

## **TOM LAMBRIX EXIT INTERVIEW**

This is an interview with Tom Lambrix in his office, Room 235 of the Old Executive Office Building on January 8, 1981. The interviewer is Emily Soapes of the Presidential Papers Project.

**SOAPES:** You had told me on the phone when we set this up that you came in March of '78 to DPS. I would have to assume that you had some background in energy work. Am I right on that?

**LAMBRIX:** [I had] some background on energy. Let me give you my background. I was an employee of the Department of the Interior, and I was in a management program with the Department at the time. Essentially, the program provided for short-term job assignments for the people in the program, and as a part of that I worked at the Executive Office in the Office of Management and Budget and through that came over to the Domestic Policy Staff in the energy and natural resources cluster. [At] the outset it was to be a short-term assignment, and it was extended and extended and extended, and then finally I took a position as assistant director on the Domestic Policy Staff and left the Interior.

**SOAPES:** And then, you were going to set me straight, after Kitty Schirmer left, did you assume the associate director title?

**LAMBRIX:** No. Kitty Schirmer was associate director at the time that I joined, and there were two assistant director slots. Kitty left and they picked the new associate director, and I stayed an assistant director.

**SOAPES:** At the beginning of the administration, I've been told, there was a tremendous flurry of activity here on the second floor working on the initial energy proposals for the President. When you came in March of '78, energy had been a watchword in this administration. What were the early initiatives that you were working on?

**LAMBRIX:** Well, the cluster here does not only energy work. We do energy, natural resources, and environment. So essentially, all of the programs that would come through the Departments of Energy, Interior, Environmental Protection Agency, U.S. Forest Service, and some of the functions of the Department of Commerce would all come through here on their way to the President. We divided things up on issue lists, so I covered areas in all of those departments, but Kitty and then Erica did the bulk of the energy work. When I got here in 1978, I began working on issues in the water

resources area, the minerals development area, and then the solar energy area initially.

**SOAPES:** You mean working, to begin with, on what became the solar energy bank?

**LAMBRIX:** Yes, eventually. A year later the work on the solar energy issue was a Presidential review memo set up under the Domestic Policy review process. It was one of the memos that was done. Interagency studies, with recommendations to the President, eventually culminated in June of '79 in the President's solar energy policy message to the Congress. And I was one of the two principal DPS people involved in that.

**SOAPES:** Let's take solar energy as an example, the way that becomes something that is recommended to the Congress and goes through--start how it comes to you.

**LAMBRIX:** The solar energy issue, as I said, was one of a number of major policy issues that was selected to undergo the domestic policy review process which is a process that was set up when the President reorganized the Executive Offices, and that's how it was set up. Essentially, it provided for an identified group of Cabinet officers and heads of agencies to organize a staff to work with the Executive Office, analyze the issue, develop policy options, and eventually make recommendations to the President. And we worked on a regular basis with the staffs and the agencies, and eventually it was the responsibility of the Domestic Policy Staff to refine the recommendations and prepare the paperwork and write the memo. And the President would ultimately make his decisions from it.

**SOAPES:** And this Presidential review memo system was probably introduced by Stu Eizenstat, right?

**LAMBRIX:** Well, it was introduced when they reorganized the Executive Office. Stu, obviously, had a lot to do with it, but the others were involved. There were other issues that went through. There was a non-fuel minerals study. There was one on industrial innovation, one on youth employment, and probably four or five others, but we won't talk about them right now.

**SOAPES:** Your boss, Stu Eizenstat, has often been speaking on energy related topics. Now, does he rely, to a great extent, on what the energy, natural resources, environment cluster can tell him? He's had an interagency task force which, I assume, this cluster has been involved in, is that right?

**LAMBRIX:** Well, on overall energy policy matters, Stuart relied extensively on the advice of his staff, and that is his cluster. He also worked very closely with the Cabinet

secretaries and the other policy people in the relevant agencies in the Department of Energy. And in the beginning before we had a Department of Energy, Stuart and his staff played a larger role. And then after the Department was created, of course, we played a staff role advising the President in conjunction with the Secretary of Energy. So, yes, he relied very heavily on the staff.

**SOAPES:** The Department of Energy, for this election, took a great deal of political fallout. Just the creation was sharply criticized. Has that caused your work in energy--does that cause you any--is that something that you have to deal with?

**LAMBRIX:** Well, you have to deal with the political fallout, no question about it. Whether or not an agency functions effectively is also an element that enters our work. But I think they're two different things and we deal with political reactions all the time. And, you know, we do our best to be as cooperative, work efficiently with the agency as we can. Any time you set up an energy--a department the size of the Energy Department, you naturally experience the growing pains, and I think the Department of Energy has certainly been criticized for more than its fair share of growing pains. So there has been some difficulty there. But, I don't want to say that it's been an overriding factor.

**SOAPES:** Yes. If you're in an advisory role to the President, one of the people that I interviewed said that he wanted to make clear the point that, I believe he stated, "Creative thinking should go on at the agency level. The White House Staff was here to advise the President, to get the creative thinking from the department." That was his point.

**LAMBRIX:** I think that's a fair statement. The Domestic Policy Staff, it seems to me, cannot be experts in energy or on any other issue. I mean, we're generalists by nature. We handle a whole lot of issues and usually the ones that are the most important at that particular time. There's a fair amount of reactionary management, although we try to do our best to stay on top of things. But people who are specialists ought to be and are in the departments, and I have relied on their advice. At the same time, we are the eyes and the ears of the President outside just officials of government. We do coordinate a great deal with people outside the government to get their advice as well.

**SOAPES:** Did you work on any other, we'll stay on energy and then I'll go back to the water and mineral policy. Did you work on any of the other pieces of legislation proposed in the energy field?

**LAMBRIX:** Yes I did. The energy act, the five act, the national comprehensive energy program had already been proposing things by the time I had gotten here. But I did

participate, in addition to the solar PRM [Presidential Review Memorandum], in issues on heavy oil decontrol, a major recommendation to the Congress for developing the oil and gas potential of the national petroleum reserve in Alaska, the whole gasohol and renewable energy program, and the development of the Energy Security Act which produced the Synfuel Corporation, and other programs including the solar energy plan.

**SOAPES:** Decontrol of oil [is a] hot issue. What kind of decision process, say, on the decontrol of heavy oil did you have to go through in this office?

**LAMBRIX:** Well, we made a determination that we would decontrol heavy crude oil, without getting too much in the details of the substance of it. But we did that because we felt that the cost of trying to produce heavy crude was so high that it justified immediate decontrol as opposed to phasing control which was the rest of the program. The question became, "How do you determine which is heavy and which isn't heavy?" Of course, many proponents--people on the production side of the business--wanted a liberal definition because it would obviously create more money, and we needed to work with the experts in the Department of Energy and people in industry, look at their data on production figures and cost figures and try to arrive at a reasonable definition which was consistent with our overall policy of phase decontrol, generally. But we wanted to stimulate production of that oil which otherwise would probably stay in the ground unless we immediately decontrolled. So we worked very closely with people in the industry and the government.

**SOAPES:** You had no trouble selling the President on the idea?

**LAMBRIX:** Not to my knowledge. The initial decision in April of--the years are running on here--when the energy message came out in April of '79, we had heavy oil decontrolled immediately at what was defined as sixteen degrees API. We then reviewed that decision and decided that it was appropriate to decontrol heavy crude oil up to twenty degrees API, and that's the decision that went back to the President who said, "Let's go to a vote."

**SOAPES:** To what extent would the problem that--everyone realizes there is a problem--energy is going to run out. To what extent is there the temptation to take the "sky is falling" attitude? I mean, you've got to make long-term plans, but something's got to be done short-term too?

**LAMBRIX:** Well, I think that there's a lot of that, a lot of that. There's a lot of pressure brought to bear on the decision-makers. And, in my experience here, that's one of the keys to working here, being able to deal with that pressure and decipher out what's really critical and what isn't. But yeah, there's a whole lot of pressure to try and follow

the "sky is falling" attitude, and you get it from all sides. You get it from the development side of an issue in energy. You get it from the preservation side of the issue as well. But I think that if you're doing your job well it becomes fairly clear what your universe of potential actions are, which are the most feasible. At some point the choice is difficult [inaudible].

**SOAPES:** Yeah, they're hard choices obviously.

**LAMBRIX:** That's right, and all I'm saying is that if it was easy, we would have solved it a long time ago.

**SOAPES:** Let's talk first about the Camp David, March '79, energy summit. Did you have any input into that?

**LAMBRIX:** No I did not. You might check with Kitty. As I said, at that point Kitty Schirmer was doing almost all of the energy policy advice to Stuart. At that point I was still working as a detail for her. You're better off asking Kitty.

**SOAPES:** And then what about the Camp David Summit then that summer that resulted in the Cabinet shake-ups? The President was going to give an energy speech. The energy speech was cancelled. The President calls everyone up to Camp David and stays up there a couple of weeks, and it ended up with a Cabinet shake-up. Would that again be something that Kitty Schirmer would have been the energy person?

**LAMBRIX:** Yes, I think that's fair to say, for the most part. I had very little to do with that.

**SOAPES:** You knew what was going on, but that was basically...

**LAMBRIX:** Yes, but I didn't know all that was going on.

**SOAPES:** Let's see, the Vienna Summit was also that year.

**LAMBRIX:** Kitty.

**SOAPES:** Kitty. Well, we're going to have to get Kitty sometime. That's all there is to it. Okay, let's go then to the other things you had worked on which was water policy and mineral policy.

**LAMBRIX:** Water policy.

**SOAPES:** You're going to have to educate me. I can't kid you. I don't know anything about water policy.

**LAMBRIX:** Water policy was one major issue the President took on immediately after taking office. One of his criticisms on the resource side for many people, particularly those in the West, was beginning to be known as the hit list. The hit list was a list of water projects, water development projects, which he proposed internally shortly after taking office, and that created a good deal of controversy. And then shortly after that his staff here in the White House and in the agencies developed the comprehensive water policy reform program which they forwarded to Congress, and it really tried to change, fundamentally, the way the federal government involves itself in the funding of water resource projects. Traditionally, that whole program has pretty much been the prerogative of Congress with marginal input on the formulation side from the executive branch of government.

**SOAPES:** They tend to be what Carter called "pork barrel" type issues?

**LAMBRIX:** That phrase was used a lot. So when I came on to it, I began working on that issue, and I must say that we've had limited success with this program because the Congress has, in my view--my feelings about it are that the Congress was polarized pretty quickly through the hit list process. And we were constantly kind of at odds all the time. Our reforms for cost sharing, where the states would pay some part of a cost for getting our ideas on conservation and environmental quality built into the calculations, met with limited success. And even in the waning days of the last Congress, they pretty well debated fairly heavily on whether or not new federal projects should be authorized. So, it's a difficult issue. It's still very much unsolved. [It] requires a good deal more work and analysis, and I suspect that the next President and probably the one after that will still be involved in trying to reform that issue.

**SOAPES:** Meaning making decisions of where the projects should be?

**LAMBRIX:** And whether they should be. In other words, you're spending taxpayers dollars, it's a fairly sizeable program investment, and rightfully so in my view. The President felt that we ought to be doing that to achieve efficiency and economic effectiveness goals as well as environmental quality goals. But that means that some projects which are really not cost effective aren't going to get built, and traditionally people are pretty used to getting projects in their districts back home without too much trouble, and it creates problems. And it grows not only for the traditional large-scale dams, but for navigation improvements in waterways to irrigation projects out West and has a lot to do with, you know, driving or determining growth or whether growth will occur. So it affects a larger issue.

**SOAPES:** It could very definitely affect the administration's support on other matters?

**LAMBRIX:** Yes it can very much so. But on the positive side, we have instituted some reforms to take better account of fish and wildlife matters in developing projects. We fought very hard on the endangered species program, for example, yet there's one project, the Tellico Dam in Tennessee, that we had opposed and ultimately ended up signing, reluctantly, because the Congress was persistent in trying to get it.

**SOAPES:** It's really stayed in the news for a long time.

**LAMBRIX:** Even right now we have a project, the new Melones Dam on the Stanislaus River in California, that you have a federal investment of upwards of \$300 million in a dam that is now complete on the river, yet there are a number of really concerned people who feel that if we allow the water to back up behind the dam, we will flood a very beautiful river canyon and eliminate recreational opportunities. And it's extremely emotional. We have, I understand, there are people right now chaining themselves into the canyon, and it's on the news. The issues are not going to go away. I think on the plus side, though, what we have done is awakened people to the need to take a better look at this side, the need to look at how federal tax dollars are going in this area. Traditionally, they've been rural Western, Southwestern, Southeastern beneficiaries and the cities now, Boston and New York, [are] screaming that the water supply systems are in terrible shape and maybe some of these tax dollars ought to go up there. That's wholly another big economic issue. There's a lot to be done.

**SOAPES:** And yet you read political power is shifting to the South and Southwest, well actually the West and Southwest.

**LAMBRIX:** That's right, and it has a lot to do with that. So, in terms of the Domestic Policy Staff, Kathy Fletcher was the person in this job right here who worked most heavily on the Domestic Policy point of view with the agencies in developing the overall reform program. And it was a cooperative effort, an interagency effort again, in developing recommendations and presenting them to the President.

**SOAPES:** To what extent do you deal with the public in Domestic Policy Staff? I would think that, say the people in California on the Stanislaus River who are irritated might go to the Interior.

**LAMBRIX:** No, they come here.

**SOAPES:** Do they come here?

**LAMBRIX:** I just got off the phone with one about ten minutes before you got here. My view has been, since I've been in this job, that part of my job is to be informed and to know as much about an issue as I can, and that includes all sides. So I've had an open door policy. If an industry group wants to come in to tell me their views, at the same time I'll listen to the other side and encourage them to come in and talk. So I do meet with the public, you know, a fair amount. I think it's important that we get other views, other than just what people from an agency tell us. That's important, and at the same time you need to keep up with the political side of the equation as well.

**SOAPES:** And you said you had also wanted to limit policy. Now is this mining?

**LAMBRIX:** Yes. There was a study initiated, again before I got here, that was called the nonfuel minerals domestic policy review which, like the solar program, was another domestic policy review issue. A big interagency group and staff worked for months and months on trying to get the issue about development of our mineral resources. Should the federal government policies be encouraging industry to get at minerals? Should we be looking at our federal lands policies so we can get at them more or less? What about our import dependency for certain minerals? What does it mean? What about our tax policies toward industries in this area? What about our environmental regulations? Are they inhibiting mineral development, working to the benefit of society? So those issues were identified and analyzed by this group and again following the same process, recommendations to the President.

**SOAPES:** And what accomplishments can you point to on that?

**LAMBRIX:** The President did not, like he did in the solar program, send a message to Congress. In fact, it was fairly low key. What we did, pretty much, was request the National Security Council to do a further short-term analysis of our import dependency on four specific strategic minerals that are potentially important for national security because the first study identified this as a critical area, and that is now underway and probably nearing conclusion. We also centralized the data gathering and analytic ability of federal government in one bureau, the Bureau of Mines over in the Interior Department, and that was about it. One of the problems, and it's a problem with the whole domestic policy review process which I think never worked really well, is that it was designed to originally defrost the Cabinet government, defrost the public input to the decision making process of critical importance. Well, what has happened, in the ones that I'm familiar with, is that you're out there in public hearings, you're identifying a lot of issues and advertently or inadvertently you generate a good deal of public expectations about what the President is going to do in this area even before you've decided whether or not it's critical to do anything. So then what you've got is a series of



recommendations or a longer list of items which the President may or may not do, and if you don't do them all those people will be disappointed. I think, in terms of Presidential decision making, it's, in my view, not been the best way to go about it. I think public input is important. I think we should continue, of course, but I think we need to refine how we put forth the issues in a way that allows the President's staff to have some control and to--which protects him, protects his decision making, protects his flexibility.

**SOAPES:** That's a very important point. It would raise expectations that the President is going to do something about what I'm griping about.

**LAMBRIX:** Yes, they tried to model the domestic policy review process after the National Security Council's PRM [Presidential Review Memo] process. It might be that you can't do that. The PRM process for NSC works well, but it's usually classified stuff, and it's very discrete and very narrowly focused on a specific problem. In the case of minerals, the problem was huge and very complicated, and it was difficult to deal with when there were that many issues and you raise so many levels of expectation. Then if you don't do something, the whole process is looked at as a terrible failure.

**SOAPES:** In each of the issues that you undertook through this review process, did you have a set way of going about it? I mean, did you go to say four areas, or was there some process that you had to--

**LAMBRIX:** Yes, the process was fairly well defined, but the two that I'm familiar with, worked on, the soil one and the minerals one, were very broad in scope, and at some point in the process I made a series of recommendations to Stu on ways to improve this, to narrow it and to allow the Domestic Policy Staff to have a little bit more control. And I think that had he done that, we would have had better progress in both those studies. Both the studies were fairly well criticized by many folks; the content, the analytic integrity.

**SOAPES:** And you see that as the big cause of it?

**LAMBRIX:** I see it as a problem.

**SOAPES:** Well, that really is one of the things that I was going to ask, was things that have not been done that you would have liked to have done if you'd had another four years, or things that you would have improved upon you just mentioned.

**LAMBRIX:** Okay. I think I would've done some serious thinking about, obviously, domestic energy development, and you need to do it in a way that increases our energy security as quickly as possible, but still allows us to keep in place as much of the

environmental safeguard that we've got as we can. I think, though, that I would have supported a re-analysis of many of our regulatory programs, especially of some of our environmental regulations.

I would have seen if we could have increased our multiple use management concept in a number of areas in public lands rather than just saying that all of this area should be for oil and gas, and all of this area over here should be wilderness, and here is where we can increase multiple use.

In the energy area also, I think we would have had to stimulate our coal production, and in regards to that we would have had to take a--we were beginning to do that--look at our infrastructure in terms of coal, and that is coal transportation, our navigation systems, our ports, in terms of exports. I think we always took the first step with the--that would have been an area to continue.

In the environmental area, I think we would have tried to take a look at the Clean Air Act, and by that I mean not studying the Clean Air Act, but seeing how effective it's been and where we can modify it without causing problems and where could we strengthen it? And, in terms of our resource protection programs, I think the President's program in Alaska is probably--will be a major element in his, I'm sure, in history viewing him as the largest conservationist President, the biggest conservationist President the country's ever had. His environmental record is unparalleled. And it's really a proud achievement, I think. The Alaska lands issue is one that we would have had to probably clean up since it's so complicated.

**SOAPES:** This is the one that was just signed?

**LAMBRIX:** Just signed December 2. And that was another major area I worked on, the Alaska lands project.

**SOAPES:** And when you say worked on, does that include calling Congressmen? Does it include working--

**LAMBRIX:** Working with our Congressional Liaison people on lobbying the bill. Lobbying is the wrong word, in working up the bill, working up the staffs. On a regular basis I would be the focal point for having the Department of Agriculture, the Department of the Interior, the Council on Environmental Quality, Ann Wexler's people, Congressional Liaison [inaudible] status, and what do we need to do, and let's get going, and then the environmental community would come in here en masse and tell me what the President really needs to do. And loyal folks would meet me and say what the President really needs to do. And Domestic Policy Staff, appropriately, serves as a

good focal point for all of that, and had, constantly, to make sure he was apprised, when it was appropriate for Stu to be meeting with Secretary Andrus and Secretary Bergland and Secretary Duncan on the issues. And he was informed as these things went along so that eventually you did get legislation through for the President to sign. I'm sure there are other areas that I want to--I would have wanted to see us get into. I'd have to do some more thinking on that.

**SOAPES:** You haven't sat down yet and--

**LAMBRIX:** Yes. I had done some thinking on it, and I transmitted a memo to Stu on it before the election, but I'd have to think it through in a little more detail. But it covered those areas that I mentioned to you, and it covered others as well. Hazardous waste cleanup issue was another one that we won on. I wasn't the lead staff member, another gentleman, R.D. Folsom, was the other assistant director.

**SOAPES:** I've worked on picking up his records.

**LAMBRIX:** He worked on that, and that was a significant achievement for the President, and we would have had to follow up on that.

**SOAPES:** After the election in November, what did that mean to your office, and when did you have to stop planning and just finish up implementing what had gone through?

**LAMBRIX:** For the most part, although after the election, my experience has been that there are a series of new proposals that come in because people want the President to do it before he leaves office, and they fear that the next President won't be interested in it. So I'm spending all of my time now on having to deal with issues that they want the President to do before he leaves. And Stanislaus River is one issue. You have these people chained to a rock. And there are some energy issues, too.

**SOAPES:** So the work in your office certainly has—

**LAMBRIX:** It has slowed down. It had slowed down significantly, but then it sort of picked up here, too, [with] these last minute requests to do things.

**SOAPES:** I am struck by the title of the office being energy and also linking environment with it.

**LAMBRIX:** They're inseparable. And that to me, in fact, the energy-environment interface is an area that we would have had to really watch. I mean, we've got a domestic energy program with goals for synfuels production, and synfuels production requires digging up the land. It requires a hell of a lot of water. And you just can't

do--unless you do it right, it takes a lot of thinking and a lot of planning and a lot of input from a lot of people, and that's an area that the next administration will have to be involved in.

**SOAPES:** Yes, I was going to ask what that future outlook--

**LAMBRIX:** What do you mean?

**SOAPES:** In this area.

**LAMBRIX:** Well, it depends on who you talk to. It's hard to tell. I'm obviously not aware of the, inside the thinking of the next administration, but from what I've been able to gather, issues which will be major policy issues for the next administration in the energy area are the role of the government in fostering the production of synthetic fuels. We supported the Synthetic Fuels Corporation which we have established. There is some question as to the degree of the enthusiasm for the next administration. [It] will be a major issue in that area, accelerated domestic production of oil and gas both from the outer continental shelf as well as onshore, accelerated--all forms of domestic production that leaks out, that would be an issue.

Then the trade-off of preserving lands versus developing them. In the environmental areas the clean air act would be the first major test of this Congress, the 97th Congress, in terms of the regulatory policy, the environment/development controversy. And then the access question, access to lands versus locking them up. It's not clear. The environmental community is, from what I can gather, pretty well cautious or not satisfied with the President-elect's designate for the Secretary of the Interior. Reagan is a developer, so that will be interesting to watch the kind of direction he wants that Department to take. Because that Department is so multi-faceted, it has huge programs which deal with preservation and a whole lot of stuff that deals with development, constantly internally at battle. And the guidance from the top, whether you steer it one way or the other, is kind of a critical thing, and it will be interesting to see how that goes.

EPA, who knows? I'd see a downplaying in EPA with transferring as much as possible back to the state level. I see more emphasis on property from the development side; preservation, development, and correction. Whether or not that's the right thing to do remains to be seen. I think it is the right thing to do myself. That's my own belief in many case, carefully.

**SOAPES:** And in the future, where would we best get in touch with you, say in three to five years? Do you have an alumni association perhaps that always knows where you

are or your parents address?

**LAMBRIX:** The alumni association sends half my mail to my parents' address. I don't know, let's see, in three to five years I hope to be in town. My parents, well I assume my home address in town is on the record. Do you want me to give you my home address?

**SOAPES:** If you don't mind.

**LAMBRIX:** Okay. It's 4988 DeQuincey Drive, Fairfax, Virginia 22032. My parents address is Houston, Texas.

**SOAPES:** And are they Tom Lambrix's, too?

**LAMBRIX:** James R. Lambrix, Sr. assuming they're still there. That's got to be tough for you to get where people will be in five years.

**SOAPES:** Yes, it's tough for the people, and when you ask for a permanent address and people are going away, of course, they don't know. But some people say, "Yes, my alumni association always knows where I am to call me for money."

**LAMBRIX:** Well, why don't you put down Rutgers University Alumni Association, because right now they have my accurate address.

**SOAPES:** Yes, and the more possibilities we've got, the more places we may find--. Another reason that--it's very evident that if I'm trying to do fifty interviews in the space of two months, I am not an expert on energy, water and mineral policy, in addition to what everybody else does. When you've got time to go into depth then, you might have a very different kind of interview, but thank you very much for talking about--

**LAMBRIX:** It was fun. I don't know how the others on Domestic Policy Staff have reacted, but I think that this staff has functioned very well, generally, and has given the President, as far as I'm concerned, good advice--fair, objective advice. People have done good analysis, and I think his decisions benefited from it.

**SOAPES:** It's certainly been much more prominent than in previous administrations.

**LAMBRIX:** I think so. It's hard for me to tell.

**SOAPES:** And, of course, Stu Eizenstat, being one of his closest advisers, I'm sure

that's very much a reason.

**LAMBRIX:** I think that this type of a staff advising him immediately in the office of the President is good. I don't follow their strict Cabinet government theory if it's implemented to its fullest extent.

**SOAPES:** Many have tried but few have succeeded on that?

**LAMBRIX:** It's difficult. I think that you can certainly improve, you know, try to make it work. In my view, the Cabinet Secretaries are critical and ought to be first line advisers to the President. Obviously, they are in the departments' line of functions, but I think strong, centralized staff wise in here loyal only to the President is good.

**SOAPES:** And you worked both in the agency and the White House staff?

**LAMBRIX:** Yes, I spent six years in the Department of the Interior.

**SOAPES:** When you're in the agency, people have said to me, you think the White House staff is where the power is, and yet somebody said, "When I got to the White House, I found out I couldn't do a thing."

**LAMBRIX:** Well, I certainly found that I had a whole lot more influence here than they did over there, and you're dealing at a higher level, too. But, I think that if you balance power carefully enough, ultimately the decision-maker will benefit. So I think that it's good to have some reasonable discourse or friction between some of the White House senior advisers and some of the Cabinet people. I think if it's done correctly, it's healthy.

**SOAPES:** That was FDR's theory of administration, in a way, have competing elements that work on the same problem.

**LAMBRIX:** They don't always have to compete, but I think that you get different perspectives. Our advice to the President may provide a different perspective than the Secretary's advice. I think unquestionably the Cabinet Secretary has the mind for it, and the President, in my view, ought to turn to the Cabinet Secretary. And at the same time, a kind of generalist staff view is useful. I mean, I'm kind of biased having been one, I guess.

**SOAPES:** Did you find a certain amount of--I'll use jealousy which may be too strong a word--jealousy in the departments for the power they thought that the White House staff, specifically DPS, would have?

**LAMBRIX:** Yes, I think you're going to find that. And I think that if you look back, you could probably do a fairly common trace in terms of the record of any four-year President. By the third year many Cabinet Secretaries have sort of defined their own turf. That's when the discourse starts to increase. But one of the most useful roles for a staff such as this is that on many, many issues the President is getting different and counter advice from one or two or more Cabinet Secretaries. And this staff serves to kind of be the neutral presenter of that and then provide their own advice. And the competition is often among the Cabinet Secretaries. This staff here is, without a stake in the outcome theoretically, able to provide a different perspective.

**SOAPES:** Yes, I would think that would be one of the more important functions of the Domestic Policy Staff.

**LAMBRIX:** Yes, it is. Sometimes we're referees.

**SOAPES:** That's a good way of putting it, yes. Coordinators.

**LAMBRIX:** Coordinators, yes, but we certainly, at least in my view, have the authority, if we've done our job right, to present our own opinions and influence the results, too.

**SOAPES:** On the various issues that you've worked on, some of the energy ones, water policy and mineral policy, how--you mentioned the Alaska Lands Bill, you thought that was going to really be one of the items the President was judged in history very well for, what are the areas that you've worked on besides that? How do you think the evaluation--?

**LAMBRIX:** I think that this President tackled the tough issues, generally. His comprehensive energy policy is, I think, going to be an historical achievement as well as his overall position on environmental protection. But it requires difficult choices. It puts the President in a difficult situation. He recognized that if we're going to get a handle on this energy situation, we're going to have to raise the prices. To raise prices is politically improper. At the same time, if we're going to increase domestic energy production, we may not be able to protect all the environmental stuff that we want, so that causes a problem there. He made some very difficult choices, but that's why you admire him. You elect leaders to make those decisions, and I think this President did not shun that. He faced them square and took some politically unpopular routes. I think, historically, that may be there because in the Alaska situation you can argue that it was too environmental or it was too developmental. Personally, I think that it's a very, very strong environmental result, and it allows for development. It's fairly balanced, yet it's doubled the National Park system and tripled the size of the wilderness system. It's unbelievable. I think his legislative record is very good compared with Kennedy and

Johnson--better.

**SOAPES:** That must make you feel pretty good about the last almost three years.

**LAMBRIX:** Yes it does. I wouldn't trade it for the world.

**SOAPES:** It's good of you to say. Thank you for talking about it. I really do appreciate it because you know we're getting down to the last few days here, and I wasn't sure you'd have time to do it.