

Charles E. Lindblom
April 9, 1991

TAPE 1, SIDE 1

- 1 Frank Knight's influence on Lindblom's early years. The market was the world's greatest coordinator, yet without a coordinator in charge.
- 1-2 Lindblom's RAND work was on the idea that politics is a market-like process. Dissertation (Ph.D. Chicago?) Was on conflicts and in efficiencies in a society which tries to operate competitive markets and to use collective bargaining for employees.
- 3 Asked to leave the economics faculty at University of Minnesota. Found a job at Yale in 1946.
- 3-4 Economics offered more solid topics to study than did politics. Lindblom wanted to combine both fields as his studies. Received formal appointment in both fields at Yale.
- 4 Dahl and Lindblom published Politics, Economics and Welfare in 1953. Four basic institutions for political and economic organization: market, hierarchy, polyarchy (real world imperfect democracy), and bargaining (mutual adjustment in social organization).
- 5 Lindblom saw Air Force bargaining with President and other services. First summer 1954 at RAND was initiated by Charlie Hitch of RAND.
- 6 Lindblom found at RAND a higher level of interaction among economists and several scientists than on any university faculty. They learned from each other. New ideas were welcome, not challenges to their correctness.
- 7 Hitch requested Lindblom after arrival at RAND to look into how to develop criteria for evaluating alternative such as convoying merchant ships in North Atlantic in WW II, which Germans countered by changing to different sea lanes James Buchanan also worked on this problem summer of 1954.
- 8 Lindblom came to this position: political factors are an essential part of democratic government, which we want, and should be welcomed as relevant considerations. AF would understand RAND's offerings better if only AF would listen.
- 9 RAND was applying systems analysis Lindblom was friend of Bernard Brodie at Yale and RAND also to Malcolm Hoag, Bill Capron, Andy Marshall, Alain Enthoven, Harry

Rowen.

- 10 They were committed to a highly conventional picture of how to bring analysis to the aid of civilian and military government departments. Lindblom's work was distributed to RAND staff, some of whom responded by contacting him.
- 10-11 At end of summer Hitch expressed pleasure at Lindblom's performance. Hitch offered him a permanent position.

TAPE 1, SIDE 2

- 12 RAND staff had a somewhat narrow view of their job as consultants to the Air Force. RAND had other contracts and did independent research RAND claimed to have educated the AF to shift from best weapon systems money could buy to the best bang for the buck.
- 12 Lindblom suggested in 1954 a different kind of military and a different kind of relationship with the civilian are called for.
- 13 Observations on survival of RAND documents Lindblom finished paper started at RAND, "Bargaining: The Hidden Hand in Government. He had few contacts later with RAND personnel.
- 14 Although not an active member previously, Lindblom was elected vice president 1978 and president 1980 of American Political Science Association.
- 14-15 Believes Hitch invited him for summer of 1959 and then asked for a comprehensive evaluation of RAND.
- 15 Lindblom sought individuals to interview more intensely in 1959 than in 1954. Observed Strategic Offensive Forces Study sessions, headed by Barlow.
- 16 Lindblom kept notes and destroyed them as he converted them to text. He observed corporate bureaucratization in RAND in 1959. Felt that RAND had changed, but was not in crisis. Knew that top brass and analysts read his reports. Had contacts with Frank Collbohm, Dick Goldstein and Larry Henderson.
- 17 Believes RAND had grown more sober by 1959 compared to 1954. Heard more in 1959 from Enthoven, Rowen and Wohlstetter, who thought colonels and generals were not listening to Lindblom as they should some RAND personnel wondered how to deal with Air Force officers' abysmal ignorance or stubbornness or ideology or doctrinaire thought.

- 18 Collins asked if Lindblom thought the evolution of strategic views was a response to inherent problems of judgment in dealing with more complex issues that were less amenable to quantitative analysis. Lindblom said probably yes. He noted that Rowen invited him to a conference at China Lake on strategy. Noted that Air Force and Navy had developed independent doctrines but they were not being put into competition.
- 19 Lindblom asked Rowen how could AF and Navy wash out each others' views as wrong without considering them. Lindblom thinks Rowen was suddenly faced with a very disagreeable aspect of his work.
- 20 Lindblom debated, at RAND and on other occasions, whether one could do minimally judgmental empirical scientific work and combine it with highly judgmental and subjective work on strategy.

TAPE 2, SIDE 1

- 22 No one in RAND seemed to consider what to do with this nor did Lindblom get into it deeply enough to want to say something about the social and political organization of the military. Lindblom's memos were not widely circulated among military officers. Collins asked if interdisciplinary research was really successful in 1959.
- 23 Lindblom noted that disciplinary habits inculcated in graduate school were enormously powerful. He said the RAND results were better than in most universities, that disciplines ought to try to understand each others' views.
- 24 Lindblom described two examples of intransigent refusal of economists at Yale to work with other disciplines. But economists at RAND talked to men in other fields.
- 25 Collins asked if insularity resulted from security classification policies in 1959. Lindblom was aware of several effects including isolation from broader views in the university.
- 26 Lindblom now appreciates, more than in 1959, the need to test the 1959 views. Lindblom's actual examination for three months of RAND differed from his study of case studies of other organizations. Lindblom in 63-64 studied in India the economic and political development of India.
- 27 Collins queried Lindblom's phrase, "to gain control over RAND's recommendations" When the military foresaw RAND's judgments making trouble for them, they wanted

to express their differing judgments.

28-29 Did RAND want to be independent of AF views similarly to a professor being independent in his own discipline?

29-30 Lindblom said whether one works for government or a private organization, one is always working as a partisan. RAND had not thought this point out well. RAND people wanted to think their work bore fruit. They weren't after power, but efficacy, a job well done

Interviewee: Professor Charles E. Lindblom

Interviewer: Mr. Martin Collins

Location: Professor Lindblom's office,
Yale University, New Haven, Connecticut

Date: April 9, 1991

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MR. MARTIN COLLINS: Just to get started, I'd like to ask you a little bit about your educational background. I know you received your Ph.D. from the University of Chicago in 1945, but could you talk a little bit about your course work and teachers and dissertation activity, just to set the frame for your professional activities.

PROFESSOR CHARLES LINDBLOM: An enormous influence on my thinking was Frank Knight. He always comes to the top of my mind whenever I think about formative influences. I think of Frank Knight as the creator of the Chicago School (though I'm not of the Chicago School.) The Chicago School is the Friedman, Stigler, Aaron, Director Buchanan tradition of--to put it a little harshly--highly doctrinaire commitment to the market system.

Frank Knight himself had another side, which was represented in his "Ethics of Competition" classic article in the Quarterly Journal of Economics about 1922, in which he savagely took apart the whole market system, subjected it to an ethical or philosophical appraisal, and found it dismal. This second side of Knight disappears in Friedman, Stigler, et al; but it is very much alive in my mind. What I got from Knight was not just a doctrinaire commitment to the market, but a disclosure for the first time of an intricate social mechanism with great organizing potentials. It was absolutely foreign to my earlier thinking. There's a passage in Paul Samuelson's introduction to his text book in which he comments on how one can come across such an experience of intellectual discovery only once in one's life. I found it a marvelous experience to begin to understand the complexity of unplanned and unintended social organization, the intricacy of coordination that can be achieved through it. Knight's thinking was powerful for me: the market as the world's greatest coordinator, yet without a coordinator in charge.

The connection of it to my RAND work (and to all my subsequent work on topics related to those I explored in the RAND work) was that I began to toy with the idea of politics as a market-like process--not so highly articulated and not so highly developed a system of unplanned mutual adjustment as the market, but nevertheless a rough counterpart to market mutual adjustment.

It was a view of politics which deprecated the traditional inclination of both lay and professional thought to see in politics the heavy hand of hierarchical authority and centrality.

In the tendency even of laymen to talk about politics in such terms as wheeling and dealing and political bargaining, I saw a counterpart to the market and its mutual adjustments. And so my interest in political science and political phenomenon has been very much influenced all through my career by a desire to appreciate the degree to which some of the most superficially wasteful, ugly, disorganized, and chaotic aspects of politics have something of the character of unplanned, unintended epiphenomenal coordination roughly comparable to that which Adam Smith and Frank Knight were teaching me was accomplished by market organization.

COLLINS: That does indeed come through in those memos that you prepared for RAND.

COLLINS: Just to be clear on your experience at Chicago, your concentration there was in economics or political?

LINDBLOM: Entirely economics.

COLLINS: What was your dissertation subject?

LINDBLOM: It was on the conflicts and inefficiencies created in a society when it tries, on one hand, to operate competitive markets, and, on the other hand, to operate collective bargaining. I was exploring the contradictions between markets and collective bargaining. Of course that problem was an important one to the Chicago School, and its members were all coming out on the side of great hostility to trade unions. They've always had a great hostility because they saw collective bargaining as a fundamental deep challenge to the efficiency of markets and competition. I explored the conflict without, however, taking the prescriptive position of the Chicago School.

COLLINS: What was the character of academic life at Chicago during the war? As a second question, did you have any ties to the war effort as a student there?

LINDBLOM: No. I left Chicago in '39. I worked on my dissertation while teaching at the University of Minnesota.

COLLINS: So you were away from Chicago during the war period?

LINDBLOM: Yes.

COLLINS: For the period of the war were you pretty much working on your dissertation, or were you doing other things?

LINDBLOM: Yes, I was. I was 4-F, working on the dissertation and teaching at the University of Minnesota.

COLLINS: By 1946 you had come to Yale. I guess the question is, how did that happen?

LINDBLOM: Interesting story. I'll let you record it privately but please take some care in what you make of it in print. I was very happy at the University of Minnesota. I liked the city; I liked the students and my the faculty colleagues. I could imagine staying on there indefinitely. But I thought that one of the professors teaching in a field close to mine (mine was labor economics) was something of a charlatan, not very competent; and I was brash enough not to conceal my opinions effectively. He asked that I be fired. And I was also troublesome to the dean of the School of Business, in which the economics were placed. He called me in to rebuke me for what he thought was my political radicalism! The upshot of these considerations was that I was told I had to leave, and so I cast about quickly at the next American Economic Association meeting and found a job at Yale.

COLLINS: How did you identify yourself at that point in terms of a discipline? Was it economics or political science?

LINDBLOM: It was economics, except that the associated interest in politics was strong, and I had always looked for ways to indulge it. I had flip-flopped back and forth twice as an undergraduate in my choice of major. When I first left economics as an undergraduate major, although I was fascinated with all its analytical tools and apparatus, it seemed to me too narrow; and it wasn't indulging my interest in economic phenomena that had a political aspect. I was interested in policy and social problem-solving. I had thought economics was going to be the great insight into social problems, but the economists weren't helping me get to them beyond the fine analytical apparatus. So I switched over to political science as a major, hoping to find what I wanted there. But there I was distressed at the relative emptiness of the discipline. There just was so little to learn, compared with what I was learning in economics. So I went back to economics. Again I was struck by the same narrowness. I ended up qualifying for a B.A., in each of both fields.

When I went to do graduate work at Chicago, even though I knew I was going to be dissatisfied with the narrowness of economics, I knew economics offered very solid things to study, more so than in political science, and hence I would choose that discipline over the other. Through my choice of courses, and to some extent other reading, I kept my interest in politics alive. When I went to Minnesota as an economist, I soon got into programs of joint teaching with political scientists and sociologists so that I could indulge in a much wider range of

interest than I could by straight economics teaching.

When I left Minnesota and came here to Yale, my state of mind was, "Damn it, I've been fired." And one of the reasons I'd been fired was perhaps that I wasn't paying enough attention to economics as economics. Perhaps then I ought to stick to it and quit fooling around with interdisciplinary interests. So for a few years I kept my nose very clean, but soon I became restive again. I began to teach in an interdisciplinary program we had for undergraduates here, and also teaching a graduate course with Robert Dahl of the political science department whose interests I found congenial with mine. I was back playing both sides of the street again, and eventually was given a formal appointment in the political science department, along with my appointment in economics. Gradually my main interests and institutional loyalties shifted over to political science from economics.

COLLINS: One significant issue for the university after 1945 was the relationship of the university to the federal government, especially in university support to the professions and disciplines needed to provide some input into the military. This was, I think, reflected in a number of venues at the university. To what degree did you see this as an issue at the university, and how did you become involved or interested in national security affairs?

LINDBLOM: I don't recall seeing it as an issue. Perhaps I did but I doubt it. I assumed it was one of the background issues and other people were attending to it. It was not occupying me. Some evidence of that would be that from about 1949 to '53 Dahl and I were working on Politics, Economics and Welfare,¹ and I think if you look in that book, you won't find any reference to issues on the relation of the university to the military or any analysis of the military as an important part of the social structure or the political or economic order that we were discussing. There is very little in that book about that. I became involved in these things only because I had an invitation to spend a summer at RAND. I welcomed this diversion from my usual interests, as well as the additional summer income. I found what was going on at RAND, and the kind of problems they faced, extremely interesting.

And they connect very tightly with a large, large piece of unfinished business in Politics, Economics and Welfare. That book we published in '53. I think I went to RAND in the summer of '54. When we finished that book we had laid out four basic institutions for political and economic organization: market, hierarchy, polyarchy (by which we meant real world imperfect

¹Harper 1953

democracy), and a more diffused general category of mutual adjustment in social organization called bargaining. The more I thought about bargaining, the less I was satisfied with our analysis of it. I thought more work needed to be done, and so a good deal of my work ever since then, including the work at RAND, has turned heavily on clarifying mutual adjustment processes. I found right away that bargaining was much too narrow a term because people interact with each other in nonhierarchical ways, in many ways other than bargaining. Even if you give bargaining a fairly broad definition, it's not broad enough. So I have ever since then pursued mutual adjustment. In the work I did at RAND I saw the Air Force as engaged in a bargaining process with the President and with the other military branches. And all were engaged in bargaining with RAND analysts. I found it all fascinating.

COLLINS: Two questions before we get on to the RAND issues. Were you familiar with or involved in any way with the Institute for International Studies that was active at Yale in part of that period before you came to RAND?

LINDBLOM: No, not in their international studies. I knew those people and found myself personally drawn to some of them. Some of them were among my best Yale friends, and one gave me helpful advice on my first book; but I don't think I ever went to a seminar of the group or ever presented a paper. I certainly never had any appointment in the Institute.

COLLINS: Do you recall whether the start of the Korean War had any noticeable impact on the campus or the activities of the Economics Department as an external influence that was felt in some way?

LINDBLOM: All I can remember is much talk and a good deal of anxiety about what might develop as a result of Chinese engagement in the Korean War, but no, I don't remember anything about it.

COLLINS: At that point, were you going to outside sources for support of your research, say, for the book you worked on with Dahl?

LINDBLOM: Yes, around '49 or '50, I forget just when, maybe even as early as '48, Dahl and I were looking for funds for that book.

COLLINS: Did you go to a foundation?

LINDBLOM: Yes. And we got Guggenheim help and some Rockefeller help. (Incidentally, you're going to find me, I think, surprisingly weak in recollection of institutional problems of the university in relation to the federal government and the

foundations. Somehow I never seemed quite to tune in on these things. Curious. Ivory tower isolation?

COLLINS: How did you establish a contact with RAND? How did this initial consultation relationship come about?

LINDBLOM: My recollection is that it came out of the blue from Charlie Hitch.

COLLINS: Did you know Hitch previous to his approach to you?

LINDBLOM: No, I don't think so. There may be something more I've forgotten, but I think he was just looking around for people he thought might be interesting. Perhaps because of Politics, Economics, and Welfare he thought it might be interesting to have me out there for a summer. He was, you know, quite exploratory and innovative.

COLLINS: How did you make the decision to go and spend some time out there?

LINDBLOM: It was only for a summer, and it was a very easy decision to make. I was at a point where my salary was not terribly high. I was looking for, not actively seeking but always receptive to, summer employment that would prod some kind of interesting professional activity. I also had family out in California whom I welcomed an opportunity to spend a little time with now and then. It was a very ordinary, pragmatic decision. I had no particular interest in military affairs at all, but I thought it might be interesting to get acquainted with that field.

COLLINS: Did you require a security clearance for your work there over this summer?

LINDBLOM: Not a very high one as I recall, but yes.

COLLINS: And this was your first clearance, I assume.

LINDBLOM: Yes.

COLLINS: What were your initial impressions of this organization?

LINDBLOM: I thought it was marvelous. For one thing, I was enormously stimulated by and pleased to see a much higher degree of interaction among these people than on any university faculty I've ever seen.

COLLINS: You mean in terms of interchange between disciplines?

LINDBLOM: Between people, different disciplines or not. They talked a lot to each other. They seemed to thrive on each other's criticism. Now to be sure, I'm drawing my experience largely from the economists and several scientists. I can't really say that I was reacting to how the mathematicians or the scientists operated. But the economists especially were a lively bunch. They were working hard but with their doors open (and the custom here at Yale and other places I've been is that you work with your door closed). At RAND the ease of intellectual interchange and the frequency of it seemed to be very, very high, compared with Minnesota, and Yale. I thought that was very heady stuff, and these people were, I thought, thinking sharply, pertinently. Although they loved to argue, they weren't hung up trying to win their points. They were learning from each other, and they liked to find a new idea rather than fight it off as a challenge to their correctness. It was all very good.

COLLINS: What was your charge for that summer?

LINDBLOM: It was very specific, and it was one on which I never performed very well, although perhaps Charlie Hitch was smart enough to know nobody could. You see, I came out there without any agreement with Charlie about what I was going to work on. He just said, "Come out and we'll find interesting things for you to do." Subsequently I was a little surprised (because I wasn't used to being told what to do in the university atmosphere) when on my arrival he said, in effect, "I would like you to look into this question of how to develop criteria for evaluating alternatives (policies, weapons systems, statistics, etc.) In complex matters, evaluating criteria is pretty tough. In fact, it's awfully tough." I think he may have referred then, but if he didn't, I certainly learned quickly about the famous case of treating the reduction of North Atlantic submarine hits as a criterion for choice among methods (convoying being one) for reducing the amount of freight lost by submarine torpedoes in the North Atlantic.

COLLINS: Are you talking about a World War II problem?

LINDBLOM: Yes. Analysts found out that while we and various methods were greatly reducing the frequency of torpedo hits in the North Atlantic, one of the consequences of that success was that the Germans moved submarines to other shipping lanes where the methods hadn't yet been introduced, and so losses went up in those other shipping lanes. The methods were not so successful as had been thought because they were judged by the wrong criterion.

COLLINS: Did the criteria problem strike you as an attractive problem to work on?

LINDBLOM: I had a mixture of reactions. I thought, "Okay, I don't really think I can get very far with it but I'll try." No, I was not excited at the prospect, but I was excited at the prospect of RAND and a summer's work. I did think, "Gee, he sure could have picked a better topic." But I didn't fight him on it. I was sufficiently interested in it and in meeting that kind of challenge that I went ahead with it. As it turned out, if you look at the papers written that summer, there isn't much directly on the whole criteria issue. We were always grappling with it. As another summer visitor, James Buchanan was working on it, too, either all summer or part of the summer. All we managed were glancing blows: you know, under what circumstances should the RAND people accept what looked to them like a very narrow Air Force criterion for a solution to a problem? Or a partisan Air Force criterion for a solution to a problem?

COLLINS: One theme that emerges (from reading papers about criteria that you prepared during the summer) is that there was a substantial lack of appreciation at RAND of the political character of the analyst's role.

LINDBLOM: I thought so, yes. Some of the Rand people were, I thought, doctrinaire on the possibilities of setting politics aside as irrelevant to their analyses and simply looking for optimal solutions as though there were no political factors. Others knew they were there, deferred to them, took account of them, but always looked upon them as a nuisance--that in a better world wouldn't be there. But since it isn't a better world and they were there, they had to give some grudging attention to them. Very few of them held such a position as I came to: that since these political factors are essential parts of democratic government, and we want democratic government, they shouldn't be only grudgingly allowed to influence a solution to a problem (say, a choice of weapons) but should be welcomed as relevant considerations.

COLLINS: In your judgment, based on the time you spent there--I'm thinking now particularly of '54--can you separate your '54 experience from your '59 experience?

LINDBLOM: Fifty-nine is so much more dominant in my mind now, but go ahead.

COLLINS: What seemed to be the source of this point of view? You described the staff already as very bright, articulate, analytic and capable people. Why this blind spot?

LINDBLOM: Oh, it was part of the brightness and flash and fire they had. And they were young. Think back on what I said about the excitement of learning economics and the market system for the first time. The RAND economists were bringing their

wonderful analytical tools and insights to bear; and they were filled with enthusiasm and excitement. I think a great number of them felt they had the gospel. Their poor clients in the Air Force need only be straightened out to think right. They'd understand if only they would hear what RAND had to offer. RAND could offer possibilities of solutions beyond anything the Air Force had ever thought of. Their real enthusiasm at RAND gave them a lot of power and drive.

I remember the first time-as an undergraduate-I heard the argument from economic theory about why a legally imposed minimum wage is a bad idea. It is an incomplete argument: attempts to raise wages make labor too expensive and cause unemployment. Very simple. Such simple fundamental arguments we get in economic analysis sometimes seem overwhelmingly conclusive. They aren't but they seem so. I remember a conversation with George Stigler, who was not at RAND but was a colleague of mine at Minnesota. On the minimum wage question, I made some snide argument as: the shock of having to pay higher wages might stir an entrepreneur to reconsider his production practices and might end up pushing him into higher efficiency so that he could absorb the wage increases, even run a more profitable business. Stigler rejected the possibility, arguing that if it were profitable for the entrepreneur to improve his efficiency he would already have done so. The profit motive is already and always at work to maximize efficiency. That kind of simplistic argument simply ignores Herbert Simon's "bounded rationality," which tells us that the decision-maker can only pay attention to a limited number of things in a given time and only inconclusively, or James March's garbage can theory of decision making. Economists preached the gospel in formal economic theory, uncomplicated by these other considerations.

COLLINS: What did you do in '54, if you can again separate this out, to familiarize yourself with the RAND approach to research, to this thing called systems analysis and what it was trying to accomplish and what its goals were? Did you go around and canvass different people in the organization? Did you go over a number of RAND studies? How did you familiarize yourself?

LINDBLOM: I did all those things, yes. I also had a very good and old friend at RAND then, Bernard Brodie, who was devoted to RAND, central to it, and sympathetically critical of the economists. I'd see him often at his house at dinner. We were old friends; and I learned a lot from him about how RAND operated and what its strengths were, and what its weaknesses were. He was a very judicious, sagacious person.

COLLINS: Now did you have ties with Brodie here at Yale when you were both here?

LINDBLOM: Yes. They were among our best friends, the Brodies, and the Brodie kids and our kids.

COLLINS: Who else at RAND did you become close to during that summer.

LINDBLOM: Malcolm Hoag, Bill Capron, and Andy Marshall. Capron I've kept in touch with, Hoag only for a while, Marshall hardly at all. Albert Wohlstetter to some degree. That was in the first period. It seems to me that I met Alain Enthoven and Harry Rowen in the '59 visit, if I remember right. They were the dominant two, Rowen and Enthoven, in my later--oh, yes, what is his name, who did the book with Hitch on systems analysis?

COLLINS: Roland McKean.

LINDBLOM: Yes, yes. But of all those, I think the one I spent more time talking to was Mac Hoag.

COLLINS: Can you recall what his set of attitudes and perceptions were about the RAND research enterprise? To pose it slightly differently, do you recall to what degree those were helpful to you in your understanding?

LINDBLOM: Mac's?

COLLINS: Yes.

LINDBLOM: Well, they were helpful in that, if I wanted to talk to somebody right now to say, "I don't understand what's going on here," or "I don't understand how these people have been handling this problem," he'd be the first one I'd go to, even sooner than to Capron, whom I saw a lot of. He was extremely helpful, incisive, honest, direct, clear in dealing with these things. He was enormously helpful in getting me cued in on what was going on and what the traditions at RAND were. Anything I wanted to know about RAND, he probably knew it. His attitude was a very great enthusiasm for economics, what it could do. He was on the whole committed, as most of them were, to a highly conventional picture of how you bring analysis to the aid of government departments, whether military or civilian.

COLLINS: By the end of the summer, you had prepared several memos. How were these presented to the staff? Did you give any talks on these things, or were they simply printed and distributed?

LINDBLOM: My recollection is that yes, once or twice, I gave talks, but mostly the papers would just be handed to a secretary, reproduced, and entered into a distribution channel. And I was gratified because I would always receive comments from you never

knew where--a mathematician, engineer, social scientist, economist. It was clear that people read my papers. But I don't mean just mine. They were reading widely, and they were taking the trouble to call up or come by my office or write a reply.

COLLINS: During this first visit did you have any contact with Frank Collbohm or other people in the RAND administration? Were they interested in the criteria problem?

LINDBLOM: I don't recall. I must have met Collbohm when I was taken on, maybe taken by to say hello or be introduced, that's all.

COLLINS: Did Charlie Hitch give you an assessment of the value of your contribution over that summertime, or was it more casual than that?

LINDBLOM: He was not highly articulate in these respects. He said almost nothing during the summer. He continued, when I saw him, which was hardly ever, to deal with me both in a somewhat formal, respectful yet friendly way. In the end he said, very quietly, something like, "I'm pleased with what you've been able to do." I think he made some passing, brief, one-sentence reference to the fact that I stirred up some issues, got some interchange going. The payoff was that despite the brevity of his words, he tried to hire me then in a permanent position. I took that as the real evidence that he was pleased with the work.

COLLINS: One thing that comes out in a couple of '54 memos, and more explicitly in the '59 memos, is your view that RAND is essentially functioning as a consultant to the Air Force. Did the RAND staff members view their role as consultants, in your judgment, or did they think of themselves in some other kind of capacity?

LINDBLOM: Well, as I say in those memos, they had, I thought, in theory a somewhat narrow view of what their job was. In practice, they did a variety of things. But as I pointed out, they often tended to deprecate some of those things as not really central to their most proper function.

COLLINS: Let me phrase this differently. Implicit in the notion of consultant is a kind of subordinate role, that you are performing a function at somebody else's behest. My sense of the RAND staff is that they really didn't feel comfortable with that kind of connotation of a consultant. Is that something that coincides with your experience during this time frame?

LINDBLOM: You could put these two views on a continuum. I wouldn't perceive RAND as near either end of that continuum. It was very much a mixed situation. They felt themselves to be

consultants in the sense that basically what they were trying to do was solve Air Force problems. They had these other contracts, which grew in number, and 10 percent of their earnings went into independent research, so they realized that they had been built to have some independence that an ordinary consultant doesn't have. So you see already the mixture. I'm saying in one sense, yes, they were consultants. They had been created by the Air Force. Their basic task was to help the Air Force. On the other hand, they had already built in some deviations from that. I guess I can't say much more on that.

COLLINS: That's fine. I'm at the end of this side. I'm going to switch it over.

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LINDBLOM: I suppose, on that consultancy point, they had a zestfulness and brashness about telling the Air Force more than it wanted to hear and in assuming an educational mission toward the Air Force that goes beyond the ordinary consultant's role. And looking back much later after I left, they claimed credit for having taught the colonels and generals in Washington, particularly in the Robert McNamara period, to think a lot straighter--not about, for example, the best weapon systems money can buy but the best bang for a buck, a big shift they claimed to be achieving in Air Force thinking. And that maybe goes beyond what you were thinking of as a consultancy relationship. They were educators, soul savers for the military.

COLLINS: The other memo that you did in this early period, RAND's stake in top-level military organization, was a really intriguing piece. It was intended as a speculative reflection. But this gets to the heart of one of my interests in all this, which is defining relationships between the civilian and the military, and especially the role of professionals. In this essay you suggest that perhaps a different kind of military and a different kind of a relationship with the civilian is called for.

LINDBLOM: I go pretty far there. It is speculating.

COLLINS: Did you get any responses within RAND to this?

LINDBLOM: I have no recollection of that.

COLLINS: This viewpoint is intriguing also, given that basically over the course of that summer was your first in-depth look at military issues. To come out the other side of that brief experience with a proposal that offers a pretty fundamental social reorganization, I think, is interesting.

LINDBLOM: When I say that I don't recall a reaction, I almost

certainly did get reactions--there was that degree of interchange--but there was no reaction of such consequence or dimension that it sticks in my mind, leading me to retract or go further with that line of thinking.

COLLINS: It suggests, though, a certain evolution over the summertime of your appreciation of military issues and this broad question of its social whirl. Can you recall some of the thought processes that went into making these suggestions? Does composing that memo stand out in memory in any way for you?

LINDBLOM: I'm afraid I can't. It's all part of one big package. I can't call up right now, at least on short notice, anything that applies particularly to that line of thought.

COLLINS: Leave the '54 experience behind you unless you think there's anything else to comment on about it.

LINDBLOM: Did you see a paper of mine called "The Last Prose of Summer"?

COLLINS: No.

LINDBLOM: It sticks in my mind. It's not here. I don't know whether it sticks in my mind just because of the pun in the title or whether there was some retrospective comment on my summer's experience, which is quite possible. That might help answer the question you just put to me. So maybe you can find it if you think it's worth it.

COLLINS: As an aside, a lot of the early RAND documentation has been destroyed. What has survived are these so-called "D" documents, which were a semi-published form of internal communication. Those things were specifically kept. The things like memoranda, which I assume several of these other writings that you mentioned took the form of, are more difficult.

LINDBLOM: I don't want to detach myself from this microphone now, but I could look in my file when we finish and see if "The Last Prose of Summer" might be sitting in there. I don't think so, though. Can you remember that?

COLLINS: Yes. Okay, you had this experience at RAND and an introduction to national security issues. Did you continue to have contact with RAND in the interval leading to 1959 or develop other contacts or interests in the national security area, or did you just leave it and go back to the other things you were doing?

LINDBLOM: I worked in the fall after that summer on a paper begun at RAND. I remember the title of it now, "Bargaining: The Hidden Hand in Government." Then I went to one or two

conferences. No, that was much later, that was after '59. I don't recall any engagement in this sort of thing, but my thinking about mutual adjustment and bargaining in government was much stimulated by that "Hidden Hand in Government" and I went along working on that same line, but not with particular reference to the military, which is your question, I think.

COLLINS: Right. You saw this as just a component of a larger issue of the American political system.

LINDBLOM: Exactly. That's my recollection. As I try to think back on, for example, publication of articles, I don't recall writing anything that had anything to do with the military.

COLLINS: Did you maintain contact with the members of RAND during this period from '54 to '59, or did you pretty much go back to your older circle of colleagues and professional associates?

LINDBLOM: I believe the latter. I kept in touch with Brodie, but that was because he was an older contact, and his wife and children had become close to my wife and children. I believe that McKean came to Yale and gave a talk; and I saw Capron on some occasion, quite disassociated from the military things. Otherwise I had practically no contact. I saw Hitch somewhere. My wife and I had dinner with him, maybe in Washington.

COLLINS: These were more incidental.

LINDBLOM: Quite incidental, completely.

COLLINS: You indicated you had this dual interest in economics and political science as professions. I assume you continually balanced these interests.

LINDBLOM: Well, I was increasingly moving to political science all the time.

COLLINS: In terms of your professional affiliations and the kinds of meetings that you went to during this period, were they on the economic side, the political science side, or both?

LINDBLOM: I think they tended to be more on the political side.

COLLINS: Okay. Were you an active member of the Political Science Association and someone who participated in committees and that kind of thing?

LINDBLOM: I was not an active member. I was on no committees, and I never had any formal committee assignment or connection with the American Political Science Association until, it seems

to me, about 1978 when I believe I was elected to the vice presidency or as a member of the council. Subsequently, in 1980, I was elected president of the American Political Science Association.

COLLINS: I'm trying to get a sense of the nature of your contacts with other elements of the political science community and the interests that that community had.

LINDBLOM: Oh, well, if you set the association aside, I was seeing, I think, maybe more of my colleagues in the department here than in the Economics Department. If you looked at what I was writing, it was more interesting to political scientists than to economists. The shift was going on in this period.

COLLINS: What were the circumstances in which you came back to RAND in that summer of '59?

LINDBLOM: My recollection, again, is simply that I got, out of the blue, an invitation. I think Charlie probably said in 1953 or '54, at the end of summer, "Anytime you want to come back, let me know. I'll see if we can use you." I can't be sure of any given year, but I think he said something like that. I didn't take any initiative, as I recall, and I think he just got in touch with me and said, "How about it?"

COLLINS: Did he convey that there was a particular interest or need for pushing forward the kinds of issues you dealt with before?

LINDBLOM: No.

COLLINS: But I assume he gave you a fairly specific charge.

LINDBLOM: You know, I've been trying to think. Where did this notion come in, of writing this '59 series of papers, so comprehensive an attempt to evaluate RAND? Did he approach me with that as a condition in coming, and say, "This is what I want you to work on. Would you come to do that?" Or did he hire me and then surprise me with the topic after I got there, as he did the first time? And I can't remember. But I think it was the former.

COLLINS: What's interesting in comparing the '54 work product and the '59 work product is that it seems--this may not be a fair comparison because the conditions of your activity at RAND may have been somewhat different, but there seems to be a much greater professional maturity on your part in 1959. These papers show a kind of sophistication and subtlety that isn't in the '54 papers, and I think for that reason they're a very intriguing set of documents. Again, I guess, just a question about the process

of preparing these memoranda. It seems that the business of collecting data and observing must have been much more intense than it was the first time around, judging by the character of the work product.

LINDBLOM: Yes.

COLLINS: Can you describe what you were seeing around RAND during that summer of 1959 and the kinds of things you were doing to pull together these broad ideas you were trying to work with in understanding RAND as an organization?

LINDBLOM: Well, I went to a lot of sessions, as I recall, of the big project that Barlow headed.

COLLINS: The SOFS project, Strategic Offensive Forces Study.

LINDBLOM: In connection with that, there were colonels popping in--I guess some generals too but mostly colonels--and I would ask if I could talk to them. I remember one time I went up to San Francisco to catch some military person or persons up there while they were on the West Coast, and I went around to the mathematical engineering scientific sites systematically to talk to people as I had not done, as I recall, before. So I took very seriously seeking people out and interviewing them, although not in the systematic way you are using in interviewing me, and digging out documents. The result was, incidentally, that I spent a good deal less time in that free-wheeling interchange of the earlier session out at RAND where we were popping into each other's offices. You never knew what we would be furiously engaged in, at any hour, in the discussion of it. Perhaps I was certainly engaging in as much interchange the second time as the first, but it was different in that I was ferreting out things, asking for things.

COLLINS: Did you keep notebooks and take notes of your discussions? How did you keep control over all this?

LINDBLOM: Oh, yes. The notes are all gone. There was nothing that I didn't destroy as I went along and converted into text.

COLLINS: Since these documents deal with such a broad set of issues, it is a little difficult to decide where to focus in on these, and we can work on this together. Did Charlie Hitch perceive some sense of crisis at RAND?

LINDBLOM: Not that I was aware of.

COLLINS: Okay. Perhaps this was just timely for some sort of assessment of the organization.

LINDBLOM: It's possible that there was a sense of crisis that he didn't reveal. He played things pretty close to his chest. I remember being struck rather sharply by the evidence of, you might say, corporate bureaucratization in the organization. I certainly must have mentioned that to Charlie and others because it was very vivid in my mind at the time, that the place was different, but I don't recall that there was any sense of crisis.

COLLINS: Who did you think your audience was for these memos? Was it everybody? When I say everybody, I mean the research staff, the department heads, the administration. Is that who you thought your audience was for these things?

LINDBLOM: They did read, these people, many of them. I felt that was a powerful tradition. People weren't just writing for the files. They hoped that somebody might read them. I had every confidence that the top brass in the organization, that is, the president, vice president, division heads, and many of the analysts were going to read what I wrote. I didn't doubt it at all, and by every evidence of response, they did read it.

COLLINS: During this visit, did you have contact with Frank Collbohm or Dick Goldstein?

LINDBLOM: To interview. They knew what I was doing. I said, "I want to talk to you," but we didn't chitchat.

COLLINS: But as part of your analysis, did you bring in their views and perceptions?

LINDBLOM: Yes, and those of Larry Henderson, who would be out from Washington.

COLLINS: One of the intriguing things that you picked up on was the sense of RAND's own ambition, what it thought its mission was in relation to the Air Force. You didn't press the point, but implicitly you suggest that perhaps RAND was reaching for more than it could possibly accomplish, given the nature of its relationship with the Air Force. How would you characterize this sense of ambition and relate it back to our earlier discussion of '54, when there was a special excitement about applying the tools and getting answers and having this pedagogical function with respect to the Air Force? Did that set of issues have a different cast in 1959?

LINDBLOM: I'm not sure of my memory on this point, but I think that in the ensuing years RAND had grown a little more sober. But one reason, aside from the mere passage of years, that I'm not sure of my memory is that RAND spoke to me so often in the earlier visits through Hoag. He could talk so precisely and with such information about the RAND mission, what RAND was doing,

that I may have attributed to RAND as a whole what I was hearing in Mac's enthusiasm and confidence.

The second period, I was hearing a lot from Enthoven and Rowen and Wohlstetter. All of those three were more inclined to voice not the enthusiasm of what economics could do at the service of public policy in the military or anywhere, but they were more apt to express a concern about why these damn colonels and generals weren't listening as well as they should. They showed a certain despair or frustration. And I didn't used to hear that in Mac. My memory maybe is colored by these personalities.

COLLINS: That's an important and useful point. It's probably fair to say that during the 1954 visit, RAND had not articulated one or a series of visions or frameworks for thinking about strategic policy, but was still more fluid and open-ended. By 1959 you have, I think it's fair to say, the emergence of at least several schools about how this ought to be done. Would you agree with that characterization, and did you see that as an issue that the corporation as a whole had to grapple with? It was dealing with a different order of problems as you moved into that level of policy.

LINDBLOM: I think so, but I don't know what I'd say specifically to confirm that I'm remembering correctly. One thing that may be pertinent to this question is that by '59 a number of these people, maybe RAND personnel generally--no, I don't think so generally--but a large number of people like Enthoven and Wohlstetter and Rowen had come closer to frequent contact with people in the Air Force than Mac, or Andy Marshall, or the others that I dealt with earlier had. So they had to grapple, in a way that the earlier summer's personnel didn't have to grapple, with how you deal with these people. What do you do when you run into what they consider to be abysmal ignorance or stubbornness or ideology or doctrinaire qualities of thought? Earlier, not so many of these people posed these questions to themselves. They were too far away. They were sending off studies and memoranda to the Air Force, but they weren't seeing in flesh and blood, as in the '59 Barlow project, an Air Force officer sitting there and saying, "I don't accept that" or saying, "That's only your judgment or opinion" or "Our judgment is as good as yours." Nor were they in '54 so frequently making a presentation with blackboard and display stand while being shot at by an audience of colonels. That was more and more a common occurrence and created a sense of sobriety and sometimes some resentment, but certainly frustration and irritation, that the earlier people hadn't often been bothered by.

COLLINS: I don't know whether it's appropriate to join these two observations, but I do conjoin them when I read your memos, and

let me just throw it out. In this issue of RAND, and especially in strategic issues, entering into a realm where judgment considerations play a much larger role, where it's much more difficult to use analytic tools that give you a firm sense of which direction to head--and typically this meant being able to quantify something. And the observation that you make that there seemed to be certain party biases within RAND. I assume, when you made that reference, that you were referring to the various strategic schools, whether those of Wohlstetter or Brodie or Herman Kahn. Was this an organizational response, in a sense, to the inability to bring analytic tools to deal with these issues that were really amenable to analysis or the tools available?

LINDBLOM: You used a couple of pronouns there the reference of which left me puzzled. Was this a response? Was what a response?

COLLINS: Was the evolution of particular schools, or as you put it, party biases, a response to the inherent problems of judgment in dealing with these more complex issues that were less amenable to analysis?

LINDBLOM: It seems that a priori I should answer yes to that, but I'm suspicious of the answer. Probably though, yes.

COLLINS: I'm just trying to get you to think about the relationship between those two things. In my reading of the documents, there seems to be a relationship, but I wanted you to reflect on it.

LINDBLOM: Yes, I don't know what to say. Let me tell you about something that's a little bit peripheral but not quite peripheral. Rowen asked me one day if I would like to fly with him to China Lake, where the Navy had a substantial research operation, for a little conference on matters of mutual concern. I don't now remember just what the occasion was for the conference. It wasn't a negotiation and it wasn't a peacekeeping effort, you know, something to coordinate two organizations that diverged in some respects. But it was some kind of conference on strategy. And I remember being powerfully struck by the fact that at the conference two largely independent schools of thought on military strategy were in evidence. These two organizations, one in China Lake and one in Santa Monica, dealing with fundamentally the same problems, had developed independent doctrines that were not being put into competition with each other, as far as I could tell, among either body of thinkers.

On the return trip, I asked Rowen to explain. "How do you fellows here at RAND so cavalierly wash the Navy analysts out as irrelevant or wrong, and how do they wash Rand out as irrelevant or wrong? How do you justify such disregard for such fundamental

challenges each to the other?" I remember that he squirmed. He couldn't cope with the question. I think having his nose rubbed in the phenomenon of doctrinaire schools and their imperviousness to each other was distressing and embarrassing to him. But he was not able to defend it, he did not want to defend it, and he was distressed that he couldn't say anything about what to do about it or even express an intention to do anything about it. I thought maybe I could go as far as to say he was suddenly faced with a very disagreeable aspect of his work.

COLLINS: I think you're taking the right path here in trying to particularize this question a little bit. For example, did you have any conversations with Wohlstetter about his set of strategic assumptions or his strategic outlook and how he felt comfortable with or justified that particular point of view?

LINDBLOM: Well, I must have because I was sufficiently troubled by the China Lake experience to want to come back and talk to a number of people about it. So then, if not already and on other occasions, I must have, but I don't recall anything that sticks in my mind that I should here pass on to you.

COLLINS: In that sense, then, was there anyone at RAND besides Rowen who you may have broached this question with? I forget which particular memo this was in. You don't indicate a name, but the response of one analyst to this kind of problem was to explicitly bury the assumptions, don't bring them out, because it just would be somehow more appropriate or easier for the analysts to do it, or something like that.

LINDBLOM: My guess is that that was Rowen and Enthoven talking, but I'm not sure.

COLLINS: Yes, I guess at some other point you do refer to one of their pieces of work about that time that had a similar framework.

LINDBLOM: But there were these interesting differences. You see, I've talked about a Navy-RAND doctrinal difference just now in the China Lake episode, but I do remember these doctrinal differences within RAND were also sharp and insufficiently ventilated.

COLLINS: I think you brought a critical point to the surface if it wasn't already overt at RAND, and that is this question that in some of these larger issues, judgment, experience, and point of view come into play in formulating the position. What was the response back from RAND staff after they had a chance to digest some of these things on that kind of point? Did they feel that was a legitimate area for improvement on their part, or did they see this as something that really wasn't achievable?

LINDBLOM: I have on so many occasions, in so many conferences and other contexts, debated this point about how to do what you might call minimally judgmental empirical scientific work and combine it with highly judgmental and subjective work that I can't recall now, I can't pull out my RAND experience and separate it very well. I'll make a guess, though. There was at RAND an acknowledgement that there exist highly subjective, judgmental issues. RAND knew that. But handling them really wasn't RAND's cup of tea. That leaves the problem of how to deal with subjective judgmental issues as itself a subjective or judgmental issue. That too couldn't very well be discussed or prescribed at RAND. Hence every analyst, therefore, had pretty much to exercise his own private judgment.

COLLINS: But interestingly enough, you take it beyond a general concern with this issue and suggest some organizational changes that could help incorporate this more refined type of thinking into their practice.

LINDBLOM: Yes.

COLLINS: To the best of my knowledge, those kinds of things were never implemented at RAND.

LINDBLOM: No. After I wrote my '59 papers, I never had, as I recall, any serious discussion--certainly not with the administration--about specific organizational changes. The general direction of my thinking, the validity of my critique of RAND would be discussed, but nobody's thinking seemed to turn to the concreteness of what to do about it. And I remember wishing I had a little bit of evidence that the people in the administrative offices would sit down with these recommendations and ponder them seriously with the thought that maybe there were some changes they really ought to make. I never had any evidence that they did so. Now they may have, but I had the evidence that the closer a person got to a position where he could do something about these changes, the less he was likely to consider seriously acting on them.

COLLINS: You obviously spent a great deal of time looking at the operation of the organization, the interactions between staff members and departments, its relationship to culture and mission, and that kind of thing. Did you also take the time to familiarize yourself with and develop a feel for the strategic issues that were being discussed at the time? Did you sit down and read Wohlstetter's stuff and Herman Kahn's stuff and develop an interest in that literature as part of your activities there over the summer? Was that something that interested you?

LINDBLOM: Not as much as the issues that were engaging me about what RAND was doing wrong and right and so forth. So while I

acquainted myself with that literature and did some reading, I never decided as a scholar or publisher of scholarly works to put my toe in it. I never felt I got into these issues well enough to want to say something on the substance of strategic issues.

COLLINS: Going back to 1954 and the article about RAND's interest in top-level military organization. Did any of the thought from that paper carry over to your thinking in 1959? In the 1959 case your attitude, and this may have just been the pragmatic one of trying to work on a problem, was to take the character of the Air Force essentially as a given and work around that to make RAND a better organization, as opposed to any changes in military organization. Was that, do you recall, a deliberate practical approach to dealing with the issues, or were you still interested in this question of the social organization of the military?

LINDBLOM: I'm not sure. I have had some continuing low level of interest in social or political organization of the military and still do, but not to the point of publishing; in other words, not having to raise myself to a level of expertness where I think it's time to publish something. I have a vague recollection that I had some talk with Charlie Hitch in '59 about the audience for these papers being extended to cover the military, and that I might want to write with that in mind and hence not take up questions so deeply challenging to the military as in the paper on high-level military organization in the earlier summer. I even remember, at one point, somebody cautioning me on a reference of an unflattering sort to General Curtis LeMay in one of those papers in 1959, and suggesting that in view of the audience that those papers might have, I take it out. I did.

COLLINS: That's helpful. Let me switch to a new tape.

TAPE 2, SIDE 1

COLLINS: To your knowledge, did these memos get some circulation among military officers?

LINDBLOM: Oh, no.

COLLINS: One thing that was part of RAND's perception of itself, the RAND culture, was the sense that one of its trademarks was interdisciplinary research. They were able to bring together in a relatively harmonious way people from different professional backgrounds and get them to contribute their skills to solving a problem. But reading behind much of what's presented in these '59 memos, there is a sense that this isn't working terribly well, that the coordination across disciplinary boundaries, across departments, was something that wasn't working very well, and that there were lots of tensions. Is that a fair reading of

the documents? What were some of the parameters of this failure to be able to work together?

LINDBLOM: I don't know if I have anything unusual, interesting or worthwhile to say. There were disciplinary habits which began to be inculcated, built into the mind in graduate school. They were very, very powerful, enormously powerful; and we see it in the universities, we see it in all kinds of places.

COLLINS: Let me put the question a different way because you also deal with it at this level. What was your sense of the function of this idea or value at RAND even though it wasn't really achieved very well in day-to-day activity? Was this something that was just an ideal that couldn't be fulfilled, or did it serve some kind of rhetorical function?

LINDBLOM: No, I think there was an understood rational case for it. You might even say a moral obligation to try to break out and listen to each other. And while it wasn't achieved as well as one would hope, it seems to me it was achieved better than in most universities. For all their limitations, they did make some significant efforts to understand each other and talk to each other.

Brodie is a good case. Brodie distrusted on many scores what he considered to be the formalism and narrowness of economists, but he nevertheless had a deep respect for what they could accomplish. He tried to understand and was, rather than abrasive in his criticism, sympathetic and constructive in his criticism of what the economists were doing.

This was often what I found among those RAND people, that they were troubled by their own inability to understand the way another man was looking at things, but damn it, they felt that they ought to try, they ought to understand that this other fellow has something in his background and training and skill that leads him to proceed this way that's different from his own. Some real sympathy for the perception of that.

COLLINS: What comparison did you draw at that time in terms of differences between the RAND enterprise and the university?

LINDBLOM: Well, let me give you some concrete examples that came later, but they show what's being stated here. I was for seven years director of an interdepartmental research institute here at Yale. Some years ago, as money seemed to be coming available on energy research, I tried to get some representatives from each of the social science departments to gather together to see if we had some common interests in energy policy or energy conservation policy. A couple of very good economists said to me in effect: "Look, when we talk to the other social scientists, either we

require them to learn our analytical concepts and our tools so that we can talk with them or we are reduced to a very low level of analytical competence. We are not satisfied to operate at that low level of analytical competence, nor are we willing to take on the task of educating these people in economics, nor are they interested in learning economics from us, so no, we do not wish to participate." Now that kind of intransigent refusal to work with other people would just not be tolerated, I think, at RAND. It was not, at least at the time, tolerated to my knowledge. That would have been, as I say, an immoral way to behave in the RAND context, but it was done here at Yale.

Or take another example. A Yale graduate student tried to organize a group of graduate students to come together informally to discuss what common interests they had in the social sciences. Take such notions as, let's say, rationality and see what it meant in sociology as against psychology or economics. Or take the idea of incentives or preferences, discuss some of these common concepts to see what's interesting, different, and alike in the way the various disciplines use them. There were willing participants from every social science except economics. Not one graduate student in economics would join that venture, that seminar. The height of the walls, particularly that mark economics off from the other social sciences, who on the whole could talk to each other. And that just wasn't the case at RAND. Economists and noneconomists had difficulty talking to each other, yes, but they kept at it. Not as much as we liked but they did it.

COLLINS: So in a relative sense, comparing the university to RAND, RAND was reasonably successful with reaching these visions.

LINDBLOM: It was a better university in that sense. It was a real community of ideas, yes.

COLLINS: One thing that's distinctive about the RAND environment, and it's a little bit difficult to characterize its effect on intellectual activities, is the fact that it was conducted under classified auspices. I suppose one consequence that one might draw out of this, is an insularity in a certain sense from the broader professional community. Now RAND staff members did obviously have broad contacts outside of RAND, but in terms of assessing the activities and the internal products of the organization, these were not shared with a wider community. I wondered whether you see any of the problems that you saw in 1959 as ones that stem from a certain kind of insularity that resulted from the barriers associated with classification?

LINDBLOM: I don't know. That particular hypothesis doesn't appear anywhere in my papers, does it?

COLLINS: No. I'm just kind of reading into it. Let me phrase it a little differently. As you looked at RAND as an organization, did you see the classified auspices as an element to be considered in how you thought about what was transpiring there?

LINDBLOM: Yes.

COLLINS: In what way did that factor into your thinking?

LINDBLOM: Well, I suppose the most immediate way is that when Charlie offered me a job at much higher pay than I had at the university, one of the immediate things that came to me is, I don't want to work under that kind of circumstance. It was very personal. I was aware that working for RAND might be damaging to my career and all future prospects--insulated, walled off from the academic community, through classification of documents but also through the specialization of topic and point of view with which it's approached. I saw this happening, I thought, to a number of people there and to some extent was aware, therefore, that RAND as a whole is to a degree isolated from the larger intellectual community. But I must say I was also very much aware that there was some healthy turnover, people moving in and out, bringing the outer concerns in and getting out of the organization before they were permanently crippled. You might say getting out in time to restock their intellectual capital before it ran down to a dangerous point. And then I also noticed that there were some people who were talking about big intellectual issues outside military problems. They personally were somehow avoiding that insulation, quite a few.

COLLINS: So Hitch made a job offer to you at some point?

LINDBLOM: Right after that first time, in 1954. You were asking me, did he like my work or express approval, and I was saying the most concrete expression of approval was that job offer.

COLLINS: In considering this offer these were some of the thoughts that you had.

LINDBLOM: Yes. In simplest form, I thought of taking a job with RAND as having a price or cost in the form of some significant degree of isolation from the broad set of interests and broad set of colleagues that I would work in and with if I stayed in the university.

COLLINS: In reflecting back on that period after reading these memos, was there important perceptions or thoughts that you had that were left unsaid in those memos? Was there anything that you wanted to include in those but didn't?

LINDBLOM: As I recall, everything I wanted to say I said, except that I would have liked to make perhaps a few secondary uncomplimentary points about the military in passing. I was just a little bit careful that I didn't create trouble for RAND, but nothing important.

COLLINS: After your first experience at RAND, you indicated it provided for some stimulus in looking at the broad notion of bargaining in the political process. Did you gain anything by this summer experience at RAND in '59? Did it provide some additional stimulus for your work?

LINDBLOM: Yes, a great deal. And the reason I say that so confidently this morning is that having recently, for the first time in maybe twenty or twenty-five years, reread those '59 papers, I see how much of writing ever since is picking up on things there. That is, I was at a point where some of the general ideas that had been developing since the publication in 1953 of the book with Dahl were developing in a rather flourishing way. I was thrown into a situation where I had concrete possibilities of testing them against a concrete reality, extending and refining them in the light of that concrete reality. It really turned out to be just excellent. I have more of an appreciation of that now, having reread these papers, than I ever had before.

COLLINS: What was distinctive about looking at that kind of problem that RAND presented that you didn't get somewhere else?

LINDBLOM: Well, I had never given as long as two or three months to the examination of any one concrete institution. I had been at a theoretical level, reading case studies that other people had done, reading the literature on organizations, decision making, problem solving, social science and practical problems, but never immersing myself in the problems of a concrete organization. It was a critical case study for me at RAND.

I had another one later. I went out in 1963 to spend two years working on Indian developmental problems, the politics and economics of Indian development. Again, that was marvelously stimulating, precisising, and refining for my thinking about problems of policy making and problems of economic organization, both.

COLLINS: That's interesting because that's the kind of stimulation that many of the RAND staff members refer to as this experiential immersion in something and how it relates back to professional practice.

LINDBLOM: For my scholarly values or career plans, it's very important to get that experience and then leave it, rather than

stay with it the rest of my life. For a person who spends his whole career at RAND, he loses the opportunity of taking that and applying it to more generalized or theoretical analyses and insights.

COLLINS: You laid out a number of perceptions about RAND in these memos, and that's mostly what we've been talking about. But I'd briefly like to examine the flip side because you also talk about military perceptions of RAND, military perceptions of the advisory enterprise. I want to ask about one thing, a short line in one of the memos about the Air Force interest in doing the SOFS study or participating jointly in the SOFS study. I believe the phrase was "to gain control over RAND's recommendations." I wasn't exactly clear what was meant by that, and I wonder if you might be able to elaborate on it.

LINDBLOM: About all I can remember is having some reason to write the sentence. The details as to why I wrote it I don't now remember, but the phenomenon seems a familiar one. It's not puzzling to you, is it?

COLLINS: No, it isn't, but I guess the question is, what perceptions did you develop about the military attitudes about RAND's product and the nature of the presentation of those products? I think control is the operative word to be considered there. What was it, in your view, that the military wanted in terms of control over the RAND activity, based on your experience?

LINDBLOM: I don't recall that I was concerned that there was any particular conclusion that the military wanted to come to. They just didn't want to be confronted with a study which they saw as having many judgmental aspects which could be used to clobber them and so they wanted to be in on it. And when they saw the judgmental aspects leading to trouble for them, they wanted to express their judgments, contrary to the RAND judgments.

COLLINS: I guess what's interesting, perhaps, is that there seems to be a symmetry in part of this activity, and that is that RAND staff members underappreciate the political character of their advisory activity, but on the Air Force side they're very, very much aware of the political function of knowledge and how it ties into their mission and their political objectives. I am just throwing that out more as an observation, and you can comment on it if you wish.

LINDBLOM: Maybe one should refine it a little bit. The way you formulated the Air Force position, it is as though the Air Force had a deep and profound appreciation of how knowledge is used in society. That probably overstates the refinement of their understanding. In some cases they wanted judgment not as a form

of knowledge, but as a way of attacking knowledge. They, for various reasons, had particular positions which they thought were very important. They weren't embarrassed about them necessarily, but were eager to hold to them and make the case for them. To hell with knowledge, in a sense. That is, some of these things were so important, for reasons they did not wholly understand and articulate, that they should be held to some of these positions, even if mountains of knowledge seemed to argue against them.

COLLINS: A last issue to explore before we stop is this notion of independence, something that was highly valued in concept at RAND. What many of your memos seem to deal with is the kind of relationship that RAND had with the Air Force, the kind of institution it was. This notion of independence didn't really quite fit, and perhaps comparing that to the university situation might be the best way to get at what this means or signifies. I'm not really quite sure how to pursue this, but it seems to me a pivotal, symbolic concept in this context, and one around which the military and RAND have differing perceptions.

LINDBLOM: Yes. Let me say a few things and see if they help at all, then you come back with further questions if I'm off on an inappropriate tangent. Let's start with a notion that is deeply embedded in the academic culture, the idea that a scholar should be independent. That is, he is guided by such values he chooses, comes to what conclusions he wants, and though he may take his subject problem or subject matter from somebody else, chooses voluntarily. He's got to maintain, over a longer period of time, some ability to withdraw from any contractual possibilities which temporarily reduce his independence by signing him up to agree to work on a project possibly chosen by somebody else. He has to have long-term independence on his project choice, and on any given project, however chosen, he's got to be independent in the range of topics he can consider, the source of information he has, and the conclusions he comes to.

Now, given that deeply embodied value and claim that scholars want to make, they really haven't thought this independence issue through at all very carefully because, for example, they will assume that working for government does not compromise their independence, leaving the military aside, but working for private organizations does. Why? Working for a civilian branch of government, because it pursues the common good, does not compromise or put under doubt their independence. Yet working for a corporation, trade union, the National Rifle Association, or Common Cause would compromise or subject their independence to challenge. Now governments do not wholly pursue the public interest, sometimes not at all. Governments pursue a mixture of private gain for elites and some objectives which might be dignified with the name of public interest. But real world governments being what they are, they cannot be credited

with an unwavering pursuit of any public interest, and any public interest is only one partisan concept among many competing partisan concepts of public interest anyway. There is no one objectively established public interest. So to work for government is to be partisan in the sense that at best, the public interest you're pursuing is a version of the public interest, somebody's version, not everybody's. And much of the time working for government is working for an exploiting elite.

Hence, working for government is like working for private organizations. Like government, they don't simply pursue the public interest either, and to the extent that they do, it is a partisan interpretation of public interest, as in Common Cause is, for example.

Whether working for government or for private organizations, we social scientists are always inevitably engaged in work which is partisan and, on other grounds, of questionable relation to the public good. RAND people hadn't thought this through. Social scientists generally haven't thought this through. They consequently feel an obligation not to work for many organizations and causes which really need their help and deserve to have their help in a pluralistic world of competing interests, in which there isn't any one hierarchically valid, top-down central definition of what serves the public good. These considerations (admittedly of an iffy theoretical abstract kind) bear on RAND. What I was playing around with, in some of my comments, was to try to suggest to RAND that its conception of what's required for independence was to some degree not well thought out, to some degree naive, and in any case to some degree crippling because it constrained them in responding more fully to the partisan interests, which are valid interests in the pluralistic society, of the Air Force. Is any of this relevant to your question?

COLLINS: Yes, it is.

LINDBLOM: But follow that up if you want.

COLLINS: One reading you can give, your characterization of the ambivalences among the RAND staff about their role and the attitudes they ought to be taking towards the Air Force, is the sense that they wanted political power and influence without being political. And one way of reading your counsel to them is that if you want those things, you have to be attuned to political things in your role and in a political dynamic.

LINDBLOM: Well, the way you put it seems to be a criticism of excessive ambition, and I didn't see it that way. I didn't see RAND people as wanting power in a sense that that's ugly or inappropriate for a scholar, thus ambition to rule the world. It

is just that they wanted consequences to follow from their work. Like a carpenter who wants to make something, the RAND people wanted to think that their work bore fruit. You can say they wanted to be powerful, but I think it captures the spirit of most of their careers, not all of them but most of them, to say they wanted their work to bear fruit. To bear fruit, of course, it had to be powerful as an influence. But it wasn't power they were after, it was efficacy, a job well done.

COLLINS: I think we can probably leave it at that. Are there any concluding reflections you want to add to our discussion here?

LINDBLOM: No, I think not. Nothing comes to mind in particular.

COLLINS: Okay, why don't we call it a session. Thank you very much.