yeah. In the nationals, as good as the Kennedys were--and they were good--it was the same situation of relegating you to the black community. I remember one time Louis Martin--who was the first black DNC vice-chairman, White House aide, confidant of LBJ, helped Thurgood Marshall get his Supreme Court appointment--came downtown on Hill Street where the Democratic party headquarters was located and saw me sitting in the lobby. I was a nominee, a democratic nominee. He said, "What are you doing here?" I said, "I came to pick up a check for registration." He said, "No, no, no, no. You're a democratic nominee. The check has to be sent to you." That gives you an example.

CARR: Yeah.

DYMALLY: Here I'm sitting down there in a humiliated manner waiting for a check.

CARR: Yeah. Now, one question--and this goes back a bit before to your political involvements on a local level. It had to do with the 1995 Forty-eighth Assembly District race between Johnny Collins--the primary actually--and Maxine Waters.

DYMALLY: You said 1995. Nineteen seventy-six.

CARR: Nineteen seventy-six. Sorry.

DYMALLY: That is about as interesting a question as you've asked me over the series, and let me take a little time, very slowly. On a particular Wednesday I called a meeting of Bill Greene, Teresa Hughes, and Leon Ralph to sort of coordinate. Leon always felt a sense of independence about his actions. I don't think he very much welcomed these meetings. I came out in his view as some kind of a boss. This particular Wednesday just happened to be the deadline for filing for the primary in '76. We had a ten o'clock meeting and what I was going to propose was that instead of having a Bill Greene, Teresa Hughes, Leon Ralph Democratic headquarters. . . . Why are we putting all of this money into real estate? Why don't we just have one joint Democratic headquarters at the edge of both districts, which was Manchester and Broadway, and

we could use the rest of the money for campaigning, registration. Bill showed up, Teresa showed up, and Leon did not show up. At one minute past five [o'clock] a former staffer of mine, Dan Visnich, who is now working for Leon Ralph on the Rules Committee, called me and said, "Leon has just decided not to run and Johnny Collins has filed." That angered the secretary of state because of the sneaky manner in which it was done and prompted Maxine Waters to run.

CARR: And who was the secretary of state at the time?

DYMALLY: March Fong.

CARR: OK.

DYMALLY: And prompted Maxine Waters, who was working for David Cunningham--the city councilman--to begin to explore the possibility of running.

CARR: Why did it prompt her to explore the possibilities of running?

DYMALLY: Well, there was an opening. Now, I had known Maxine very well. And the other night she paid me such a tribute that I almost fell off my chair. I'll come to that a little later. She claimed that I was the first politician she knew in California. We were friends. She came to the house with some frequency. She came with

McGovern, with Humphrey, with Moscone. Maxine decided to run. Now, we've got an old unwritten rule that the incumbent elects his successor, and certainly I had set that precedent. So we decided to go with Johnny Collins.

CARR: Were you happy with the choice of Johnny Collins?

DYMALLY: At the time I had no objection to it, but a series of things began happening. Leon wanted to run the campaign without a Dymally domination and sought the help of Jerry Lamothe of the United Auto Workers. I was in Gary, Indiana, at a reception being held there for me by Mayor Hatcher, George Hatcher. Is George his first name?

CARR: I know it's Hatcher. I'm not quite sure if it's George [Richard G. Hatcher].

DYMALLY: Yeah, Mayor Hatcher. I got a call that the UAW had just pulled Jerry Lamothe off the campaign. I suspect that that pressure may have come from some of Maxine's friends. We had to put in his place a young man who had no experience in campaigning. What we didn't know really was who was Maxine Waters in the sense of her ability and her campaign smarts. The secretary [of state], so angered by what Leon did, instead of. . . .

DYMALLY: The law is that when an incumbent ceases to run you extend the date of filing for ten days. She extended it for thirty days. What we didn't know was that Maxine had been working in Watts, and had a good connection with the mothers there--the welfare mothers and the child care mothers. Indeed, I think she was either in the Head Start or the child care program. What I did not know was that she had ambitions to run and I apologized for that chauvinism. But she used those thirty days to her advantage. She got Kenny Hahn, and that was a major coup on her part. What we soon discovered was that Johnny Collins after graduating from Jordan High--and whose brother was a boxer in Watts and whose family was very prominent in Watts--had left Watts to go to as middle-class a white college as one could find--or upper-class. Occidental, four years. Then he came up to Sacramento as a legislative intern for maybe one year. Then another year he worked for Leon. For six years or more he was gone. So his age group is now about twenty-four, right? Most of them who were aspiring for middle-class life left for the west side. Some of them were in jail or unemployed or

not registered. So he had no base, he lost his base, whereas Maxine stayed where she was. It is probably the biggest mistake I've made in a selection of candidates. But I was so caught up with supporting Leon and Leon's successor because I'd introduced Leon to California politics through the Young Democrats. I introduced him to Reverend Ferrell, whom he succeeded. Tom Bane was his sort of mentor. Another assemblyman there whose name escapes me now. . . . He's the only one who we could not find in my class at the reunion. I think it was Wright. Tom Wright. So Maxine beat us. Beat us handily. And that created an antagonism between Maxine and myself. She forgave everybody who supported Johnny or who did not support her except me.

CARR: Why?

DYMALLY: I don't know. To this day, I don't know.

CARR: But has that rift ever been repaired?

DYMALLY: I tried many times without success. When Lynn-- my daughter--ran for Congress she said on the radio that Maxine was one of the people she admired. When she went to Washington, of all the people who saw her and for whom she sought an appointment, Maxine was the only one who did not

DYMALLY: see her. And Maxine subsequently supported--in a very effective sample ballot--Mayor Tucker.

Now, two Saturdays ago the Black American Political Action Committee, BAPAC, which is the premier black political organization in the state, had what they call an induction into the political and religious hall of fame. And they honored two retirees, Hawkins and Dymally, and two incumbents, Dixon and Waters. At the meeting Maxine shocked the Dymally partisans by having high praise for me and saying that I was the first politician she knew and that many of us there in politics today are there because of me. I returned the compliment in kind and said she gave me my first political licking and that in my new life I wanted to be as compassionate as Gus Hawkins, as effective as Dixon, and as fiery as Maxine, and I noticed she smiled very pleasantly.

So I wrote her a letter in which I said, "Maxine, I was very moved by your kind words. After years of a strained relationship, I hope we have begun to move on the road to reconciliation. When you come home"--which is this month, August-- "I hope we can have lunch." But in between '75 and '92, the only time we were in the same boat

is with Yvonne Burke on the board of supervisors. And it is interesting to note that Yvonne has never taken note of this fact. In fact, she gave Maxine all the credit for her victory. Yvonne lost in Dixon's district, lost in Maxine's district, and won in my district. A fact noted by [Dennis] Schatzman, who just died--a Los Angeles Sentinel writer. In a story, Dennis said, in effect, that Yvonne owes me roses because she lost in those two other congressional districts.

CARR: Now, going back to Johnny Collins for a moment, was there ever a time after Ralph made his decision to support Collins that you said, "Well, Leon, what qualifications does this guy have?"

DYMALLY: Well, he had all the qualifications. Watts boy, Jordan High, brother was a boxer, family well-known, Occidental, which meant nothing to the people in Watts--Occidental. Maybe UCLA. Legislative intern, again no terrific meaning. He was an absentee Watts son. Absentee Son of Watts. Remember there was that organization. He was an Absentee Son of Watts. Maxine was there all the time and she was a far better candidate than he was, and she got all the right

endorsements. I believe she had Bradley, she had Cunningham and, you know, etc.

CARR: She did have Bradley and that was the next question I was about to ask. In terms of personality, she's always had Bradley behind her, but their personalities are very different.

DYMALLY: And in his closing days, she had a very critical comment about him. This is the only time I have known her to attack a black elected official. I don't know what happened, I was away. But Bradley partisans, led by Mark Ridley-Thomas, sought to get some black elected officials to sign a letter on Bradley's behalf. He got Diane Watson, and of course himself. I was away and Ken [Orduna] approved my name. But to her credit she's never attacked me personally. She's always been respectful and I have never attacked her. That's the only time that I publicly said something in print, but I didn't criticize her, I praised Bradley.

CARR: But does her personality, her outspokenness, her fieriness, as you referred to it earlier, does it make her somewhat an anomaly even within the black political structure?

DYMALLY: She is one of the brightest politicians in the

country. She understands what it takes to intimidate establishment people and what it takes to attract black people. She understands how to work the media. She has this sense of timing that few others have. She has her own genius about the media and she's feared by the other black elected officials, except Mark Ridley-Thomas. Nobody would take her on. They'd privately grumble about her. But whatever you may think about Maxine--and I wished many times we were on the same side. . . . One time I wrote her a little facetious letter and she took it very personally. I didn't mean that. She's got her thing together. Part of her genius was. . . . There was a white women's group in Beverly Hills. I forget. . . . Was it Women For? No, I forget the name. It was very prominent in the sixties, very close to CDC. She organized a counter group, the Black Women's Forum, which is the only one of its kind in the black community.

CARR: Yeah, I think the group is like California Women Now or something like that. I'm very familiar with the doings of that group.

DYMALLY: Maxine got her own group, so she has all of these women with her. She's good at fund-raising.

She's made very good alliances. Bill Cosby is one of her supporters. She's on the board of Essence magazine. Her close foreign relations adviser is Randall Robinson of Trans-Africa [lobbying group]. Jesse has promoted her one time as a vice presidential candidate. One other smart thing she did, the Congressional Black Caucus got burnt in their early support of McGovern and their opposition to Shirley Chisholm. And after the primary, and they got ready to go in the plane, there was no room for the Black Caucus. That's recorded in Bill Clay's book, Just Permanent Issues: [Black Americans in Congress, 1870-1991]. So as a result of that, they decided to stay neutral in the primaries and support the nominee. Now, Bill Clinton. Who's Bill Clinton? Southern governor, no way. But Maxine jumped ahead early. And so she was the most prominent black outside of the South. In the South he had Representative [William J.] Bill Jefferson and he had [A. Michael] Mike Espy.

CARR: He didn't have John Lewis?

DYMALLY: Representative John Lewis. Yes, he had those three from the South. But out of the South she was the only one. And what she did, very

smartly. . . . [Laughter] You've got to give it to that woman. When Clinton came here she took Clinton to her house, and invited just her small group of friends. So she never gave Clinton the exposure that Hawkins gave Kennedy. We all had a piece of Kennedy. We all had a piece of Humphrey. She came out as the only prominent black in California who supported Clinton. So she got a vice-chair of the campaign in California. In the first campaign Willie was not supportive of Jesse, but during his second campaign she talked Willie into being his chairman. Look, the woman is good, huh? Say what you like about her. [Laughter] I've always said that if she and I had teamed up together we'd have one hell of an organization.

CARR: What seems to me very interesting about her political career is that there is a certain aspect of independence, that is independence from the state and local Democratic party at times . . .

DYMALLY: And the black elected officials.

CARR: . . . and black elected officials that could not exist before.

DYMALLY: Well, she's never really been that close to them

because her agenda is personal and independent. She emerged as the proponent of free Nelson Mandela and sanctions against South Africa, in California, and was so rewarded by being the cochair of the reception committee for Mandela.

CARR: Yeah. So . . .

DYMALLY: She's right on the issues. You can't knock her on the issues. You may disagree with her modus operandi.

CARR: Yeah. Well, I guess my question is, that kind of political independence from the Black Caucus, from the local Democratic party in general, it seems to be what essentially separates more contemporary black politicians from the older school in which positions were developed more by consensus rather than by personality or . . .

DYMALLY: Fine. Correct. Very good observation. Some black politicians now are a big disappointment in my judgment . . .

CARR: Why is that?

DYMALLY: . . . as compared to the old--Dymally, Hawkins, Bradley, Rumford--school of politics. Because I don't know where they're coming from. You can't identify them with any cause, and that's what makes Maxine different. In other words, they

almost say that it is a virtue not to be effective. By not being effective nobody knows anything about you and therefore you have no opposition.

CARR: But if that is the case and . . .

DYMALLY: That is the case. [Laughter]

CARR: If that is the case, then is it fair to say, considering that broader aspect, that the Democratic party has essentially become the same thing as well?

DYMALLY: What's the same thing?

CARR: That is, white Democrats, by and large, define themselves by not being definable now.

DYMALLY: That's fine, but blacks can't follow that line.

CARR: Why not?

DYMALLY: No, no. We can't afford that luxury. But let me just say this to you. There is a middle-class phenomenon in politics that's very dangerous. The reason why I liked Gil Lindsay. . . . My other favorite politician was Ralph White in Stockton. Ralph went and built a palace in the ghetto. Swimming pool, golf teeing area. A huge palace in the ghetto. And when they were talking about dope and trying to infer that he might be in the dope business, he volunteered to take a

DYMALLY: urinal test right in the city council [meeting]. He got up to take his pants off and said, "Let's all of us, since we are so bad and so tough, take a urinal test right here." Because he didn't drink, and he doesn't smoke, and he doesn't take dope. Gil Lindsay was the other one. . . . You know, very braggadocios. My criticism of Gil was that he did more for downtown than he did for South Central. But they both presented a lifestyle that wasn't middle-class and wasn't aspiring for acceptance. You see, what happens, you get co-opted by middle-class values in politics. In order to be friendly with these white boys you can't be a critic. [Laughter] So if you want to gain acceptance. . . . You have to change your personality to suit your constituency. I was very timid. I couldn't speak eloquently. In fact, my campaign manager, Bill Greene, came and said to me some of the people think that I'm not tough enough on civil rights and I should go downtown and get arrested. [Laughter] So I said to him, "We'll get elected first. [Laughter] And I'll get arrested later." I said, "But Bill, my fiery background starts all the way back in Trinidad. I have a sense of

guilt about not being a black American and I don't want people to say, 'He's just putting on.' But I'm genuine about this commitment to the civil rights movement."

CARR: Now, wait, wait, wait. That's an interesting statement and that's a statement I haven't heard before in all of these interviews. A sense of guilt for not being a black American. What does that mean?

DYMALLY: Well, a lot of people didn't think I was a soul brother because I was so foreign. In fact, I got the name "Merv" from Willard Murray. When I went to him to run he said, "Hey, man. No black person's going to support some goddamn West Indian with the name Mervyn. Black people don't call their children Mervyn." [Laughter] And he changed my name to Merv. That's how I ended up being called Merv. Even my family. . . . They never called me Merv until recently. I heard my sister say Merv. But nobody in Trinidad, when I left, called me Merv. This was a Willard Murray American invention.

CARR: You said you didn't like that.

DYMALLY: No. Hell, not nicknames. I don't like any damn nicknames. Even to this day I don't like Merv,

but that's it. So that's how I became Merv. I always felt that. . . . I don't think these people think that I'm really into this. They don't know my background with the very British socialist background in colonial politics.

Back to today's politicians, with very few exceptions. . . . Right now in the present crop I would single out Diane Watson. But she paid the price for that militancy by losing the supervisorial district.

CARR: Right.

DYMALLY: See what I mean?

CARR: Now, what about the speculations that somehow that seat was stolen from her?

DYMALLY: There was no theft. Our admonition to Yvonne was to. . . . She's going to get her share of black votes anyway, and the place you need to campaign is in the white community. And that was the difference. Both she and Diane were very popular in the black community and the difference was in the white community. That's where Yvonne won, among the whites and among the Republicans because of style.

CARR: Clearly because Watson represented a kind of . . .

DYMALLY: Militancy.

CARR: . . . militant demeanor that . . .

DYMALLY: Pro-strikers, protestors type of thing, so it appeared.

CARR: So you have Watson . . .

DYMALLY: But I love Diane. She and I made up since. That's one endorsement that I did not make and I have always felt terribly guilty about it because she and I were close friends. In fact, she acknowledged at this BAPAC dinner that she got a start in politics through a group that I organized called the Select Twelve. By the way, I quipped at the dinner that the reason why Maxine and I were not together in the past was because I didn't have her on my payroll. [Laughter] All the others there, Gwen Moore, Teresa Hughes. . . . Gray Davis mentioned to a black crowd that my politics went beyond blacks. Richard Alatorre, Art Torres, the mayor of Sacramento, Joe Serna, to name a few. By the way Art was not a UAI fellow. He was on my staff.

CARR: That's a fascinating statement.

DYMALLY: I finally have a white assemblyman, Bob Hertzberg, who used to work for me.

CARR: But that's a great thing . . .

DYMALLY: I wrote him a letter the other day and I said, "Bob, I finally got a white boy in Sacramento." [Laughter] But he's a very hip white boy. He and I used to travel together. When I ran for LG [lieutenant governor] he was my driver, and he knew my favorite food was fried chicken and Foster's Freeze. [Laughter] Go ahead, you were making a point.

CARR: No, no. The statement you just made that Dymally's politics went beyond race.

DYMALLY: Right. Has a lot to do with my village background.

CARR: In his book Politics in Black and White,¹ [Raphael J.] Sonenshein defines the difference between you and Bradley as this. . . . I think he mentions this notion of the Dymally regulars.

DYMALLY: The son of a bitch never interviewed me.

CARR: Right.

DYMALLY: I was pissed about it. I wrote him a letter about it and called him. I mean, how could you write a book about black politics and not

1. Raphael J. Sonenshein, Politics in Black and White: Race and Power in Los Angeles (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993).

interview me?

CARR: He never attempted to interview you?

DYMALLY: No, because he was not a Dymally supporter.

CARR: And this comes to the crux of what I'm pointing at because in his book is a paragraph that describes the difference between you and Bradley as this: there were the Dymally regulars, or something like that, and the Bradley normals, or whatever. Who knows. But he goes on to the next paragraph to say that your group represented a radical separatist black politics that didn't want to have anything to do with integration. And it seems to me that the statement you just made and the fact of all you've done is totally contrary to statements like that.

DYMALLY: Look, if you go on the record, Barry Felder, Steve Smith, Kent Speiler, Mauri Goldman, Richard Thompson--in the legislative counsel's office. . . . I just wrote him the other day. Another one in. . . . A white girl, in Washington--Teri Lowenthal. All of these white lawyers who came through me. And they used to call it the Dymally Scholarship job. I just mentioned three prominent Hispanics. I always had an integrated staff. Even when I had two people one was white.

He really pissed me off. Here's a guy who is writing a book about black politics and you don't even interview Dymally. And I'm not on an ego trip. Just for historical background. I mean, I started in this thing before Bradley. I've put together an organization. I was lieutenant governor, first black senator, represented Watts, South Central, Compton, and you don't interview me writing a book about that? Come on. Because I think he worked for Maxine. I called him and I wrote him about it. I see him being quoted in the Los Angeles Times as an authority on black politics. That's really offensive to suggest I had a separatist movement. No. I was pro-Panther, I was pro-US, I was pro-Black Muslim. But I was also pro-Alatorre, pro-Torres, pro-Serna, pro-Hertzberg, and all of these white lawyers who came from my office. And there might be some that I forgot.

CARR: Yeah. And so, that's what . . .

DYMALLY: There's no sense of guilt in Washington. My chief of staff was white. I didn't have a black chief of staff.

CARR: What was the name of your chief of staff in Washington?

DYMALLY: David Johnson.

CARR: Oh right. You talked about Johnson and how you were very impressed with how he was able to hold things together there.

Since we're on this subject I think a good segue would be to talk about the 1978 primary election that essentially pitted Marguerite Archie-Hudson and Willis Edwards on one side and Gwen Moore on the other side. You were successful in that one.

DYMALLY: But Gwen Moore did something that really annoyed the shit out of me, although she and I are best of friends. When she was. . . . We put out our tabloid, with our Community Democrat, with Willard Murray on her side. And when I called her to congratulate her she said, "Yes, I'm doing very well in Culver City, where Ira Reiner, Mike Roos, who heads LEARN, and one of the Berman boys. . . . Guess what? She lost Culver City. Guess what? She won in the east side where we had our strength.

CARR: Right.

DYMALLY: But she gave three white boys the credit for her election. When she reads this she's going to be madder than hell with me. But she's my dear

friend and I supported her very strongly. And I must say to her credit, she was the only statewide candidate who hired blacks to run her campaign. She had a black woman running her campaign.

CARR: Who was that?

DYMALLY: Julian Dixon's former wife, Felicia Bragg. And she had me working in a very significant capacity. For that she's been forgiven all her sins. She's the only one. Every other black in this city, even those who were criticizing Pete Wilson on his [Proposition] 209, had white campaign managers. Mark Ridley-Thomas was elected by Ken Orduna, myself. When he got closer to reelection time he hired a white fundraiser, white campaign manager. That's what bothers me.

CARR: What does this phenomena mean? What's behind that?

DYMALLY: Well, it is something endemic I think among blacks that they believe white vanilla is sweeter than chocolate ice cream. [Laughter] The white boy is always better. But I always took my chance with blacks. Always. Willard Murray, Ken Orduna, Curtis Earnest. That to me was part of

what I was all about, what black politics ought to be all about. But they all have white campaign firms running their campaign. Every one of them.

CARR: And if that's the case, then, is it possible to say. . . . Your early criticism as we started this interview was the fact that campaign managers didn't understand how to campaign or reach the black community.

DYMALLY: But this is a winner. I mean, how the hell can you lose? If you were a nobody running a campaign for Maxine Waters in Watts, how could you lose?

CARR: Right.

DYMALLY: So they were handed a victory. So you have to look good. Why don't you hand a black that victory?

CARR: Yeah.

DYMALLY: That's been my position. You're going to win anyway.

CARR: Right.

DYMALLY: So why are you hiring this white guy? Economically, the money's going out of the community and you're not building up any leadership. It's difficult to name a black

campaign manager who hasn't had some experience with me in this city because that was part of my legacy, helping young people. Hispanic, white, blacks. It didn't matter. That totally came from my village background, where race was not the determining factor in life as it is in American politics.

CARR: The alliances along class lines were probably more significant than . . .

DYMALLY: Yes. Well, I was sort of upper-class society.

CARR: Right. With that in mind, how did you come to know Gwen Moore and support her 1978 race?

DYMALLY: Well, when Gwen Moore got ready to run for the L.A. Community College, a woman by the name of Caffie Greene, whose children I taught at 79th Street School, and who is still a friend of mine to this day--to this day she and I talk over the phone--and one of my biggest supporters, introduced her to me. After all the work I did for Drew Medical School it was she who sponsored the event at Drew for me when I retired. It wasn't the Drew management or the Drew board. But she, as a member of the board, forced them into doing this. She brought Gwen Moore to me. And Gwen Moore today would tell you. . . . I led

Gwen Moore to Joe Cerrell, Max Mont of the Jewish Labor Committee, all the right people. And she won at the community college. She had made alliances with the Bermans.

CARR: Now, one moment please.

[Interruption]

OK. Could you tell me a little bit about your reaction concerning Moore's indictment in Compton?

DYMALLY: Oh, I thought you were going to talk about. . . . And let's talk about it. Gwen Moore got involved in a sting operation.

CARR: Right.

DYMALLY: And I thought she was totally innocent. But it shows the evil powers of the FBI if they want to incriminate you. I always thought she was innocent. Staff can put you in a compromising situation. If you don't have very vigilant staff. . . . That has been always my good fortune. I had staff who were to the right of me.

CARR: They were more protective than . . .

DYMALLY: Yes, on ethical matters. But you were really asking me about Pat Moore.

CARR: Pat Moore. I'm sorry.

DYMALLY: When I went to Compton, she was running against a white woman, and I did not feel that I should, as my first endorsement, oppose the only white woman in Compton. That was not my politics and my district was not exactly black and I didn't know where she was coming from. So we opposed her. Then as a member of the Science and Technology Committee I became quite interested, apart from knowing what was going on in Compton, in waste energy. I had a seminar in city hall, and the place was packed. And I said to myself, "Boy, I am very popular in Compton." [Laughter] I didn't know why they came there. They came there because she organized the group thinking that I was supporting an initiative, by this very guy who compromised her, to turn a waste dump on Rosecrans into one of these projects. I didn't know that was taking place. And she had some tough questions for me. When she saw that I was somewhat naive about the project, we became friends. I took her down to Tampa to show her waste technology. I said to her, "The technology is sound." And then I went to New York and other parts looking at the technology. Well, she and I became good friends, and what I liked about her

is that she was always respectful of me and treated me with a great deal of respect.

CARR: Even though you didn't support her in her first race.

DYMALLY: Right. And we became good friends and she came to work for me. But for some reason the staff didn't like her.

CARR: Why do you think that is?

DYMALLY: Well, Ken said he caught her in a deception during the course of one of her campaigns. I supported her running against another incumbent, now. Maxine supported the incumbent. He was indicted for using the records, Jesse Jackson's records, as campaign incentives.

[End Tape 18, Side A]

[Begin Tape 18, Side B]

CARR: . . . Got by with a misdemeanor.

DYMALLY: Yeah, and I regretted that very much because I don't think that Rod Wright was in any way conspiring to violate the law. I would have been pleased to testify on his behalf had he called me. The incumbent did some road time. But he won the election. Subsequently she came back and ran again, and this time we helped her again and she won. At that point, she left my employment.

Now comes Willard Murray wanting to put a jail where Compton City College is located. He sponsored the move to turn the Compton school district over to the state. He was using our paper, the Community Democrat, to support white Republican candidates against black Democrats and that angered us. So we went downtown and took the paper away from him by incorporating it in our name. That resulted in a major court battle, which we won. But during the course of the court battle his son Kevin, who is a lawyer, filed a RICO [Racketeer-Influenced and Corrupt Organizations] suit against Ken and me.

CARR: How were you racketeering?

DYMALLY: Well, that's how ridiculous these suits can become. But that was laughable.

What angered me is that the Democratic congressional delegation was raising money on a reapportionment issue. It was a measure on the ballot. They were going to put money into Willard's paper, which was my paper. And I went to Willard and I said, "Willard, I can't support that effort by the Bermans because you're supporting Ira Reiner." When Mark had some difficulty with the law over the use of a gun, my

DYMALLY: lawyer went to Reiner because he felt the judge was disposed to probation. And Ira said, "Tell Merv that his son is in good hands." Ira went to court and asked the judge to send Mark up to San Quentin for eight years. Everybody was shocked. The judge, a Republican judge appointed by Deukmejian, said to the district attorney, "Do you want me to lynch him right here in court?" and gave Mark work release time. So he kept his job and his family. So I went to Willard and I said, "Look, you're going to have Ira Reiner on your slate and I can't put any money into this campaign. It's causing me a problem with the delegation because if I put money into the reapportionment campaign and it goes on your slate, which it will do, you're going to be serving Ira Reiner." Willard put that in the brief--in the legal brief--saying the reason why I was mad with him is because he refused to go along with me in opposing Reiner. Now, I went to him. . . . My kids call him "Uncle Willard" and his. . . . Kevin the other day called me "Uncle Merv." It was a close family. Willard and I. . . .

Steve Teale on the [state] senate Rules

DYMALLY: Committee came to me and said, "A complaint has been filed with the district attorney that you have a ghost on your staff"--on my reapportionment staff--"since '71." And I said, "Oh, the ghost is Willard Murray. He's not a ghost, he just doesn't come to work." So we were very close.

When Willard ran the first time, I borrowed money from the Wells Fargo Bank in San Jose to support him, etc., etc. And putting that piece of confidential information in the lawsuit in addition to filing a RICO lawsuit made me madder than hell. So we were embarked on a program to defeat Willard and recruited. . . . Because Pat was viewed. . . . Oh, I know it's complicated. Pat was supporting Diane Watson. And it made it difficult for us to support her--Pat Moore--for the assembly, on the one hand, and then support Yvonne. So I went to her and asked her not to run because if she ran against Willard, and a city councilwoman whom we were supporting in Lynwood ran, they both would split the vote, which is exactly what happened. Willard won by less than 50 percent. More than half of the people were opposed to him. So Pat got mad with

DYMALLY: me and went with Tucker--to support Tucker-- against Lynn, my daughter. So that's when we broke up.

Now, before that break took place. . . . As I said, she was very friendly. She tried to see me and my staff wouldn't let her see me. She finally caught me one day on the phone. She called, and I picked up the phone, and said she wanted to see me and so she came over. She told me about this guy who wanted to put this waste to energy plant [in Compton]. And I'm supportive of the technology, so he came to see me. And a couple of things he said troubled me. One, he said he had all of this money in cash from the Japanese to build this plant. Well, that's a lot of money and I know that it's one. . . . I've been going to Japan every year for about twelve years now. I went there four times one year-- very close to the Japanese government and fishing industry. I know the Japanese do not deal in cash. They don't deal with little people. They don't even deal with checks. They deal with bank transfers. [I thought] "So where did you get all of this cash?"

Then he sets up an office right next door to

DYMALLY: me, but the office is closed all the time. I found out later from court records that the FBI had the key. He couldn't get in there without the FBI--in his own office. Then I had another tip from my landlord that he was paying him in cash. And there was a time when he bought some tickets to my dinner with a cashier's check. There was debate among my staff not to accept the check and I said, "Why not? We don't know what's going here and we're not into anything. Let's take the money and run." That's where he met Tucker. Tucker came to the dinner. What I didn't know is that Tucker was planning to run against me, so he was coming to all my events. That's where he met Tucker. So he came to see me and then he said, "I want you to see the location." Later he came and he picked me up in his car. Knowing that I'm being compromised, I took Lonnie Saunders with me. And when we got into the car I told him, "I know you're a sting."

That eliminated me as a target because according to federal rules you can't distort a tape. You can't do a mixing on the tape. You have to produce the whole tape. I should also

add that a U.S. attorney in Sacramento told me that whenever I have suspicions that I'm being tapped, at the end of a conversation you must always say, "Hey, by the way, did you know that Hoover was a homosexual." He said, "It drives the FBI agents crazy and they don't want to use the tape." So he never came back.

CARR: What was this guy's name?

DYMALLY: Oh shit, I forget his name. That's how well I knew him.

CARR: But in the papers didn't Pat Moore say that you had taken money or something?

DYMALLY: No, not in the papers. I don't know if it came in the papers.

So after she was indicted. . . . I still liked Pat, and I am chairman of the Center for the Study of Harassment against Black Elected Officials, so I have to support her. So I'm meeting with her at the Holiday Inn almost every Saturday in Torrance coaching her, getting pro bono support for her, and then I get subpoenaed by the feds. It turned out to be a friendly subpoena as I understand it, because we had a pre-conference with the U.S. attorney and he said, "Well, you were not a target, but we just

DYMALLY: wanted to clarify something." Now, she had gone and copped a plea and then she was wired up. And I believe during the course of that wire she was meeting with me. But I was anti the prosecution. [Laughter] [I was] not a client of the FBI, or the U.S. attorney. And they said to me that the reason why they wanted me to come and testify before the grand jury is that she said she was raising this money for me. And when the FBI said, "But you never gave any of it to him," she said, "Well, I was raising it for Ken Orduna. I gave it to Ken Orduna." So both Ken and I were subpoenaed.

Now, I learned something--it was the first time I have ever been subpoenaed--about grand juries that was very frightening. During the course of questioning there, one grand juror couldn't believe why I would be so involved in Compton waste energy and not Los Angeles. Well, first, I didn't represent Los Angeles. Second, Los Angeles had no such program. Gil Lindsay had a program, and his good friend Gus Hawkins opposed it. But it didn't occur to me to correct this juror. Mark, my son, who's one top of this, said, "Dad, Los Angeles has no such program." So

then I had cause to call the U.S. attorney and say, "I'd like to come back and correct the grand juror, because he made an assumption that I was lying by saying my energies were in Compton and I neglected Los Angeles." You see what I'm talking about? You see, it was not necessary.

CARR: Yeah. So you go through this whole grand jury process . . .

DYMALLY: No. But this is a very interesting case. Tucker is indicted. I called him and said, "You know, I am at your disposal. . . ." I sent him the material on the Center for Harassment to talk with the authorities there on harassment. I sent him probably the first contribution to his defense fund, \$1,000. I went to Washington and volunteered to be a witness on his behalf. Guess what he does? His whole defense strategy was centered against me, that actually I was the target, I was the crooked one. He just happened to be standing by and he got shot by a drive-by shooter, which was the FBI. The whole strategy. And he tried to provide his own defense in the court, whispering to his lawyer and trying to direct the lawyer how to. . . . The lawyer, who was a former U.S. attorney, told Pat that he knew

about me and was once assigned to get me indicted.

CARR: If one considers the Pat Moore and the Tucker incident as closely connected, which they . . .

DYMALLY: By the way, I was surprised about Pat, but not Tucker.

CARR: Why not?

DYMALLY: Tucker was crooked. He and a black elected official, very prominent in this city, went to collect a contribution. And when the guy said, "Whom should I make the check out to?" He said, "Make it out to me." Which is what he had been doing with other people in L.A., the court case revealed, and kept the money.

CARR: If one takes these two situations as related, are they an indication of a certain breakdown that's going on in black politics?

DYMALLY: No. Compton is corrupt. It's corrupt . . .

CARR: So you're saying this is an indication of a certain kind of corruption in Compton.

DYMALLY: Yeah, it's a blip on the screen. Not everybody in Compton, but most of the politicians were corrupt. Not in the sense of taking money, but in the sense of not having any strong commitment to the city. The "rubbish people," it has been a

known fact around the city. . . . At one time, two people on the city council went to jail. One was unindicted as a coconspirator, the other one had to save his ass by turning state's evidence to avoid being indicted. The only person who wasn't involved was the white woman. Corrupt in a moral sense. When the cable contract came up, Yvonne had a group--Yvonne Burke--and there was a black-Hispanic group vying for the contract. The "garbage boys" didn't even show up and they got the contract for cable. They turned around and sold it to Continental and made a bundle. The same thing with the casino. Again, the "rubbish guys" came in and got the casino license. They spent a couple of thousand dollars. They sold the franchise to Hollywood Park for \$10 million. And these are the guys who are beating up on Wilson about affirmative action. They never put an affirmative action clause in the casino contract.

CARR: When you say "rubbish guys" what do you mean?

DYMALLY: Well, long history. . . . The rubbish is collected by the private sector in Compton. One has the domestic and one has the commercial. It's been known for a long while. . . . Not now.

I think things have changed, but for a long time they used to run the city for peanuts.

CARR: And who were the people connected to them? Or you don't want to say.

DYMALLY: Well, I don't know the names. I never got close. . . . And their names are very, very tongue twisters. I never really got close to them.

CARR: But these were black families? Or . . .

DYMALLY: No, these were white guys who had these contracts. One was [] and the other was Western Waste--two companies.

CARR: Very interesting. We've covered Gwen Moore. We've covered Pat Moore. Gwen ran against Willis Edwards and Marguerite Archie-Hudson. Would she have won if those two, who were supported by Bradley, had not split the vote?

DYMALLY: Yeah, I think so. She had me, she had the Bermans, she had Willard Murray. You know, she had a good team behind her. She was an incumbent community college person, and she was a good one.

CARR: This is one of the things I don't understand and maybe you can explain it to me. The Bermans, technically, had always supported Bradley, but there are times when they have not historically

lined up with the candidates Bradley supported.

How . . .

DYMALLY: Well, their . . .

CARR: And then this is one of the examples . . .

DYMALLY: Their first interest was Israel, and that was an important issue. The second was they swore by Willard Murray. Julian Dixon is their best friend. So all of these things have to be taken into consideration. All of these are factors. Now, they broke with Bradley over the Occidental . . .

CARR: Drilling thing.

DYMALLY: . . . issue. I guess they didn't think Bradley could win the race for governor. They had this notion that it would be difficult for a black to win. Not that they themselves had any personal antagonism towards blacks. They just felt that there was too much conservatism in the state to elect a black. But they were very supportive of Bradley when he first ran. Very, very supportive. And at the time they had a very effective operation.

CARR: Let's move back. Let's stop here for a moment. This notion, it seems--and it has come up very often as a theme indirectly as we've spoken over

these months--this notion of reconciliation at this point in your life seems very important to you. It seems very important for you to reconcile.

DYMALLY: Yes, very much so. I started working with Bradley just before my retirement days, because when the Times went after him I believed. . . . And this is very personal. He didn't tell me this because Bradley's not a man given to talking very much about his personal emotions. I believe he got a taste of what I went through. So that reconciliation was enhanced. Willard and I made up, although his son, Kevin--and I need to put this on the record--I believe, was the cause of Willard's defeat and his sister's defeat.

Early in the game, when Kevin decided to run for the assembly, he came to me, and I said, "Kevin, I will do nothing to hurt you, but Julian has never said no to me and his guy is running for the assembly. I've got to support him." Now, we had put out a very nasty tabloid against Willard, because Willard had stated he had a master's from UCLA and, you know, he never graduated from college. We had this big tabloid, and all we had to do was mail it to give the

DYMALLY: impression that was Kevin. I wouldn't do that. He called me every week. He called me the day of the election to be sure that I didn't do anything to hurt him. Ever since then he stopped--when he got elected. When Mark decided to run for the assembly we went to him and made a deal that if he stays away from this district we will not oppose his sister and may very well support her. Well, we began hearing words in Sacramento that Kevin was dinging Mark and he finally came out and supported Ed Vincent. By supporting Ed Vincent, therefore, I couldn't support his sister.

But more significantly, when the Bermans felt that Willard was losing and the only person to save him was me, Mike Berman had several meetings with me, several phone calls, urging me to support Willard. When I told him that Kevin had double-crossed us and it was difficult for me to go against my son, who was very angry about it, he worked out an arrangement where I would just go in a particular area and just endorse him with a letter. And obviously his son--Willard's son--was working against us. Willard was endorsing Mark's opposition and I couldn't endorse Willard.

DYMALLY: Had I endorsed Willard he would have won. There's no question in my mind because if you notice, the margin was very small of Juanita's victory.

So I think that Kevin was probably responsible for both his father's and his sister's defeat by not living up to his commitment to stay neutral in the Fifty-fourth [Assembly] District. But more significantly, under his leadership. . . . And he was the uno numero black in the legislature, lots of articles about him, and boom, boom, boom, Willie's pet--he was candidate for speaker. We lost three seats under his leadership. We lost Willie Brown's seat, we lost Barbara Lee's seat in Oakland, and we lost Juanita McDonald's seat. It's the first time in California history that blacks had a net loss in the legislature while the Hispanics were having a huge net gain. There was no coordination. Willie saw to it that there was a certain amount of support and protection for his incumbents. But Kevin was on a kick to become speaker [of the assembly].

Now, how do you become speaker? Well, you become speaker by supporting people whom you

think are going to win, such as Ed Vincent. But was it realistic to anticipate that a freshman could become speaker? Or that the white members would support another black for speaker after Willie left? That was unrealistic. Had he stayed neutral, his sister possibly could have been elected--maybe. But I know for sure Willard could have been elected with my endorsement.

Now, Willard on the other hand, as I stated earlier, wanted to put up a prison in Compton. Eighty-five percent of the people were opposed to it. Willard supported an effort to give the school district to the state. All the parents were opposed to it. So he had some opposition.

CARR: So this notion of reconciliation is important to you because. . . .

DYMALLY: By the way I spoke to Kevin about this, and he denied that he opposed Mark.

I've never liked conflict. I've never liked confrontation, despite what you may see or read, privately. Not certainly with black elected officials. Not with individuals. I recall an incident when Gingrich was going after Jim Wright--Speaker Jim Wright. One of the

Democratic leaders gave me an article about Gingrich's treatment of his ex-wife while she was ill with cancer. I put it in the hopper, and the parliamentarian called me and said, "This is not you. I want to suggest that you not put this article in." I said, "Let me think about it." And he came back and he said, "I did not put the article in the Congressional Record because I don't think that's you." So I said, "Fine." I did not put it in because he knew that I was not in for confrontation. When you read about some of the most caustic conservatives, Rohrabacher . . .

CARR: Dornan.

DYMALLY: . . . Dornan, Dan Burton. I get along with them. I never believed in attacking individuals. I don't think you could find any copy in the Times' files of my going after elected officials.

CARR: There's Curb, and it backfired.

DYMALLY: I said elected official.

CARR: OK.

DYMALLY: Curb, yes. That was a big mistake we made. We learned our lesson from that. It backfired, yes.

CARR: Let me see. Let's . . .

DYMALLY: I respect the incumbency.

CARR: Let's go back a little bit to about 1989. Was that the year you were actually appointed to the Foreign Affairs Committee?

DYMALLY: No, no, no. I was on the Foreign Affairs Committee from '81. I think that was when I became chairman of the Subcommittee on Africa and chairman of the Congressional Black Caucus.

CARR: That was a very busy year for you.

DYMALLY: Well, it was interesting to note how I became chairman of the Congressional Black Caucus because there's a little controversy involved. And I know someone mentioned it to my friend Dick Griffey. There's a long history of just serving one term as chairman of the Congressional Black Caucus. It went all the way back from its beginning. And after Mickey Leland served his first term--and very well--he sought a second term. And he received commitments from a number of people. Two commitments I made to myself when I went to the House. I was going to seek some happiness out of this office and I didn't want to be in the leadership--to be chairman of the Congressional Black Caucus. I didn't want any leadership role. And I got a call from Bill Gray and Walter Fauntroy that I needed to consider

running. I was in my Compton office when I got the call.

CARR: Why did they say you should consider running?

DYMALLY: Well, the precedent. They claimed that breaking the precedent was bad for the CBC and the future. So I called, and people who had committed to Mickey kept telling me privately they're glad I'm running. I think even Ron Dellums, who is his best friend, didn't like the notion of breaking the precedent, because Ron had never been a CBC chairman because most members thought he was too radical. He did not become chairman until after me. Both Mickey Leland and I promoted that. So I ran and got unanimous support because Mickey did not contest it.

CARR: By '89 the significance of the Black Caucus is changing. It is becoming more of a national platform to get across . . .

DYMALLY: I don't want to keep praising myself, but many people told me that the years that I was there. . . . We held a series of seminars. We even got into money management, something I'd never heard of before. We got into the issue of black pilots, and science and technology. They had never had a conference with science and

technology. A seminar on Africa. Just name it. I keep forgetting the director of the Black Caucus, and she called me yesterday. Amelia Parker. Mickey had developed a coalition with the Hispanics. Mickey and myself probably had the closest relationship with Hispanics. He spoke Spanish. We began expanding our horizons. . . . Oh, we had one on harassment. We had Farrakhan speak during my tenure.

CARR: Boy, what was the reaction to Farrakhan's speech?

DYMALLY: Oh, he was a big hit. A bit hit. But he came in as a sort of last minute guest, so it wasn't publicized. We had a very, very active seminar on harassment. Seminars on Africa, on the Caribbean, organized a Caribbean action lobby.

CARR: Now, it seems to me . . .

DYMALLY: Apartheid.

CARR: . . . that the renaissance, in terms of power, of the Black Caucus under probably someone like Kwaise Mfume, for instance, before he left and before the whole Gingrich dismantling of the resources. . . . It seems that there was a bit of. . . . How do you say it? No one realized the potential power that the Black Caucus could have until you came along.

DYMALLY: The Black Caucus started losing its power just around that time I took over because this watchdog group in Chicago stated that the caucus was violating congressional rules by using private funds to run the caucus--and so did the Hispanic Caucus and the Women's Caucus and the environmental caucus and the tourist caucus and the steel caucus and the auto caucus. So Congress enforced the rules, and we had to separate the foundation away from the caucus. So the foundation took over the dinner. The caucus now depended exclusively on contributions from members, and couldn't get involved in issues that were non-congressional. They viewed us, legally, as an extension of Congress. So we couldn't take private funds and we couldn't get involved in non-congressional issues. Before that we had the largesse from the congressional weekend dinner. Then the IRS ruled that the caucus makeup could not be incestuous. You can't have a majority of the caucus run the caucus. But they solved that by putting some wives on the board of the foundation.

CARR: One of your involvements at the end of '89-- middle of '89 actually--was with the Committee on

Post Office and Civil Service. Do you recall any significant legislation that came out of that involvement?

DYMALLY: I think more significant is how I got there. I was on Science and Technology, and Bill Clay came to me and said, "The Speaker wants you to go on Post Office." I said, "Why?" He said, "They need a strong person to support the pay raise." And I left Science and Technology, much to my regret.

CARR: Whose pay raise?

DYMALLY: Congressional pay raise. Remember the big controversy? That came through our committee. I left Science and Technology and went on Post Office, which was a good move because there was a wealth of support from the postal workers, many of whom or most of whom lived in my district. They had left Los Angeles and moved into Hawthorne and Gardena and Compton and Carson and Lynwood and Bellflower. And they were very supportive of me. So that was a good move. So that's how I ended up on the Post Office Committee. And I became chairman of the Census and Population Committee at a very important time in the history of reapportionment.

- CARR: Exactly. And within that context, one of your complaints with the Census Bureau was the fact over how they went about counting people in poor and minority areas.
- DYMALLY: Oh, we had several hearings. Several hearings. Here in Los Angeles and Washington. We stayed on their case. But one thing I learned about the Census Bureau, they're the most stubborn people in the world. They wouldn't change if you paid them. They and the State Department operate from the theory of infallibility.
- CARR: Could you just synopsise your complaint with them regarding . . .
- DYMALLY: Well, it wasn't a bitter complaint, because we had a good relationship. For instance, I wanted them to count the Caribbean residents in the country and. . . . Look, they have all kinds of theories about. . . . They based all of their theories on history and methodology. I made no headway. [Laughter] I got some small favors like getting information and stuff like that, but anybody could have gotten it. I just got it faster because I was chairman.
- CARR: How did your involvement with the proposed congressional pay raise . . .

DYMALLY: Well, I was for the pay raise. I'm always for pay raises. I have no objection to pay raises because I don't think the public understands the pressure one is under financially when they depend exclusively on their salary to live, especially Californians. My two rents were close to 40 percent of my net. In order to maintain a family you've got to split yourself in half. Your wife says, "I want to stay in California." "OK." And you've got to have a place in Washington or vice versa. She says, "I'm coming with you to Washington." Then you've got to have a big place. A house for the children and you've got to have a place out here.

I like [Inaudible]. I'm talking about Tip O'Neill, who asked me to go to the Post Office Committee. When I went to Cuba, Fidel gave me some of his personal cigars. In those days he was smoking cigars. I went and I left one for the Speaker in the office. And then I get a call. The Speaker wants to talk to me. I said, "Well, I'm not going to call the Speaker on the phone, I'm going to go by and see him." And I go by and he says, "Dymally, I got your cigar. Where the hell is the box?" [Laughter] I had

the box in the refrigerator. I was going to dish it out one by one to various members.

CARR: He wanted the whole box.

DYMALLY: So I went home and got the box and gave it to him. [Laughter]

CARR: He didn't mention anything about congressional rules about smoking Cuban cigars or anything like that. [Laughter] That was forgotten.

Let's deal with a few issues of foreign affairs I'd like to touch on before we start to wrap up. First of all, what was your involvement in areas of the Middle East, particularly Iran and Iraq, toward the end of the eighties?

DYMALLY: Well, first, when you started our conversation--I don't know if it was on tape--you mentioned that you wanted to talk to me about China. I wasn't a China hand, so to speak. I went to China to find out how they did their census. Another time I went and opened up the first American-Korean, South Korean, China-Korean handbag factory in the private sector. And I'm standing up there, crowds of people, and there's a ribbon which I had to cut. When I cut the ribbon it turned out to be a firecracker ribbon. It went off and to this day my ear still hurts me.

DYMALLY: I was very pro-Israel in the California legislature. I wrote an eloquent piece. It was written for me by Max Mont of the Jewish Labor Committee--"Israel Must Live." I was more eloquent than Miller in the defense of Israel. I remember one time I went to Cal Poly and gave a strong Israel speech. I was followed out by students, some angry students. And they said to me, "How can you, a third-world person from Trinidad, support Israel?" And I said, "Is there another side?" I didn't know there was another side, because the Palestinians, then and now, and the Arabs, then and now, did a very poor job of public relations.

But I subsequently went to the West Bank and the squalor and poverty that I saw there among the Palestinians brought tears to my eyes. I just happened to have gone on a very unfortunate day when it rained and the people's places were flooded with water. I remember when Jesse Jackson decided to go to the Middle East, I said to a friend of mine, "He's either going to cry or become very pro-Palestinian," which he did. So I came back having seen the other side.

And then when I went to Congress I still had

DYMALLY: that position of support for Israel. One day the Quaker Friends Legislative Committee gave a staff member, Peg McCormick, who was pro-Palestinian-- and I didn't know that, because that was not an issue on my agenda--a question to ask Joe Dine, the hawk of the AIPAC, the American Israel [Public Affairs] Committee. "Are these funds going to be used for settlements on the West Bank?" And it was from my part very naive. I didn't know what the implication was. "Are these funds going to be used for West Bank settlements?" The next thing I knew Mel Levine, Waxman, Berman wanted to have breakfast with me. They were told that I was going anti-Israel. Phil Burton, the great liberal, came to talk to me. What I didn't know was his wife was Jewish. I had known her since the 1960's. She never one day sold her Jewishness to me and she defended me all along, my position.

Then I got some invitations from some Palestinian groups and I became very friendly with a Palestinian from the West Bank, Hassan El Katib, who is still my friend today. I went by to visit his family on the West Bank. I was there the day when the Intifada started. And

then this young man came to see me and wanted to serve as a pro bono fellow--Marwan Burgan. He was so good, he ended up as my AA [administrative assistant]. A good researcher. He and I are still friends today. By the way, of all of the people who worked for me there are only two people I can't locate. One is David Johnson, my AA. Another one is Melvenia [J.] Gueye of the Africa Subcommittee. I have a couple of certificates for them. But anyhow, that's how I became involved. But I caught hell for that position.

CARR: Now, weren't you also involved in a position to either reopen or fund a university on the West Bank or Gaza?

DYMALLY: Yeah. Sure. I went there and met with the provost. He was in exile in Jordan. I took the position of academic freedom on the floor.

CARR: And you were criticized for that?

DYMALLY: I don't know if I was criticized, because this opposition to me became very private, not public.

CARR: Ah, I see. Very interesting. Going back to China just for a moment. You developed a reputation for being a very strong human rights advocate.

- DYMALLY: Yes.
- CARR: When the Tiananmen Square massacre occurred what was your reaction . . .
- DYMALLY: What year was that?
- CARR: Tiananmen Square, that had to be . . .
- DYMALLY: 'Ninety-two?
- CARR: No, that would have been '90.
- DYMALLY: 'Ninety?¹ That late. Well, as I said, my position was this, that I had Africa, I had the Caribbean, and I had my district, and my plate was full. I let the China hands handle that one. Not that I was not opposed to it, but I figured, "Look, there's only so much. . . ." Then I had the Middle East. I had my hands full.
- CARR: One last foreign affairs question and then we'll start to move into some of the more philosophical questions towards the end of your career. Did you have any relationship with [General Ibrahim] Babangida in Nigeria?
- DYMALLY: I visited with him through the U.S. ambassador. Then when he was leaving, I think in '92, he sent for me. Is it '92? 'Ninety-three?

1. The Tiananmen Square massacre occurred in 1989.

CARR: He sent for you?

DYMALLY: Yeah, through Chief Antonio Fernandez to come and talk to him about what was the congressional action of what was taking place in Nigeria.

CARR: What was your position regarding his regime?

DYMALLY: I've always been opposed to military regimes, but Babangida was one of the moderates. The one thing I don't like about Nigerian military regimes, they're very, very bad on free speech, free assembly. Probably of all of those. . . . You see, they're probably not worse than any others, but Nigeria has such a past history of fiery orators and free assembly and free speech that whenever the military comes and kills that, it shows up on the screen more so than other places. And because of its importance to black America, its importance to Africa, the largest country. . . . But my last visit there, last year, I made comments about. . . . Some of my friends were in jail. General [Olusegun] Obasanjo. One of my lawyer friends was just released for supporting Obasanjo. The military. . . . They're very, very hard on free speech--Nigeria.

CARR: As a person, what was your reaction to or what

was your impression of Babangida?

DYMALLY: Very cool. That's the best I can say. Very cool. Had a sense of humor. For instance he said this, "You've read today's paper where some of those boys are making a lot of noise about the election. I think I'm going to give them a little retreat." And he arrested them. [Laughter] In-house arrest. He put them in in-house arrest so they wouldn't disrupt the election.

CARR: So you say he had a very dark sense of humor about [Laughter] his political position. That's very interesting.

DYMALLY: Give them a little vacation he says. [Laughter]

CARR: A little vacation.

DYMALLY: He wasn't as ruthless as some of the others.

CARR: Finally, Mobutu had a visit to the United States somewhere in 1990 or something?

DYMALLY: And the great liberal Howard Wolpe offered a resolution which passed Congress unanimously, and no one has ever criticized Wolpe for it, but they criticize me for just going to visit Mobutu. I tell you, the double standard in this business. Even to this day, no one mentions that, but the Congress. . . . That was his peace initiative

between UNITA and MPLA in Bdolite.

CARR: All right, let's stop this tape here for a
moment.

[End Tape 18, Side B]

[Session 16, August 8, 1997]

[Begin Tape 19, Side A]

CARR: Congressman Dymally, I'd like to discuss with you one of the notions of how the demographics of your congressional districts changed and how it might have changed your political orientation.

DYMALLY: Well, as you know, the courts eventually drew the lines in '71, but I had worked extensively on it. I did my doctoral dissertation on the economic and political factors in districts of 20 percent or more of black participants. This district, the Thirty-first [Congressional] District, wasn't in it because it was only about 18 percent, so I never considered it a black district. But over the years the migration of blacks from South Central into the small cities was taking place rapidly. And so everybody kept telling me that the district was changing. I didn't know it because when you live in Sacramento you get to LAX, you go north. You don't go south.

CARR: Right.

DYMALLY: You don't go east. You come to the west side where you live with the rest of the bourgeoisie.

CARR: Exactly.

DYMALLY: And so I never observed the demographics taking place.

CARR: Now, you mentioned about postal workers moving into your district and how that became a constituency that actually had not been there before. Were there any other supporters or constituencies that evolved during your years as a congressman in that district?

DYMALLY: Aerospace.

CARR: Aerospace. Well, but that had always been there, wasn't it?

DYMALLY: Oh, I'm sorry. You said evolved.

CARR: Evolved and developed.

DYMALLY: Yes. Ethnic groups.

CARR: Ethnic groups.

DYMALLY: A good example is there are two Filipinos now on the Carson City Council. I went the other day with a friend who wants to open up a school, and there in the building is a Samoan office. They saw me, and they all began welcoming me very warmly and reminding me that they had made me a chief one time. So what I discovered was the

rise of the new ethnics. Now, the Koreans do not live in Koreatown. They live in other parts of the city and Orange County. The strongest contingency of Japanese Americans is in my district, Gardena--other than Hawaii. Some of them are now moving into Torrance. And for the first time we have a black elected official in Gardena. So that tells you. . . . So anyway, this new ethnicity was kind of new for me. I loved that makeup of the district.

CARR: Now, regarding the Korean population. You have since spent time in Korea and been very . . .

DYMALLY: Well, I became their representative, so to speak, because I had represented Koreatown. In fact, Congressman [Jay] Kim, who is now a conservative Republican, was a very liberal Democrat when I met him. He held at least two fund-raisers for me out in the district when he was in the private sector. He headed a group called KAPA, Korean American Political Association. And so I got to know the Koreans and then began going to Korea. My wife loved Korea. And I made some very good friends. Still, I think, the thing that really made me there was the number one dissident, other than Kim Dae Jung, his number one lieutenant [Kim

Sang-Hyun] was released just about 1981 when I first went to Korea. . . . And friends asked me to see him; the KCIA [South Korean Central Intelligence Agency] was following him. He had to come through the kitchen of the hotel. He and I became good friends, and he is one day a possible candidate for president. The other day he came here to a Korean dinner and I was the only black person there. Not only did he single me out for a lengthy discourse in his speech, but he left the table where the district attorney, Garcetti, was sitting. He came and sat at my table. Because he knew, and he's told friends, that when he was really down and out I was the one guy who supported him. His group sponsored a dinner, I showed up. I didn't run away from him. When he came I had a reception for him in Washington. We're still friends. And in this debate about Korean ownership, I take a little different position than some people in that I say that after '65, when the Jewish merchants began leaving, we blacks didn't buy up their stores. Maybe we had some moral judgment about liquor stores.

CARR: But wasn't there a small percentage, perhaps 10

percent I've read somewhere, of blacks who did buy liquor stores?

DYMALLY: Very small. Very small. Very small. They are scattered. But there were other enterprises, small stores, that we didn't buy. We didn't go into the mom-and-pop business. They did. Now, the reason why they survived is because the mom-and-pop business is an extended family business. The margin of profit on a can of string beans is small. And in some instances, if they were to hire someone from the district, it's really the margin of profit that they've given away. So you have the whole family working that store.

But on the other side, they have no notion at all about blacks. They're about as dumb about the black community as I am about space. They have no understanding about the nature and culture of the black customer. For example, a black customer goes in there to buy a paper and he says, "Are you going to look at the [Mike] Tyson fight tonight?" "Huh?" He doesn't even answer him. Do you know why? He doesn't know who the hell Tyson is or what Tyson's all about. I recall in Compton I went over to the liquor store to buy, I remember, a banana and a soda,

DYMALLY: and I said to the merchant there, "By the way, I'm going to Korea next week." Do you know what he said, "What for?" Now, had I said that to someone else, a Jewish merchant or a black merchant or an Hispanic merchant, he would say, "Oh, by the way, I've got a friend, why don't you look him up? Here's his number. Call him." Or, "Let me know when you come back." And so the black customer sees them as very unfriendly, very hostile. The Korean merchant is very suspicious of young people. Indeed, some of them have indulged in shoplifting. But you talk about. . . . "Did you see the game last Saturday with Michael Jordan? Boy, he was great." "Huh?" Nothing.

Now, they may give a contribution to the NAACP, but they wouldn't come to the NAACP dinner. So the contribution, like a contribution to a politician through the campaign manager, never gets the attention it deserves because when you give a contribution to the campaign manager the politician doesn't see it, especially if it's mailed. So when you give the NAACP a contribution and you don't show up at the dinner, they don't know that you were involved or

supportive of the organization. So their public relations is very, very terrible. They're very stubborn about trying to learn new ways of doing business in the black community. Nevertheless, I was always sympathetic and always defending them from criticism of taking over because we had a chance to take over and we didn't.

CARR: Since we're on business, and small businesses in particular, you were very supportive, have always been throughout your career, and you carried the support in the Congress, for minority businesses.

DYMALLY: Yeah, boy, I'm telling you.

CARR: And particularly within the realm of affirmative action, minority business contracts.

DYMALLY: When the Reagan people started going ideological and started opening up these contracts. . . . In order to kill affirmative action, what they did, they opened up a lot of these contracts for bidding rather than sole source even though they had the power to sole source. I used to say to them, "If you're going to put this small contract out for bidding, why don't you put the F-16 out for bid?" The F-16 is a sole-source contract. You have the discretion of sole source in these contracts. Why does the little guy have to go

out to bid? So many of the small black businesses just got wiped out. I know in one instance a guy who had the only portable water converter, which the army used in that abortive attempt in Iran and other places--they put his contract out to bid. A large company took it over and couldn't do the job. So they had to renew the contract with the large company and give them some more money because there's so much in it. You just can't cancel. It was a struggle. It's a struggle.

CARR: Well, the right-wing political argument is that this is a free market and governmental intervention should not . . .

DYMALLY: Put the F-16 out to bid. Put every goddamn Pentagon contract out to bid. You can't be half pregnant on this issue.

CARR: With that regard . . .

DYMALLY: I hear their argument, but let's not be hypocritical.

CARR: Taking all of this into account and considering basically your three decades, four decades really, as a political leader . . .

DYMALLY: You know, at the BAPAC meeting they recognized me for forty years of public service, and I said,

"Look, how can you recognize me for forty years of public service when I'm only thirty-nine years old." [Laughter]

CARR: They're adding those two years in the nineties. Those two years have become ten years. What is your political legacy?

DYMALLY: I was asked that after I left the lieutenant governor's office and I said, "My legacy is the many people I brought into the political system." Teresa Hughes suggested the other day that I ought to call a reunion of the Urban [Affairs] Institute fellows and interns, and my own staff. I would like to do that. I've had one in Washington, one in Sacramento, and one in Los Angeles while I was in Congress. But I had the resources to do it. I'd like one day, when I have some extra cash, to do it again. Because I'd like to host it. But I'd like to bring all the folks back. But I still stay in touch with most of them.

CARR: So your political legacy is . . .

DYMALLY: My legacy was the people I brought into the system.

CARR: Is there one particular person, or maybe several people, who you're particularly proud of in terms

of their accomplishments, what they've gotten?

DYMALLY: The most loyal of all of these was Senator Bill Greene. I mean, I could do no wrong, even when I probably was wrong. I've reasons to be proud of Julian Dixon, because Julian is a non-media legislator who works very well with his colleagues, Democrats and Republicans, and is highly respected.

CARR: What do you mean by non-media?

DYMALLY: Well, he doesn't rush to have press conferences every time he does something, you know, like a lot of us did. So you don't see him on CNN, you don't see him in the L.A. Times every weekday.

CARR: One of the things, as you're moving towards retirement--1989. . . . You have lists of tributes of people you gave tributes to, and two people that struck me on the list. . . . One, you mentioned Tom Bradley. Another person was Nate Holden.

DYMALLY: Nate and I have had a stormy relationship. But I was very touched the other day. The Water Replenishment District [of Southern California] went to present a check to the Los Angeles City Council for water conservation, and he said publicly that we should all be grateful to

Dymally for this effort. But he and I . . . I supported him the last time he ran; didn't support him when he ran for the senate. He outsmarted us and took our own sample ballot and beat the hell out of us because Frank Holoman, who had agreed not to buy any billboards, took the United Auto Workers contribution and bought billboards and we weren't able to send the sample ballot anymore. Jesse Unruh, whom we did not support. . . . We were supporting Gray Davis for treasurer, because Jesse got into the race for treasurer late. Nate Holden went to him and said, "Look, those guys are not supporting you and I want to put you on my slate." And Jesse Unruh said, "Yeah, they're going to put out the sample ballot." And Nate [snaps fingers] used the sample ballot and defeated us. The moral of the story is that when you build up a strategy with your campaign committee you don't arbitrarily change it, which is what Frank did.

CARR: So finally you've been able to reconcile with Holden.

DYMALLY: Yes. Holden and I have had disagreements about modus operandi, but he is basically a decent guy. Yeah, the answer is yes.

CARR: Now, within the context of this, as you go to support Bradley in 1990--'89 actually--you reconcile after he's having all his difficulties in the L.A. Times.

DYMALLY: It started when he ran for governor. Gus Hawkins, Julian Dixon, and I went and pledged our support to him, especially the second time, because we wanted him to avoid the mistake he made in the first one.

CARR: One of the issues in Bradley's last years was the fact that the powder keg of the LAPD began to blow up surrounding the issue of Rodney King, which later led to the riot. How did you view this string of things that went on?

DYMALLY: Well, these are circumstantial developments in politics over which one has no control. The police saw Bradley as a traitor because he came from them and he began supporting community efforts, and so they left him. He didn't leave them. The riots caught him in the middle of the police here and the community there. I think in the final analysis, history will be kind to Bradley.

CARR: Why?

DYMALLY: Because he had a style that attracted people.

They liked his non-confrontational style. And he's a very gentle and very impressive man in stature, physical stature, and intellect. Certainly the most non-confrontational politician I know--he and Gus Hawkins.

CARR: By this non-confrontation, is it something that comes out of a particular generation of black politicians?

DYMALLY: Yes, those pre-civil-rights politicians dealt with the system very quietly. The civil rights [movement] demanded visibility, demanded fire. We haven't talked much about Gus Hawkins. I hope we don't leave it out, if you don't mind talking about Hawkins.

DYMALLY: Well, we have talked about him, of moving from the assembly straight through to his . . .

CARR: Yes. But I just wanted a few words about his character. Here is a man who is as honest as the day is long. Very polite, moral, non-confrontational, very effective, hardworking, does not seek publicity. I mean, he's really a model, and was very, very helpful to me over the years. I wish that I had picked up some of his style. And he is highly respected. I was standing at the airport with Charlie Wilson--

assemblyman then--and he offered me a ride. And I'm in this car with three. . . . Five of us are in the car. And we began talking about the most effective and respected legislator at the time--Gus was about to run for Congress--and the conversation centered around Gus Hawkins. He was the most respected. And my experience with him in Congress was the same thing. He was very responsive to me. The chairman really runs the committee, dictates the committee, and trying to get an amendment sometimes is so difficult. And many members of Congress treat an amendment like a bill, unlike California. They talk about this bill, that bill. It really was an amendment to a major bill. But Gus would always permit you to get your piece in.

CARR: What did you learn from him?

DYMALLY: Civility, in one word. The most civil person I know.

CARR: What, as you consider your political career--and this is a question you suggested that I posed to you a long time ago--were your mistakes? What would you have changed? What would you have done differently?

DYMALLY: Style. One of my weaknesses was my inability to

say no to requests for help from whatever quarters. Some turned out to be questionable. And the appearance of being involved in a project for personal gain. I would absolutely change that. I would learn to say no or have someone say no for me since I'm incapable of saying no. I was incapable of firing people. I was not very tough, and I permitted people to use me and my name when I should have said no. If you read the Times, there's no single controversy that I'm involved in with the exception of the Urban Institute that doesn't relate to somebody else. And even that was related to a lot of people.

CARR: Within that context, you decided to retire. The circumstances around your retirement, you said earlier, had to do with fund-raising. Fund-raising had become increasingly . . .

DYMALLY: Fund-raising. I got burnt out. I fell out of love. I was having difficulty getting up in the morning. For my entire life I was never a late sleeper because I wanted to come out and conquer the world early. If I learned anything from white people it's that while some of us are sleeping, they're plotting our demise. I learned that in the senate. I remember one time I was at

the Ditchley [Palace], which was the weekend hideaway for Winston Churchill, with Willie Brown. And I knew the senate caucus was meeting. After the meeting a group of the delegates wanted to go to Paris and I left and I came back to Sacramento. And that Wednesday they were about to cut up the pie, and I said to my friend, Nick Petris, I said, "Nick, it's a little disconcerting that I sit down there and these guys cut up the pie and they never ask me what I want." I said, "I really don't want anything, but it would be at least consoling to have them ask me . . ."

CARR: Before the pie is cut.

DYMALLY: Yes. He said, "What would you like to do?" I said, "I'd like to be caucus chairman." And sure enough, I became caucus chairman. But if I were not there when that pie was cut up that Wednesday morning at the restaurant where we used to meet. . . . But there was an early morning breakfast. A lot of my colleagues, black colleagues, are not into planning. They want to do things now, for now. I like to sit down over a meal, over a lengthy meeting, or in a retreat, and talk about things. I've always seen myself as a student of

politics. That's what I loved about Congress. That Library of Congress just blew my mind to the point that I couldn't cope with it anymore. Such a volume of information there. It was one hell of an experience.

I might teach a class at Compton [Community College] this year and it has nothing to do with compensation. I still have the teacher in me. I might teach a class on current events in American politics. What I did, I went over to [CSU] Dominguez [Hills] and saw what was a transferable class that Compton could teach so that students could get credit for it when they move over. I don't know if we're going to work out the details.

CARR: So that teacher in you was always there.

DYMALLY: Always learning. I remember when I ran for the assembly, I went and visited people who wouldn't even support me to find out how do you run a campaign. I'm never opposed to going and asking people how to do things, even though they may assume that I know.

CARR: As a congressman, what piece of legislation are you most proud of?

DYMALLY: I cannot answer that question truthfully. If you

asked me about the California senate I could run out a long list. There's no major piece of legislation that I could think of. That was one of the frustrations because. . . . Oh, I got some things amended, but it doesn't stand out as the senate did. I got the Muslim mosque amended into a bill about desecration of religious buildings. Like I said, I got an amendment to fund a program for Trans-Africa. But there's no major. . . . The Congress doesn't work that way. You've got to be a chairman to have something of significance. Now, I introduced legislation on conflict resolution. It passed after I left. But I've pioneered an awful lot of legislation that eventually became law. The one that I never got to carry, because I wasn't heavy enough, was the Japanese redress and reparations. There's a conference at UCLA toward this September and I've been invited to make a contribution.

CARR: The other thing we've talked about is this notion of the differences between black elected officials and white elected officials when it comes to retirement and the opportunities in retirement.

DYMALLY: Well, you look at the historically black

colleges. Are there over a hundred?

CARR: There were.

DYMALLY: Yeah, still are. Take a man like Gus Hawkins, you have all this experience, chairman of a powerful Education and Labor Committee. If he were white he would be given a grant and an office and a secretary to just think and write. Harvard or [Johns] Hopkins [University] or one of the many institutions--centers. Name me one black elected official you know of who's at the Kennedy Center in Harvard, who's at the Center for International and Strategic Studies at Georgetown--formerly at Georgetown. Or any other place for that matter. Or Howard University for that matter. If I had my magic wand I would set up an institute that would make these valuable assets. . . . To just sit down and write the history of their career, the history of their lives. And I think the historically black colleges have failed in that area miserably. Take me for instance. I'm not on an ego trip, but I think I could make some contribution, and if it weren't for the fact that the president of the Compton Community College Board of Trustees was a staffer of mine and a friend, I probably

would never be invited there. In part, I had to invite myself. You would think Compton would have picked me up, or Drew for that matter. But we don't have that sense of history about us, certainly not on the West Coast.

CARR: You said at some point you'd met with other younger black politicians . . .

DYMALLY: I talked to them about retirement. I went up to Sacramento and met with the Black Caucus and said to them--the young ones coming in--"You need to start preparing for retirement because the only thing that's not constant in retirement is your income. Union oil stays the same price, MacDonald's ninety-nine-cent hamburger is the same price, and the house mortgage is the same price, but your income drops, and that is a major adjustment. And if you don't begin to plan for it early, you have problems."

I remember Byron Rumford coming to me in '63 and saying, "Young man, you're going to be here for a long time. Go buy a piece of property." Well, at that stage in my life I wanted to save the world. I didn't want to be bothered watering grass. Had I bought a piece of property. . . . The veteran's home on Florin Road was \$12,500.

DYMALLY: Today they're worth over \$100,000. I would have had it more than thirty years and it would have been paid by now. I never thought about it. My wife had her house in San Bernardino. It was \$68 per month, believe it or not. We sold it rather than hold on to it, didn't want to be bothered with property. Poor counseling. We don't have good counseling.

When the Joint Center for Political Studies was first perceived by Percy Sutton and myself, this is what it was intended to do--especially for southern politicians, many of whom are not quite as sophisticated as in New York and California--to hold them by the hand and take them through Robert's Rules, prepare for the future, plan a strategy. They've become a think tank for basically middle-class issues and pleasing foundations to get grants. I quit because I held a hearing on poverty. . . . I quit the Joint Center, of which I was a founder, when Eddie Williams refused to send someone to the committee to testify on poverty when all the other witnesses were white. And when I told him what an embarrassment it was for me as a founder, a board member, of the Joint Center to chair a

committee on poverty and we didn't have a black person there, he sent someone and the first thing she did was put out a disclaimer that she wasn't speaking for the Joint Center. How in the hell can you have a hearing on poverty in Washington, [when] the chairman of the subcommittee is a founder and a board member of the Joint Center, and the Joint Center cannot speak on poverty. And when they do, they have to put a disclaimer. I mean, that was enough for me to quit.

CARR: Did that kind of politics demonstrate itself often enough for you to really be disgusted with . . .

DYMALLY: When they talk about co-optation, that is middle-class co-optation. They have to please their funders. Eddie Williams didn't want to offend any federal agency or any funding grant by coming to talk about black poverty. They also finked out on the question of black harassment. In fact, we had Clarence Mitchell. We had a meeting sponsored by the Church of Christ in New York on harassment. The Joint Center sent someone to defend their non-involvement in the study of harassment. I said to you before, and I need to emphasize this, in order to gain acceptance in

middle-class society, especially white middle-class society, you've got to change your style. And that's what I love about Maxine Waters.

"Take me as I am." Her husband is an ambassador appointed by the president, but she's not afraid of criticizing the president.

CARR: In any way, as you look back, do you feel personally that you were co-opted in any way?

DYMALLY: No. Nope. No. I always had a problem not having adequate income because I lived on my salary and I was involved in buying some slum properties and lost my shirt in some instances, but I usually got a tax write-off. No, I never. . . . No. Because I feel so strongly about racism. I claim I'm the most intolerant person you've ever met, but I also have a strong streak of intolerance in me. And the intolerance is on the question of racism. I'm especially intolerant against middle-class blacks who tolerate racism. One of the strong resentments I have about my homeland--Trinidad--is that too many Afro-Trinidadians there are in denial about race discrimination on the islands, because they are the palace guard who work for white institutions. And they would have you believe

that there's no such thing as racial discrimination. And that applies for the Indians too.

CARR: So you retire. If you have a network of support around you as a congressman, what happened to your network of support after you retired?

DYMALLY: It was zilch. Be damned lucky if some people return your phone calls. I get better response from civilians than I do from legislators. But first, I hate. . . . And I shouldn't even. . . . I often caution my wife against using the word hate. I totally dislike the notion of lobbying, even though I'm a registered foreign agent for two countries.

CARR: And those countries are?

DYMALLY: Mauritania and Sudan. I took them because they were underdog countries and they were Islamic countries. And people equate Christianity with goodness. You never hear someone say, "He's a good Islamic boy" or "She's a good Buddhist girl." It always a good Christian man or good Christian woman. I have turned down others because I don't like military governments. I was invited to represent Nigeria. I turned it down because of the military regime. Sierra Leone, I

turned it down.

CARR: Why did you turn down Sierra Leone?

DYMALLY: Because there was a true democratic government, before the coup. Let me finish the question. Refresh me what you were asking. What was the question again?

CARR: Well, the question was regarding the choices you made in terms of after you left. You were saying, well, first of all, how you lost your network of support. No one returned your calls.

DYMALLY: Oh yeah. And some of these people I helped out, basically, are not very grateful. I don't expect them to worship at my shrine all the time, but you'd expect some sense of friendship and loyalty. And that's what I like about Julian. Whenever I call up on him, he's there to help. Bill Greene was always there. But I don't like having to go back to the legislature and ask for favors. I hate it. A staff member called me the other day and said to me, "You don't like it in Sacramento, do you?" I said, "Well, I like Sacramento, but I hate having to go to the legislature and ask anyone to vote for something." So part of the lack of contact with some of these people is my fault. The way I make

up for it, I go to the fund-raisers and buy one ticket or so and drop them little notes. For instance, I stay in touch with Bob Hertzberg. And when I see him, he hugs me when we meet. You'd think that I was his father or benefactor. Warm, genuine.

CARR: So, for the historical record, just talk a little bit about the nature of your company. The nature of your company is to represent foreign governments? Dymally International, that is.

DYMALLY: I organized Dymally International because I had this false notion that I was so popular with the African countries. I had been honored with some of the highest honors--about half a dozen--met with heads of state, and been picked up at the airport with police escort and the whole bit. But there were. . . . And introduced some good stuff. Increased their budget. . . . I guess you asked me what I would be proud of. I took the African budget to a billion dollars, and that to me was a major accomplishment. And I had this false notion that they would come to me for advice. The first year was very good. And I miscalculated. I thought all of the years would be as good as the first year, but I was fresh and

DYMALLY: new.

But African, like Caribbean, countries still believe in whiteness. They're still colonial. I could have a whole session with you on some of the horrible experiences I had in Africa. If I were a bitter person it would make me anti-African. And maybe someday we could talk about it. Maybe if we had another session. Anyhow, the idea was to represent Africa. I always knew that the Caribbean was hopeless because a prophet has no honor in his own country. I couldn't even get an invitation to attend CARICOM meetings when I was [chairman of the] Congressional Black Caucus. How the hell am I going to get any clients there? And a good example is that I went to the prime minister in Trinidad with the hope that I could represent the country. He took somebody else. This government. . . . You go to Trinidad and ask them, "Who was responsible for the election victory?" And the average person would tell you in a friendly way, "Dymally and the Africans," and in an unfriendly way some would say, "Dymally is the one who caused us to lose." They promised me a contract. The prime minister asked me to send him a proposal, and as

DYMALLY: of this day I haven't heard from him. So that second year was a disaster.

And I made, again, some emotional decisions. Don't let your emotion get the best of you in politics or business. A Liberian friend came; he wanted to open up the first black-owned bank in South Africa. I put in some money there, lost that. A friend in Trinidad wanted to start up a fertilizer plant and he had all of the statistics. I invested, I lost. I got ripped off by a securities company. I borrowed \$50,000 to set up a securities firm here and couldn't get paid. I finally took them to arbitration and won and still can't get paid. I have to go to another lawyer now to get a judgment against them. But I had borrowed \$50,000 to assure a young man that for one year he would have his salary paid. And when that money ran out he ran out too, and the debt stayed with me. So after the second and third year we had some difficult times. I was over-staffed. The staff was paid too high for the size of this company, so I finally downsized. Almost felt like I was with AT & T or something like that. I moved to a smaller office, cut back on staff, picked up a

couple of new clients. So I think this year will be a good year for me. By the way, Trinidad asked me to do a project for them. I did a project and I haven't heard from them since the project was completed.

CARR: What if I said something like, "Mr. Dymally, you've had a long political career. It's a long year. Why don't you rest and go fishing or something?"

DYMALLY: Yeah, I should have and I could have with my retirement funds. But as I said, that's just not what I did. Had I done that January 7, 1993, and gone fishing I'd be better off. But by getting involved in this business, this need to continue to represent, this time for pay, it didn't quite work out that way. So I have to get out of debt now before I can go fishing. Besides I'm not good at fishing. I would probably. . . . And I say that in the literal sense and the broad sense. I would still be involved. I'm involved with the Grace Home for Waiting Children. I'm involved with CATO charter schools. I would still have the need to do something, but I need to get out of this business that I'm in now, and I hope I can do so next year. I don't need this

rat race. But my problem is I don't know how to relax. And then my wife and I have been to just about every place. Name some place and we've been there. And she and I are not good at laying on the beach and taking sun. So I don't know where to go and what to do right now. Now, I enjoy going back to Trinidad and I have a little project there I'm working on. I have taken an old family building and remodeled it to make it into a guest house. There's no money in that, but general pride.

CARR: When your daughter ran for Congress. . . . Well, first of all, what was your reaction when she told you she was interested in running for Congress?

DYMALLY: Well, she didn't tell me, because when she wanted to run for the school board I heard about it--she didn't tell me--and her brother and I went to her and told her she was crazy to run for the school board in Compton. It was the worse thing we thought she could do in life. And she said, "Well, you support everybody else. Why don't you support me? And if you don't I'm going to run . . ."

[End Tape 19, Side A]

[Begin Tape 19, Side B]

CARR: . . . In Congress your first choice was Willard Murray.

DYMALLY: In fact, Willard knew about my retirement before my wife or staff or my family. I thought Willard was a prophet, was a genius, that he did no wrong. He was damn near godlike to me. That's why I was so hurt when he did what he did. I felt he would be my successor, but Ken and others came to me and said. . . .

[Interruption]

So I decided to support her--Lynn, my daughter. Now, her defeat was the biggest shock that I ever experienced in politics because. . . . It was contrary to our modus operandi. We do not believe in polls. We had this pollster and he kept telling us our margin was so big it would be impossible for us to lose. And everybody said we were going to win. We did not let down. But one thing we didn't do. We didn't do the thing that we were great in. That was the sample ballot, and Maxine did it. Had we done the sample ballot. . . . The second thing we had no control over was the riots. Tucker articulated that very well. Compton was hit, he was the mayor, he

showed up at all the meetings. I even called him a television whore, for which I apologized. It was not right. I said I didn't attack public officials, but. . . . But he did a good job and the riots helped him. He articulated very well. Well, we don't believe in polls and yet we kept believing in the polls. But she lost by a very narrow margin and it was a surprise. What you had to realize is that Tucker's family was well-heeled in Compton, and Carson is an extension of Compton. Everybody in Compton . . .

CARR: Knows people in Carson.

DYMALLY: . . . moved to Carson. Or their family moved to Carson. Let's do one more session, eh?

[End Tape 19, Side B]

[Session 17, August 11, 1997]

[Begin Tape 20, Side A]

CARR: Good morning, Congressman Dymally.

DYMALLY: As I understand it, Elston, this is our final interview. The last of the Mohicans. First, let me take this opportunity to thank you for the very intelligent manner in which you approached this interview. When I first met you I thought you were just a plain old graduate student. I didn't know that you were a seasoned professional in journalism. This has been a very enjoyable project. I also want to thank UCLA for assigning the time and resources to do this project. It came about in a very funny way. I called protesting the fact that they did not interview me for the Hawkins project--Congressman Hawkins--because I wanted to say some nice things about him. And in the course of that angry debate, impressing upon the UCLA people my qualifications to talk about Gus, that [resulted in] this project.

As we conclude I made a couple of notes here-- not very many. One about regrets. As a whole, in fact, I don't have many regrets. There are a couple of things I would have done differently. But if the circumstances were different, and I discussed it with you in a previous session, I would have supported Maxine. I believe black politics would have been much different in California if she and I were working together.

CARR: In what way?

DYMALLY: Well, we had strained relationships and we never really worked together. The other one, I should have been more upfront in my support of Willie Brown for speaker. I was not in the assembly, couldn't cast a vote. First time I was in the senate. Second time I was lieutenant governor. His third attempt, which was successful, I was out of public office. The first time, that was in 1974, after my election, the black members of the assembly, Bill Greene, Leon Ralph, Julian Dixon, and John Miller of Alameda County, met and one or more of them used me as the excuse for not supporting Willie.

CARR: How did they use you as the excuse?

DYMALLY: Well, they claimed that Willie wasn't very active

in my lieutenant governor's campaign and that in one mailing up in northern California I was left off.

CARR: That's not true. Willie had actually called on Jerry Brown to come, to be more upfront . . .

DYMALLY: That's the second one, not the first one.

CARR: OK.

DYMALLY: But that wasn't a good excuse. John and Willie had personal antagonisms towards each other. Even though I didn't have a vote, I should have been more vocal, because Willie held that against me for some time.

I have felt that the L.A. Times was especially brutal, went out of their way to single me out. But there's no way that I can prove it except to cite you two experiences I had. First, there was never a good story about me in the Times for over twenty years. They wrote a front-page left-hand column, I believe, on West Indians in California and they never once mentioned me. I was not just a prominent West Indian in California, but in the United States. And when we called the reporter he gave us two stories. One, he said that he couldn't get hold of me; I didn't return his phone call. And my

press person at the time, Miya Iwataki, said, "Well, had he committed a felony would you have had a personal call from him? Would he have had to return a call?" The second one he gave, he said he wrote it in, but his editor took it out. Now, how could you write a story about West Indians in California without mentioning me?

And the second one is that after the story came out about Tempelsman and myself, I resigned from my own foundation and Roll Call carried the story. Roll Call is the Capitol Hill newspaper. A Times reporter came to interview me about it. But what resulted a couple of days before my primary was an article totally different from that which he interviewed me about.

CARR: Who was that reporter? Do you recall?

DYMALLY: Oh God. I forget his name. It came about on one of those several clippings you had. I saw his name on there.

CARR: It wasn't Broder was it?

DYMALLY: No, Broder is at the Washington Post. I'm talking about the Los Angeles Times.

CARR: Fairbanks?

DYMALLY: No, it was a Washington reporter. He wrote a story in which he said that I had circulated a

DYMALLY: letter in support of Mobutu. So I wrote the Times a letter and I told them that if they could produce the letter that I will resign from Congress in twenty-four hours. They never published my letter. And they never retracted their story, but they sent me a letter of apology, a private letter of apology. I hope I have it on file.

But Fairbanks had a thing for me. He got into some extreme stuff. In one instance he mentioned that my present wife, Alice, had been seeing me and was the cause of my divorce. That caused me to go to [William French] Smith, the board of regents member, who arranged a meeting for me and Mrs. [Dorothy Buffum] Chandler. At the time, Mrs. Chandler was involved in a drunk driving incident which was kind of covered up by Sheriff [Eugene] Biscailuz and they signed an agreement with the CHP officer, in effect--a guy by the name of [] Brown--a nondisclosure agreement.

Anyhow. In the course of. . . . Would I change anything if I had it to do all over again? Yes. I would probably be a little more cautious about people to whom I responded on various

DYMALLY: economic issues. What I discovered in politics is that if you stay away from matters affecting money or business that fail, it's OK. If you succeed, you're a hero, if you fail. . . . This all started with my involvement in Batik. I was asked to serve on the board. I was being criticized for not bringing any business to the district. One particular critic, Lin Hilburn, who was a L.A Sentinel writer and a candidate against me for senate. . . . So I thought that this might be proof that I was getting involved in business. My investment was \$600. But what happened is that Batik finally changed over to a medical company and I couldn't get rid of the stock because they were promotional stock. I sought permission from the corporation's commissioner and he said, "Well, if I gave you permission to sell promotional stock I'll have to do it for all the board members and that's not exactly the way we do it in California."

The strange result of that experience is that the man who invited me to participate, Bill Burke, the husband of Supervisor Yvonne Burke, with whom I was very friendly, doesn't even return my phone calls now. So I would stay away

DYMALLY: from these business enterprises. But at the time, given the limited amount of money you made in the legislature, most people had outside businesses. For someone getting into that field, who is not in the business profession, per se, I would suggest that you stick to investment funds and real estate.

During the course of this interview I tried to be intellectually honest in my response to your questions and to have some accuracy about the events. In the course of so doing, I may have mentioned a name or two, but it was designed for historical accuracy rather than any personal criticism of the individuals. I cite one example about Gwen Moore giving credit to three people--three white men--for a victory in an area in which she lost. [She] never gave Willard and I that credit. But over the years she and I continued to be very friendly, and during the course of her campaign for secretary of state, she's the only black elected official I know who ran for higher office and hired blacks to help her. So that was just a reference about the nature of black politics. It wasn't intended to discredit her in any way. So anyhow . . .

- CARR: Now, your relationship with Willie Brown, were you ever able to mend that breach or has it always been . . .
- DYMALLY: At times, yes. It fluctuated from friendship to ambivalence to ignoring me. He privately criticized me for not supporting him, and an op-ed piece was written by some guy from Sacramento to that effect. But I did not oppose him. I just felt I wasn't in the assembly and the black members were not supporting him. Frank Holoman did support him.
- CARR: From your perspective--you're removed from the legislature--what do you think Brown's legacy or his contribution to the legislative process, particularly within the Democratic party and as a speaker, was?
- DYMALLY: Willie is someone whom I admire. And he may very well be surprised to hear that. Willie was tough. He was unafraid of criticism. So much so that he was viewed as being egotistical. But I observed him. . . . I first began to admire him during the Young Democratic days. We were running Bill Greene for president, and he made it very clear to us early in the game that this was not about, with him, black or white, it was

simply about being part of an operation. He was part of the Burton operation, to which he was loyal. And my second observation, during the course of the civil rights movement. . . . You know how angry brothers were. If you had any status or if you were light-skinned they would just attack you. But Willie withstood the attacks and fought back. He was not intimidated by them at all. And in the legislature he provided leadership. He kept the majority, except for one defeat. He supported his friends, supported his constituents, who were members of the Democratic Caucus. And if I am to fault him for anything, I don't think he spent as much time as he should developing young black leadership.

CARR: Really? Why do you think that is? I've heard that criticism not only of Brown, but I've also heard that criticism of someone like, say, a Bradley or even. . . . Not only a Bradley, but a Nate Holden, or a Gilbert Lindsay. These are people who built political bases, however large and significant they might have been, but did not necessarily bring young black politicians . . .

DYMALLY: Well, in the case of Willie, the black census was in the south and there weren't very many young

blacks who wanted to go to Sacramento because their roots were here, they were going to school here. But in my judgment the fault lies with the young blacks. They did not seek these opportunities that were there as young whites did. I mentioned to you about six or seven lawyers who graduated from the Dymally Employment Scholarship Program and only one was black, Adonis Hoffman. All the others were white, male and female--two white females. And so, in part, blacks can't afford the luxury of volunteerism because they've got to work and whites could afford volunteerism. Besides, I think whites have a greater appreciation of the value of the institution as a reference point and taking advantage of it. I remember Steve Smith, when he came to manage my campaign after the Willard fiasco, one of his conditions was that he be permitted to go to night law school while running my campaign. And indeed he did and passed the bar eventually. He came as my chief of staff, the LG [lieutenant governor]'s chief of staff, and continued school until he finished the bar.

CARR: But what about the notion that within the black community--and this is a generalization--there is

not necessarily a history or legacy of trusting the government or at least seeing the government as a vehicle for positive change?

DYMALLY: Well, we dealt with that the other day with that bulletin from Murray. That's a good example. I need not say any more. Here's a series of about twenty pieces of legislation, very little having to do with black youth. And that's where I think I was different because I had the museum program, I had the urban affairs program, I had the internship program.

CARR: Now, you mean the Museum of Science and Industry program.

DYMALLY: Yes.

CARR: So this was the summer of math/science program we talked about.

DYMALLY: And so I always sought to elevate that. When I went to the Congress I had a scholarship program for young students. I encouraged young people to run for public office. I used my resources. That's why I was always campaign broke. I spent every penny I raised helping others, not just in California and not just blacks.

CARR: Speaking of the museum, what was your involvement or participation, if any, in the [California]

Afro-American Museum [now the California African-American Museum] in the park.

DYMALLY: It's a very interesting story and I'm glad you asked it. I was headed from Sacramento to, I think, San Diego to visit the office of the Commission of the Californias. And in my folder was a letter from Congresswoman Yvonne Burke telling me that Ohio had just embarked on such a program and I should do that in California. So I took out my yellow pad and wrote the legislation. I gave it to Teresa Hughes because I knew then that she was close to Jerry Brown. I think it was Catholicism that made them close. And Terry introduced the legislation, it passed, and much to my surprise Jerry Brown signed it.

CARR: This was about what year now?

DYMALLY: Must be after '75.

CARR: About '76.

DYMALLY: Yeah. Subsequently, Maxine got the money in the budget for the museum. Now, when they were breaking ground for the museum there was a lot of fanfare about a lot of people. And I pointed out to them, were it not for Yvonne, this would have never happened because it was her letter to me. I've never been credited for that, in part

because Teresa has never seen fit to focus on this incident of my giving her the piece of legislation.

CARR: You wrote the legislation or you just brought up the idea to her to write the legislation?

DYMALLY: No, I wrote it on a yellow pad and gave it to her. In California, all you need to do is write something on a piece of paper and give it to the legislative counsel, and they make great legislation out of your idea. The best in the country.

CARR: Now, as you discussed it and this was a thought on your mind, what was your vision or your ideal? What did you expect this museum to accomplish?

DYMALLY: That's another good question. It's not what finally ended. What finally ended was a museum of art. That was not my notion. I thought it would be a museum of history, of African American history. And indeed, I gave them all my artifacts. It got stuck in the basement of the armory and I finally had to go and retrieve it. So they concentrated on art rather than history. I thought that it would have been a museum for the history of black life, politics, and other aspects, but it shifted.

CARR: As we know, so many things from the idea to eventual inception go through so many changes that very often they don't look like what we envision them to be. Why did the museum go through so many changes? Why did the original vision not get accomplished in your opinion?

DYMALLY: I think you have to lay the blame in large measure on Senator Bill Greene and Assemblywoman Teresa Hughes. As I drafted the legislation it was unprecedented. They were written into the legislation. The senator and the assemblyperson of the district were on the committee. Subsequently, the director got Bill Greene to amend the legislation to take both of them off the museum board. I don't know why Bill did it. He never consulted with me. And since I was in Congress and I wasn't on the board and my experience was not solicited, I had no say in it. The woman who became the director was a friend of Yvonne's and it just got shifted away from what I really thought it was going to be.

CARR: Was it a situation of too many hands stirring the . . .

DYMALLY: No, I think it was a situation of not having the vision of where the museum had to go. And that

vision was not entertained by anybody.

CARR: Right, no focus.

DYMALLY: Except for me, and I had no say. Indeed, I went there. . . . Nothing annoys me more then when people invite you and ask you, "Do you want to speak?" I mean, you either invite one to speak or you don't. So they came to me and asked me, did I want to speak. I was really offended by that. But I took that opportunity to praise Yvonne because were it not for her it would never have happened.

CARR: Yeah. Now, in terms of the infrastructure, Exposition Park is kind of a weird bird anyway. You have county, you have city, you have state involvement. How does that make it [Inaudible] for running an entity like a museum there?

DYMALLY: Don't confuse the three entities. The museum is a state institution.

CARR: Right, but it's a state institution on county land, isn't it?

DYMALLY: State land. The county is over there with the museum and the coliseum. I don't think the city has any property there, although they have some say in the coliseum commission and they're advocates of an NFL team. I first came out

swinging against the museum as an adversary until I discovered it was an asset. And the director . . .

CARR: Which museum? You mean the Afro-American . . .

DYMALLY: No, the Museum of Science and Industry. And the director, Bill McCann, was more than anxious to work with me. So we began using the museum as an asset, not as an adversary.

CARR: So the problem with the museum right now is funding, in a certain . . .

DYMALLY: Yeah, because I think the Deukmejian administration had some problems with it. And I don't know what's happened. Because, see, had they involved a larger segment of the community in the museum. . . . Artists are about the worst lobbyists there are. The artists are usually not members of the community. You may have Brazilian art. I don't know of any Brazilian who can lobby the California legislature. If you had politics and business and history and education, you'd be focusing on local people. If you had a sort of Kenny Hahn approach to that, you would have involved local people. Who founded Drew Medical Society? That's an important institution in our life. The old pioneers of the NAACP--Dr. [H.

Claude] Hudson, et al., Dr. [J. Alexander] Somerville. If you made a history of California rather than art it would have been successful and it would not have had this reoccurring problem they have with funds.

CARR: Also, on a certain . . .

DYMALLY: But I might add, why they ignored the hell out of me. . . . I don't blame them because I don't think they ever knew what role I played. Yet, when they wanted to raise funds, when they were having difficulty, they found me.

CARR: Right. Were you able to help them in any way?

DYMALLY: No.

CARR: OK.

[Interruption]

So we were just finishing up on the museum.

DYMALLY: The museum was a big disappointment. Not so much because I was not given credit or consulted, but because the people who took it over didn't have a vision. They were into art and culture. It was the same approach we took to Africa. During the civil rights movement we were consumed with culture and art in Africa, not with business and politics.

CARR: On a more domestic level, you were involved in

some kind of amendment of the Civil Rights Act in about 1989. Do you recall what your involvement might have been in that?

DYMALLY: No. I don't know that I had an amendment as such. We felt it was weak. And part of the Congressional Black Caucus was very split on that. In fact . . .

CARR: How were you split?

DYMALLY: Well, a group felt so strongly about it that they wanted to go and chain themselves to the gates of the White House. And that same group ended up voting for the bill because the leadership prevailed upon them.

CARR: Who led that group?

DYMALLY: Kwaise Mfume. Ron Dellums, I think at the time, was chairman. So some of us voted against it because it was too weak.

CARR: How did Kwaise Mfume come to lead the Congressional Black Caucus?

DYMALLY: Well, first, Kwaise had ambitions to be in the leadership of the Congress. He was immaculately dressed, he was very eloquent, and he volunteered to preside, and he was a good presiding officer. So he was projecting himself. [Craig] Washington of Texas was a candidate and he [Mfume] became a

candidate and got elected. He just had the majority of votes because Washington was doing some strange things. Washington was campaigning in his district and with groups for a position which was confined to few people in D.C.

CARR: Washington.

DYMALLY: Yeah, and a few people.

CARR: What kind of leader did he make before his resignation?

DYMALLY: Well, he was very impressive because he took on Clinton on a number of issues, and he was very vocal and very visible. I think that's what resulted in his getting the NAACP job. And I think his name didn't hurt him at all.

CARR: Really?

DYMALLY: It was a kind of unusual, unforgettable name. He got a lot of good publicity during that era, when there were some disagreements with Clinton on a number of issues.

CARR: Right. How would you. . . . You talked long, long ago on the toll entering politics took on your personal life, in terms of your family. Would you have changed anything there, in retrospect?

DYMALLY: Yeah. Yeah, I did a poor job with the family.

As the kids were growing up I was an absentee father, totally addicted to politics. Although I was not neglectful. I took them on trips to Mexico and other parts--Trinidad. Yet, if I had that to do again, that's one thing I would have done a little differently: spent a little more time with the family. But I was so addicted. I have an understanding of what addiction is now.

CARR: You were extremely supportive, always, from the very beginning, of the divestment issue, but you were also extremely supportive of getting Nelson Mandela out of jail throughout.

DYMALLY: I took the. . . . What is it? Sutterville? Sixteen or seventeen? Summerville or Sutterville?

CARR: Sharpeville.

DYMALLY: Sharpeville. I took their issue on the floor. I went down and visited Mandela's wife and daughter in Soweto, South Africa; went to Brazil, received a peace award for him. I wasn't a leader in the movement. I think Dellums had staked out that position before me, but I was very supportive, yes.

CARR: Was there any concern that by focusing so much on . . .

DYMALLY: Oh, and there was an Aspen Institute meeting in Switzerland, up in the mountains, and the whole conference there lobbied with the South Africans for me to go and visit Mandela in prison, but I wasn't successful.

CARR: Was there any indication that early on, before it became known to the press, that the South Africans were moving toward releasing him that you knew of?

DYMALLY: No, I didn't.

CARR: What you learned in the news was what everyone learned.

DYMALLY: That's correct.

CARR: Was there ever any concern that by focusing so much on one person that it might do damage to or take focus away from the purpose of, one, divestment and, two, the broader issue of democracy or the end of apartheid to South Africa?

DYMALLY: No. The one part of the question you missed was the rest of Africa. What happened, in the minds and activities of people and groups, was Africa was transformed into South Africa. That was the focus. Everybody else forgot there were fifty other states.

CARR: Right.

DYMALLY: So it was a tremendous neglect and I think that's where I became somewhat a favorite of the ambassadors, of African ambassadors, because I focused attention on other parts of Africa.

CARR: Now, this focus on South Africa, to what degree . . .

DYMALLY: Even today, the administration's big thrust has always been South Africa.

CARR: To what degree. . . . Why is that?

DYMALLY: That was glamorous. It was motherhood.

CARR: To what degree, though, did this lack of attention on the other countries in Africa help to afford diplomacy as well as certain governmental structures to deteriorate [Inaudible]?

DYMALLY: Well, I'll cite you one example. In February of '91 the African American Institute asked me to go to Benin to be an observer of the election because no one was interested. [Nicéphore] Soglo, the democrat from the World Bank, defeated the socialists. And during the five years of democracy he complained to me that he was not getting any help. We and other Western democracies took the position they had democracy

and then everything else followed. You have democracy, you have an open-market economic system, and everything else would flow. Benin is not a country with any natural resources. And the end result was that he was defeated by the socialists. Yes, people in Africa were looking for democracy, free elections, but they were also looking for some bread. And that didn't come with democracy in Benin. The result was that this great democrat was defeated.

CARR: Because he really didn't get the backing . . .

DYMALLY: Couldn't produce.

CARR: . . . of Western nations. This notion of bringing about democratic governments in developing nations, to what degree is it a certain amount of hypocrisy on the part of the American government?

DYMALLY: Well, we equate democracy with free elections, open-market systems. And that might be theoretically correct, but from a pragmatic point of view, the African countries need help in economic development. More practical things such as roads and schools and hospitals. Rather than concentrating on the ideology of democracy we need to concentrate on the pragmatism of

democratic economies.

CARR: Then in that sense, is it then possible. . . .
Are we going into an era where, at least on a governmental level, it might be possible to acknowledge that perhaps not necessarily a full-blown socialist state but a state which has certain infrastructure nationalized might be better in the long run for the stability of the government?

DYMALLY: My answer is absolutely yes. You have to have some measure of state-owned enterprises, transportation, health. You can't privatize everything as you do in the United States. Some things have to be run by the government because there's not enough interest or money in the private sector to support those institutions. But if you take an IMF loan you've got to do all of those things. You have to privatize the electrical system, the water system, transportation. The only thing they don't force you to privatize is the educational system. You have to cut back the civil service, do away with all subsidies. In many instances they result in total, absolute chaos. Riots, disfunction.

CARR: From your perspective, is the American government

starting to recognize the shortsightedness of some of these policies?

DYMALLY: I think so. Clinton has an economic development bill now in the Ways and Means Committee, had a big press to-do about it at the White House. I don't know if there's going to be any follow-up. But the problem is far deeper than that. We have never really had a coherent policy in Africa. Our whole thrust in Africa since World War II has been fighting communism and now there are no communists to fight. We don't have a policy to replace that. And that's the bottom line. We supported apartheid in South Africa because they were anti-communist. We supported Savimbi in Angola for the same reason, and on and on and on.

CARR: So there was always this . . .

DYMALLY: The reason why we never severed relationships with Nigeria is twofold. One, the oil resources and, two, despite their military government, they have never been communists.

CARR: Let's move over a bit, in terms of some of your domestic issues . . .

DYMALLY: Let me put a word in here for the black press. In the course of my career, if you take the Times on, let's say, Friday, June 1962, and you compare

that Times or the white press with the black press on that particular day, it's a totally different perception. What's the young . . .

CARR: Dennis Schatzman.

DYMALLY: Schatzman's coverage of the Simpson trial was different from the white media. That's what makes him such a memorable person. And so the black press has always been supportive and simpatico with reference to black representation.

CARR: But then there's also been the argument that in some cases the black press has not been as critical soon enough of certain black politicians who necessarily . . .

DYMALLY: And properly so. I mean, there's enough criticism from the white media. You just can't bury a guy. So look, I defend them. They have their weak points, and their weak points have a lot to do with the absence of adequate resources. They don't get into investigative reporting. It's too expensive.

CARR: Precisely. Of all the papers over the years, in terms of the black press, which have you felt, I don't know, most informed by or a stronger allegiance to than others?

DYMALLY: Well, I think the most militant and most profound was the Goodlet newspaper. The best organized paper is Bill Lee's paper in Sacramento, the Sacramento Observer. And the most widely read is the Los Angeles Sentinel. All of which were very supportive of me.

CARR: Even when the Times was being critical.

DYMALLY: Oh yeah, absolutely. You could always get an audience. . . . And they have a simpatico. . . . You look at the white press and you look at the black press. The black press has experienced some of the things that the individual black politician has experienced. They've been discriminated against by advertisers. And in some instances. . . . In Washington when the Washington Post came out with a weekly that literally put the black weeklies out of business. . . .

CARR: Now, in terms of your relationship with black newspapers--for example the Sentinel--if things got really negative for you, in terms of the white press, were there ever situations where you would call up someone at the Sentinel and say, "Hey, look, I need a positive article"?

DYMALLY: Absolutely. A.S. "Doc" Young. You'd read his

columns about me because he would listen to the other side of the story.

CARR: So you called Doc and said, "Hey look, Doc, we need some . . ."

DYMALLY: "These are the facts. I would like to bring something and show you." Give him the other side of the story.

CARR: On a certain level, was it even possible for you to have that kind of access with a white newspaper?

DYMALLY: I never had a friend on the white newspapers. I never had. . . . There were some guys whom I thought were very civil. Bill Stahl of the L.A. Times, or George Skelton. . . .

CARR: Boyarsky?

DYMALLY: Boyarsky. Because they all came from Sacramento. They were reporters for the wire service and I sat right next to them. They were against the wall and I was right on the aisle, so I got to know them. But once they got into the L.A. Times they changed. They were wire service people. Once they started working for the Times they changed. Although I've maintained a distant relationship with Boyarsky, he and I had dinner not long ago and we reminisced. I had occasion

to call him about that article he wrote about the Compton educator going after this girl who was shot.

CARR: Now, 1990, in the black community, Walter Tucker Sr. died. You wrote an obituary for him in Congress, I think. Given the fact that relationships had been strained between you and him and as well as his son, what impact do you think that had on Compton?

DYMALLY: Zero. Tucker told Bill Greene he was unhappy with me, because when he ran for Congress I did not support him. He never asked me for support. In fact, I didn't even know he was running. That's how unpublicized his candidacy was. So he held that against me. In fact, he was advocating a pay raise for members of Compton--for the city council. And I saw that as an opportunity for me to mend fences with him. I came out in the Times, South Bay edition, in support of his initiative. And he told the Times the people of Compton don't need Dymally to tell them what to do, as if I was some kind of stranger. He never saw me as a part of the political family in Compton. There was a lot of resentment towards my victory.

CARR: So your obituary was directed more toward your constituency in Compton than anything else?

DYMALLY: He was the mayor. I respected his position. The people respected him. They liked him. I had nothing personal against him, had no reason to be. Some people don't care for your political presence and there's nothing you can do about it. I need to take this opportunity to talk about circumstances.

CARR: One moment. Let me just turn the tape over.

[End Tape 20, Side A]

[Begin Tape 20, Side B]

CARR: You were saying about circumstances.

DYMALLY: Circumstances in life and politics over which you have no control are what you get caught up in. I cite this analogy. If a teacher were to miscounsel a student and ruin his or her life, there's nothing to it. But if a politician makes a mistake it borders on criminal sanctions. And so we expect our politicians to be perfect in our society and we ourselves aren't.

CARR: Did it ever bother you on a certain level that the scrutiny under which politicians in the United States operate is quite different from the scrutiny of, say, how politicians in Europe and

other places operate?

DYMALLY: Yes. Except now the excesses are being investigated. A good example is Korea and Japan. But that was part of the culture for many years. But with television and with the new generation of committed reporters, these excesses are being publicized now. But the respect for politicians in foreign countries is very high.

CARR: Whereas, you think, in the United States it's not so high.

DYMALLY: Look at the rating of Congress. We're the lowest. . . . We round out with the criminals here.

CARR: Right. Why do you think that is?

DYMALLY: Most people, by and large, look at politicians as crooked and look at politics as crooked. And yet, in the stock market there are more thieves and dishonest people than anyplace I have come across. If a politician. . . . If one of your adversaries in politics gives you a commitment, you can be assured that he lives up to that commitment. Not so in the business sector.

CARR: But what about this notion that, on a certain level, if in fact politics is a marriage of idealism and pragmatism, is it difficult for the

American people to understand that give and take between the two?

DYMALLY: Yeah, I don't think that we have developed a cultural climate in the United States to make that possible. At one time it probably was, but not now. Since Watergate, the focus has been on political misdeeds rather than political accomplishments. Now, Kennedy elevated politics--that's one of the reasons why I admire him--to a sort of noble profession, and a lot of people got involved in volunteerism and politics. That doesn't exist anymore.

CARR: Yeah. One of the things that struck me as I did research for this series of interviews was that there was a time when you entered the assembly back in the early sixties, many, many. . . . Well, quite a few--I can think of maybe three or four offhand--assemblymen had been teachers.

DYMALLY: Yeah. Jack [T.] Casey of Bakersfield was one. [Carlos] Bee, [speaker] pro tem[pore], of Alameda County, was another. There were more, but I remember those two went back into the classroom. John Schmitz, the [John] Birch [Society] member of Orange County Community College.

CARR: Well, what was that about? Was it just a

different time that it was possible for someone to say. . . . It just seemed to me, the distance between a private citizen's life and becoming an elected official was far shorter than it is now.

DYMALLY: Yeah, but the other thing is that in those days the job didn't pay anything and there was an attraction to the idealism of serving, because a teacher is a servant and that extended into public life.

CARR: Let's move on to your relationship with someone-- and I don't know if you had a relationship--Celes King [III].

DYMALLY: Ah, Celes King. In 1962, I was walking down the street, on Central, and I walked into his bond office and asked him for support, having no idea that he represented the most prominent Republican family in Los Angeles. He admired that, and we've been friends ever since. In fact, I think, he was censured by the Republican Central Committee [of Los Angeles County] one time for supporting me against a Republican. He has never failed to support me. I cite that to some of my Republican friends as a point that I'm not an ideologue democrat. I look at. . . . Because Celes's aspirations for black life were no

different from the Democrats, the black Democrats. Strong civil rights advocate, did not, and still does not, go along with the ideologues in his party. This friendship existed from '62 on to now. He's praised me, honored me. I've done the same thing. The friendship has been very close. It's over thirty-six years.

CARR: Now, what's interesting to me about that is that could you draw a distinction for me . . .

DYMALLY: I might tell you this little anecdote. He tried to get me to be a Republican during the Reagan years, you know, when these Democrats were switching.

CARR: Really. How did he approach you on that?

DYMALLY: Well, he just told me it's time for me to make a change [Laughter] because Reagan was riding high. It was a big laugh for me, but I think he was serious. [Laughter]

CARR: So he was always relentless in his . . .

DYMALLY: He was always a Republican. He never wavered in his republicanism.

CARR: But it seems to me that the republicanism of a Celes King is far different from the republicanism of, let's just say, Colin Powell.

DYMALLY: Or you should have given me . . .

CARR: Who's the guy in New York?

DYMALLY: Or a Clarence Thomas.

CARR: Clarence Thomas. Yeah, Clarence Thomas would be a far better example.

DYMALLY: If Celes were to change from Republican to Democrat there would be no change in ideology.

CARR: Right.

DYMALLY: Because he's always been to the left of the Republican party.

CARR: But he seems like he's. . . . That is, he's from this old school, black middle class, pre-Roosevelt . . .

DYMALLY: His family was influenced by Lincoln's freeing of the slaves. Even when the changes were taking place with the Hawkins election, they didn't change. In those days it was a lonely membership, but the Republicans were not quite as radical on the right as they are now. So you know, one had some comfort level. And then you had [Thomas E.] Dewey and you had [Dwight D.] Eisenhower, and [Nelson A.] Rockefeller.

CARR: Yeah, and these men were far from radical right-wingers. They were probably more moderate in some cases than a Democrat. What changed for blacks who subsequently became Republicans, such

as Clarence Thomas, in terms of ideology?

DYMALLY: Nixon started black economic power with Art Fletcher, assistant secretary of [the United States Department of] Labor and the Philadelphia Experiment. So even Nixon was not that bad on this question of black economic power. It changed in '81 when the Heritage Foundation took over the White House.

CARR: Is there anything that is particularly disconcerting to you about this trend, if it is a trend, of blacks becoming Republicans? Or do you think it's something healthy for the political process?

DYMALLY: No, blacks are becoming independents. I have always thought that it would be healthy to have some blacks in the Republican party.

CARR: Why?

DYMALLY: Because you take a Celes King, [he] can say to a Republican legislator, "Dymally is right on that issue. I share his views and he expresses a community point of view." So that would be very helpful indeed. I got a lot of legislation signed by Reagan because there was in Reagan's office a young black man by the name of [Robert J.] Bob Keyes who came from Lockheed. The Black

Caucus, as a whole, didn't care too much for him. But I befriended him, and so I had access to Reagan's office. So yes, there's some value.

CARR: So you felt that there was a possibility of building a bipartisan coalition.

DYMALLY: Yeah, you need that support for passage of your legislation. If you have a Republican governor there, you can't be attacking the Republican party and a Republican governor. But I always felt that the white Republicans never listened to the black Republicans. That was the problem. They're not taken seriously.

CARR: Yeah. But within that framework. . . . Accepting what you're saying, this notion that there is a possibility of a bipartisan coalition or at least understanding between black Republicans, black Democrats, and white Democrats, and so on and so forth, it just seems to me that many of the black Republicans, going back to Clarence Thomas, are just downright hostile toward the black community.

DYMALLY: That came about in the Reagan years, not before.

CARR: Ward Connerly, for instance, here in California.

DYMALLY: That came about since Reagan. What happened is they began getting a lot of attention because the

far right needed black justification to show that they were not racist. These guys fell into their trap.

CARR: Is it a trap? I mean, did they fall into it or did they willingly walk into it?

DYMALLY: Both. Because they were told, "Look, you've got an opportunity here and we have nothing against you." But that Republican equality really applies to very successful educated black businessmen, women, and professionals. The Republican party did not address the question of black poverty. I mean, if you were middle class and you really wanted to move in politics, you'd do what [J.C.] Watts [Jr.] of Oklahoma did, shift to the right, take up the religious right philosophy, theology and. . . .

CARR: Remain a Democrat.

DYMALLY: No, no.

CARR: He switched to . . .

DYMALLY: No, no. Watts is a Republican. He represents a white district, but he is part of the religious right.

CARR: But that's one of the other things. That's one of the other veins that runs through the black community. That is, that within the context of

the church, there's always been certain attitudes within the black community, say, toward abortion, toward homosexuality, and so on and so forth, that have been equally as conservative as the white religious right.

DYMALLY: But not as obnoxious.

CARR: Right.

DYMALLY: The minister would quietly tell you, "Look, Dymally, I'm supporting you, but I don't like your stand on abortion. I don't like your vote on homosexuals." But he doesn't go out there and try to destroy you, which is what the Republicans do. You see, so that was the difference. You're right. There's a certain amount of conservatism within the black community, except on the question of civil rights.

CARR: Civil rights. And that's pretty much where the Republican party and the black Democrats who might be moderates or even conservative have parted ways.

DYMALLY: And that's where they lose their black support, because the primary interest in the black community until now--now I think it's economic development--has been civil rights and that's been a long--long time--a long struggle. And the

black ministers, some of whom were Republicans-- closet Republicans--shared that value with you. And as I said, they weren't obnoxious about their differences with you on a couple of issues.

CARR: Now, given the fact that we're in a post-civil-rights era now, from your perspective, is it possible that Republicans could actually do some good for themselves within the black community by taking on a very strong economic development program? A serious one.

DYMALLY: Yes, but look at what happened to Jack Kemp. They claimed Kemp didn't do well on one debate. One debate and they're about to kill him. They're saying to you, "Kemp is not qualified to be a Republican president." But Kemp is the only Republican candidate, or personality, of any stature in recent years to have gone and campaigned in the ghetto and say, "Hey look, we share a number of values together." On economic matters, on school choice, on charter schools. Well, guess what? He's not going to be the Republican nominee. He's too decent and too honest. You see, that is the dilemma you face. If you try to. . . . For instance, he was opposed to [Proposition] 187. He had to change his

position. He was opposed to [Proposition] 209, he had to be quiet on that. He's a very decent man. In fact, he went to Africa recently with Reverend Sullivan's summit. But he's not going to survive; he's too decent.

CARR: Now, you bring up 187, let's talk about this. The issues of, on one hand, anti-immigration in California, which is basically a backlash against the political and economic growth of Latinos in the state. How does that affect or what does that bode for black political power and economic power in the state?

DYMALLY: Well, there's some anti-immigration sentiment in the black community. Let's not be hypocritical about that. And I have said that little anecdote, when Leon Ralph was supporting the FAIR group--I forget what the acronym means--he invited me to a meeting of FAIR. I didn't know what the hell I was getting into and . . .

CARR: Is that the insurance . . .

DYMALLY: No, no. That's a different thing. This is an immigration group.

CARR: That's the Fair Plan.

DYMALLY: No, not the Fair Plan. This is an immigration group. And I got there and discovered they were

against the amnesty bill. And I said to them, "Hey fellas, you invited the wrong man here because I'm a wetback." [Laughter] I said, "I champion open immigration." I said, "I can't in good conscience oppose this bill because I came in here as a foreigner." So that didn't get anyplace. At times labor has led blacks to believe that immigration was to their disadvantage. I have been saying to them, look, everybody's focusing on Latin immigration, but there are blacks from the Caribbean, and we have a closed immigration policy in Africa.

CARR: Africa, the Caribbean.

DYMALLY: But the Caribbean is a little more open because we've been coming in here as illegals since way back in the Depression.

CARR: South America. I mean, you take in Venezuela, Columbia.

DYMALLY: They're too poor to qualify. The blacks in South America are too poor to qualify to be visitors. And so as a result they did not migrate here as many years back as the West Indians. I've never met a West Indian who doesn't have some kind of relationship or some family or friend in the United States. I'm to the left of the community

on immigration.

CARR: But [regarding] the development of Latino political power, actually, Mexican American political power in Los Angeles. What effect will that have on historically black council districts, for instance, and for perhaps even black assembly districts?

DYMALLY: It's going to be very traumatic in the year 2000, and I've begun to take an interest in the census. Under the Supreme Court edict now you cannot use race as the sole criterion for drawing districts. You can use it as one of many factors if it is compatible. In other words, you can't draw a line in Pasadena and come down the freeway, the 110, into Long Beach and pick up the blacks there, as they did in North Carolina. If you draw a district in Pasadena that's compatible and blacks happen to be the majority, fine. But there are going to be many districts in which Latins are going to be the majority. You don't have to draw a freeway line. And one of those districts is South Central Los Angeles. What people didn't note in the last census, we lost Teresa's district. That district went to the city of Carson. We lost that district

subsequently. And we may lose the South Central district again.

The population change is upon us. We complain the Latins are taking over, the Koreans are taking over, but the growth is a natural phenomenon of immigration. And I've been preaching all along. . . . That's why I've been preaching coalition with Latinos. And that coalition has never really taken hold, not because of any fault of ours, but it's the fault of both sides.

CARR: Why is that? Is there an anti-coalition process or is it more because of cultural differences?

DYMALLY: Cultural differences. And until now they were isolated in East Los Angeles.

CARR: What do you mean by cultural differences?

DYMALLY: Language is one. Family is another.

CARR: Race, it seems to me, must also be another issue.

DYMALLY: Another issue.

CARR: Because though Latinos to some degree are marginalized because of their race in this country, that does not necessarily make them any more enlightened when it comes to race.

DYMALLY: That's correct. They're not, in some instances, very good at that. But I tell you, I could

single out about five people who worked on that assiduously. Roybal represented a black district. Alatorre was with the NAACP. He continues to be supportive. César Chávez was supporting Berman for speaker and Alatorre went with Willie Brown. Art Torres also. I don't see that sense of coalition among the new Latino elected officials. It's perhaps that they don't represent blacks. Neither did Art Torres, but he had this commitment coming from César's operation.

CARR: What's very ironic is that the generation of Roybal, especially, and perhaps Alatorre even, there were certain blacks who lived in East L.A. at that time.

DYMALLY: Boyle Heights. Just behind the Union Station, there was a housing project there.

CARR: So there was kind of a shared reality.

DYMALLY: Yeah, but you see, there's a new Latino now who lacks that sense of history that Roybal and Alatorre and Torres had. These new Latinos are part South American, but mostly Central Americans. Even the black community in Nicaragua was way on the Caribbean side where all that was totally different. There's greater communication

between Los Angeles and Belize than there is Belize and El Salvador for that matter. So it's a different type of Latino. And the new ones are not that into coalition. They see themselves as having the numbers.

CARR: But there's also another issue that seems troubling. There seems to be a religious shift. When one, say, even ten, fifteen years ago could automatically say Latinos were Catholic, that is no longer the case. Particularly in South Central Los Angeles with the Pentecostal Church.

DYMALLY: Two phenomenon. One, they're dropping out of the Catholic Church. And two, evangelism is moving very fast among the Latinos. Whether these Latinos are Mexicans or Central Americans--I think the latter.

CARR: I mean the problem with the evangelists, particularly the Pentecostal Church, is that they posture themselves as apolitical.

DYMALLY: Yes. And by the way, Pentecostal was started by a black man, although few people know about it. But the Pentecostals are also making inroads into the East Indians in Trinidad. My guy who does our carpentry invited me to church. I'm always interested in the behavior of churches. I went

there; he's African, and the minister was East Indian.

CARR: That's fascinating.

DYMALLY: He was more than just a minister. He was superintendent of the church district. And East Indians were there beating the tambourine and singing.

CARR: What's the future of black politics in L.A., from your perspective?

DYMALLY: I don't think it's very bright. We're not developing quality leadership and the shift in population. . . . You look at Compton . . .

CARR: What do you mean by. . . . Ideally, what would be a quality black political leader from your perspective?

DYMALLY: Well, you look at the feuds that are taking place in the black districts. Three districts in Compton, two in Lynwood, two in Inglewood. Total upheaval, personal clashes, resignations, dismissals. Very unstable to be a superintendent of education in one of these districts. The personalities clash. The obsession of being the right one and not wanting to compromise, of not sitting down together and talking about the issues. We're still into posturing as if it was

the civil rights movement, when the adversary was white. But the adversary is black now. So you won't see a lot of leadership coming out of those constituencies.

CARR: Speaking of personality clashes, I think one of the most recently publicized ones was supposedly the one between Mark Ridley-Thomas and Maxine Waters. Is that the kind of thing you're talking about?

DYMALLY: Right. It seemed to me that both of them should have sat down together and worked out a compromise. One wanted economic development, one wanted housing development. Where was the mix?

CARR: Yeah, and there was a possibility for a mix.

DYMALLY: That's what eventually happened.

CARR: Right.

DYMALLY: But the white man made the compromise--the mayor.

CARR: The press seems to love that kind of thing.

DYMALLY: Of course.

CARR: The white press.

DYMALLY: Oh, they love it. They loved it. They went crazy on that one. But that should have been avoided. Now, to Maxine's credit, she and I have never gotten into a public feud. She's always respected me, even though [she's] not been

supportive. That's a good example. But you look at Compton. At one time Compton Unified School District was paying three superintendents that they had fired before their contracts expired. The chair of the Compton Community College District was a big supporter of the right. Took the NAACP in Compton to support Clarence Thomas for the Supreme Court. In Inglewood here they fired a superintendent and in the next two weeks he was rehired. In Lynwood they fired a superintendent one week and the next week rehired her, same superintendent. I went to a Lynwood City Council meeting and a white woman came to me and said, "Mr. Dymally, have you ever experienced anything like this?" I mean, it was brutal. I stepped in, I said, "Oh my God." I've never experienced anything like it. It was brutal.

CARR: So the future isn't bright because of these internal conflicts which are dealt with publicly, on the one hand.

DYMALLY: The new young black--educated, sophisticated--is going into economic development. They are not into politics, not into service.

CARR: And that was my other question. What effect has this had on young black educated people being

involved in the democratic clubs that you were?

DYMALLY: Not there. There's only one democratic club that has survived over time. It is the New Frontier Democratic Club. And if you look at the leadership in the Democratic party, they're old men and women--blacks I'm talking about. Very few young people. There were young democratic clubs back in my time. We had Reverend Ferrell organize one, I had one, Stan Saunders was a Young Democrat.

CARR: Wow, so where have the blacks gone?

DYMALLY: Well, that's the question I asked in 1960. They were not there in the party and I got them into the party. They're not interested in politics.

CARR: Now, with that in mind, in terms of population shift, do you see any possibilities for black political representation in some of these suburban areas where many blacks have moved?

DYMALLY: Well, you have a black mayor in Monrovia. You've got to be able to, now, articulate the concerns of the entire population, not just blacks. I think if a black runs in the lily-white city X and is big on the environment, on crime, economic development, he could win. But's he's got to be to the right of center to win.

- CARR: The crime issue has always been somewhat of a laugh in the sense that it has been the black community that's often suffered more from crime than any other community.
- DYMALLY: But what got distorted was the fact that the police, on top of that, were brutal. And so blacks had to protect themselves from this brutality and they came out as if they were. . . .
- CARR: They were pro-crime.
- DYMALLY: Pro-crime. But that was not the case. Now they're the biggest anti-crime group in Los Angeles.
- CARR: And this, in a sense, you think, given that there's been a refocusing of what the issue is-- the criminals, for the most part--may bode well for other black politicians who would run in perhaps predominantly white districts?
- DYMALLY: Well, the other problem is that black crime increased among young people. Even then, the gangs were not involved in these drive-by shootings. They had their gangs and they fought for their turf among themselves. But now they're going out and attacking other people. I was a big advocate of prison reform. I don't think any

politician is safe now advocating prison reform, even though there's some complaints about building too many prisons, but that's a totally different story.

CARR: Is there anything else you'd like to add?

DYMALLY: Well, the best I can do is to thank you and UCLA for this opportunity here. And as I said, I tried to be honest in my deliberations with you. I'm sure I will have offended some people, but I am prepared to talk with them about it personally and tell them the same thing if the opportunity arose. OK.

CARR: Thank you very much.

DYMALLY: [I almost forgot. Before we close I want to elaborate on a question you asked me about my family. My family was always very supportive but they preferred to stay in the background. My wife, Alice, has told friends that she knew what she was getting into when we got married. She loves people and politics, so it was always a very compatible relationship. When I ran for lieutenant governor she campaigned very vigorously in the rural counties, and did both a good job and enjoyed the experience. She was always very supportive of all my political

DYMALLY: efforts. She loved to travel with me and we had some great times together, and we learned a lot about people and places. Now we spend a great deal of time together; we don't travel as much, but we go out dining and conversing about current events and times. Merci beaucoup; c'est finis.]*

[End Tape 20, Side B]

* Mr. Dymally added the preceding bracketed material during his review of the draft transcript.

APPENDIX

This is the conclusion of the UCLA oral history account of Mervyn Dymally. As I reflect on the series of interviews with brother Elston Carr, I thought it might be helpful to make a few points in concluding this series. If I were to write a book about my experience, the title would be "I Am Grateful," with the subtitle, "The Story of a Survivor," period. I am grateful because when you look at my background and you look at the opportunities I had in California, it is really an amazing story.

I came to this country in 1946 with just enough money for one semester's tuition to attend Lincoln University in Missouri. Because of lack of money and not being able to cope with the situation in Missouri, I went to New York. From New York, I went to chiropractor school in Dayton, Ohio. Then physiotherapy school in Anderson, Indiana. Then I went to Chicago, where I broke my leg while working at the Reynolds Aluminum. After recovery, I came to California, enrolled at Chapman College, was unable to keep up with the tuition and the course of study there. They had a single-subject study system, which meant you had to go to school every day, and my difficulty was working at night I did not have enough time to prepare my homework, period. From there, I went across the street and enrolled in Los Angeles

State College, which at the time was--how was that?--Los Angeles City College. I was fortunate later on to secure a position at Cannon Electric and work there at night, period.

I came to the realization on October 15, October 15, 1951--which I call my emancipation day--that there was no substitute in America for hard work and education. A little incident led me to that conclusion. The foreman came to me and said, "Dymally, do you play baseball?" I said, "No, I play cricket." He says, "No, baseball. In baseball, three strikes and you're out. You have two strikes." What those two strikes were, I don't know. Maybe lack of adequate production. I realized then I could not lose my job because I was raising a family, helping the folks in Trinidad come to the United States to go to school, and I had to graduate by all means.

I graduated thanks to the generosity of the state college system then--subsequently changed to the university system, the state university system. I began teaching in Los Angeles as a substitute teacher while working at night at Cannon Electric. I joined the Young Democrats, met Bobby, Ted, and Jack Kennedy. In fact, I had the privilege of driving Jack Kennedy from Van Nuys to the Ambassador Hotel. His car overheated on the way to the hotel, and in the car with him was Pat Brown, Governor Pat Brown. I was the car next behind, so they all jumped into my car.

After the successful election of Jack Kennedy, I was appointed by Governor Brown to a position as coordinator in the California Disaster Office with the help of Jesse Unruh and Gus Hawkins. From there, I had the good fortune of driving Gus Hawkins to Los Angeles and learned he was running for Congress. Ran for the assembly, won. Ran for the state senate after the one man, one vote. Became the first African American to serve in the California senate. Subsequently ran for lieutenant governor, became one of only three blacks ever elected to the office of lieutenant governor of the United States. There was a fourth person who served as lieutenant governor, [Pinckney] "Pete" B.S. Pinchback, who was elected during reconstruction in the state of Louisiana. After an unhappy four years in the lieutenant governor's office, I ran for reelection, lost. Two years later, I ran for the Congress, and I served in the Congress for twelve years.

So when you look at that past, you can see that I was indeed blessed. The people of the Fifty-third Assembly [District], Twenty-ninth Senate [District], Thirty-first Congressional [District], and the state of California have been very good to me, and I am deeply grateful for that--the opportunity to serve the people of this state. That's the title of my book: "I'm Grateful." All those years were not easy years. There were some difficult years. That's the

subtitle: "The Story of a Survivor."

What I tried to do in these interviews was to be as intellectually honest as I possibly could. I tried the best to give some background information, some experiences, some of them not very complimentary to some of my friends, but I tried to be truthful. In one instance, I thought that I was probably highly critical of Kevin Murray, now a state senator, but that's the way I felt. It was my judgment that he rushed in to be speaker much faster than he should have and instead should have spent some time as majority leader, looking at the possibilities of increasing black leadership in the legislature. But that's my opinion. He has denied opposing my son, Mark, for the assembly. And so it is I conclude this series. I hope that I did not offend anyone. If I did, I apologize, but I tried to relate the facts as they existed to the best of my knowledge. Recently, I had dinner with a Nigerian friend who graduated from UCLA, and he said that my epitaph should read, "He was right," and I added, "Most of the time," and concluded, "But who gives a damn?" Thank you very much.