

**TRANSCRIPT OF INTERVIEW OF McGEORGE BUNDY
CONDUCTED APRIL 19, 1993 AT THE OFFICE OF
McGEORGE BUNDY AT THE CARNEGIE CORPORATION
26th FLOOR, 437 MADISON AVENUE, NEW YORK, NEW YORK**

- AJC: Mr. Bundy, where were you when you first heard of the *Liberty* incident?
- McGB: I have no recollection of the time, the place, or with whom.
- AJC: Do you remember any personal involvement in dealing with the matter?
- McGB: I have no recollection of any personal involvement other than what might be reflected in some of the papers which you have gathered.
- AJC: What was your interaction with President Johnson, Vice President Humphrey, Secretary McNamara, Undersecretary Vance, Dean Rusk, Undersecretary Katzenbach, Eugene Rostow, W.W. Rostow, Clark Clifford, Richard Helms and General Wheeler?
- McGB: I knew them all and received copies of various reports and documents in which they were involved.
- AJC: What was the relationship between Dean Rusk and Clark Clifford?
- McGB: Dean Rusk had been with General George Marshall when he was Secretary of State and Robert A. Lovett, Undersecretary of State, in opposing recognition of the State of Israel, which Clifford supported, to President Truman. Rusk and Clifford respected each other but were not close.
- AJC: Are you familiar with the Clifford report and do you know if it was made orally to the President or was it in writing?
- McGB: I have no knowledge of the Clifford report. I was not heavily occupied with the *Liberty* affair.
- AJC: Who is, or was, David Ginsburg?
- McGB: David Ginsburg was the senior partner in a Washington, DC law firm. He was a leading lawyer and active in the Democratic party as far back as President Truman and President Roosevelt. He was a friend of Israel. He was also a friend of LBJ. He, as far as I know, is in Washington now and you can probably locate him there. If you do - convey my regards.

AJC: What about the relationship between LBJ and Abe Fortes?

McGB: That was a very close, personal relationship.

AJC: I had prepared and forwarded to you a collection of 21 documents which I have assembled from various sources. Document 3 is a memo from George Christian, the Press Secretary, to LBJ. In that document he raises the question of Walt Rostow being Jewish and it has been suggested that it was for this reason that LBJ asked you to come to Washington and chair the special committee.

McGB: I was never told that I was appointed for that reason. Certainly LBJ was not blind. It was obvious to everyone that I was a New England down east Yankee, and not Jewish, and that may have been a factor in the President's decision to ask me to come to Washington and chair the special committee.

AJC: Document 6 is a memo concerning the *Liberty* written by Peter Jessup. Who was Peter Jessup?

McGB: Jessup was the inter-liaison on the staff of the National Security Counsel.

AJC: I have observed notations of conversations between you and Ephraim Evron. Do you recall Ambassador Evron?

McGB: Yes, very well. He was a very honorable man and well-liked by almost everyone in Washington. He was especially close to President Johnson, even when he served as Deputy Chief of Mission under Ambassador Harmon during the 1967 war. President Johnson personally had a great amount of trust for Ephraim Evron.

AJC: Was there a general conclusion or consensus about the *Liberty* incident?

McGB: We came to the conclusion that an interlocking collection of errors rather than an interlocking plot was the cause of the tragedy.

AJC: You were selected by President Kennedy as his National Security Advisor. After he was succeeded by LBJ, how long did you stay with the new President?

McGB: I ~~left~~ ^{STAYED WITH} LBJ ^{UNTIL} in 1963 ^{UNTIL 1966} and went to the Ford Foundation, ^{where I remained until 1966.} ^{I SERVED THERE AS PRESIDENT FROM 1966 TO 1979}

In 1967, as the Middle East crises heated up President Johnson invited me to come to Washington to chair a special committee on the Middle East. I arrived on June 5, the day the 1967 war began. As things cooled down after the war, LBJ wanted me to make a quiet withdrawal. I never actually quit. I began working less and less through July and August although I have no recollection of a formal

resignation or termination of my appointment.

AJC: Do you have any other thoughts on the Liberty incident?

McGB: Let me say that in the United States we hate confusion and the American public loves conspiracy. This is no doubt the reason why some of these incredible conspiracy stories are born and thrive.