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Chester "Chet" C. Brown
May 30, 1973

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[Side 1 – Tape # 196]

EYEVON INTERVIEW WITH CHESTER C. BROWN

Washington, D.C.

May 30, 1973

[Side 1 Tape #196]

DRAFT

TRANSCRIBER: Charles Kennedy

06/10/76

[START OF INTERVIEW]

Herbert Evison: This is the morning of May 30, 1973. I'm Herb Evison and this morning I'm back again in the penthouse studio on top of the Interior Building and with me for the second time in a couple of weeks is Chester "Chet" Brown. Chet has one or two things that he wants to add to the tape that I made of him week before last, so the floor is yours Chet.

Chet Brown: Well, thanks, Herb. We had our long talk a few days back. Somehow, I missed mention of the World Heritage Trust, perhaps because it was so important and obvious. The idea of the World Heritage has developed over a number of years of course and no one person can take lone responsibility for it. I'm sure many people thought of the idea. Among those taking a lead, however, I think it would be appropriate to mention Judge Trane, now at C.E.Q. and to Harold Coolidge, now President Emeritus of I.U.C.N., but at the time he was president of it. Both of them played a very important part in background in this country for it. On top of that a special emphasis was placed by President Nixon in his environmental message in January 1971, at which time he called special attention to the potential for a world heritage trust and suggested that the United States develop an initiative for a trust which would include both natural and cultural areas of worldwide significance and that we make a – an initiative which could be presented to the proper international forum as it might move towards an international document. This was shortly before I came in with the – with International affairs, and so I inherited some small background beginnings and then got involved myself. At that time UNESCO had already been developing a draft of a convention in this general nature, but primary accent on cultural since that was their prime business in the United Nations. At the same time I.U.C.N., the International Union for the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources, had been developing one which was parallel, but gave balance both natural and cultural areas. Following the President's message, we, in the Park Service or the Department of Interior, picked up the thread, somewhat began developing a revived version really of the I.U.C.N. one. One that would cover both and which we thought put it in a little better perspective than the one I.U.C.N. had been developing. During the fall of September '71 there was a special work group meeting under the United Nations in New York. This was a work group on international conventions and was a preparatory step

prior to the Stockholm Conference on Human Environment and at that time a group went up from Washington here to that work group session. It included Ambassador Core from the State Department, included Lee Talbot and Bob Conn (Kahan?) from C.E.Q., Bob Garvey under the National Park Service in relation to the historic trust and myself, and we ran into a sort of a buzzsaw up there.

Chet Brown: The I.U.C.N. had a draft they wanted tabled. UNESCO wanted to table theirs which was on the cultural side. It was pretty clear there was a schism between groups and the idea of merging the two or coming up with one that would balance between cultural and natural areas sure fell between the desks at that time.

Herbert Evison: Let me ask you a question.

Chet Brown: Yes.

Herbert Evison: You speak of each of these wanting to table their proposals.

Chet Brown: Yeah.

Herbert Evison: Now that I take to mean to just postpone?

Chet Brown: No. This is an interesting thing. One of the things that I have been amused to find getting into international – international affairs is the different uses of the word. In our Congress to table means to set aside.

Herbert Evison: Yeah.

Chet Brown: In international language it means to present to a group for action. Just the reverse – to place on the table for action.

Herbert Evison: Yeah.

Chet Brown: And that's what was meant there. Well, anyway, without getting into too many details, that meeting after about a week ended up with the recommendation that UNESCO proceed with the development of its version giving primary emphasis to cultural areas this sort of – and would the I.U.C.N. allowed to proceed in the development of one which would be concerned primarily with natural but not with historic cultural. Actually these, neither of these were really quite consistent with what we in the service would think nor would the President's suggestion for one development of both and so during that winter we were trying to figure how to get at this. It became pretty clear to me that unless things were proceeding neither of them would fly and then we'd end up with no convention, and sometime about January of '72 I saw an opportunity to have a meeting between assistant secretary Reed, Director Hartzog, Lee Talbot, a representative from State, myself, and Garvey at which we might

lay our cards right on the table and see if we couldn't talk that out and decide to move toward an initiative again which might properly combine balanced representation of natural and cultural, and we did this and we did arrive at – at a consensus that we would move ahead on that basis. We advised UNESCO of what we were doing.

Chet Brown: We suggested that we would be putting together such a draft which we hoped they would be willing to table in this international sense at their meeting of experts in April of '72, at which the convention would be, and they seemed to be agreeable to this. We moved ahead and April came around. We had a delegation from the United States going over to Paris. We were fortunate in getting a very sharp and a very able young chief delegate from the State Department, Carl Salans.

Herbert Evison: Better spell that.

Chet Brown: S-A-L-A-N-S. He was deputy chief legal advisor in the State Department. Very young, but very able, and along with him as part of the delegation was again Ambassador Core, Bob Garvey, and myself. We got over there. There were sixty nations represented for three weeks of meetings. We found a considerable resistance to the idea of the United States asking them, they having been working on one for two or three years, to set theirs aside and to do ours. "Oh, you couldn't do it," they said. Well, we were able to get the point across by saying well maybe right you can't, but we think you can. Would you be agreeable to our taking one day with a sub-work group here and – and set up a procedure, and they grudgingly said okay, and from that we moved into it and able to convince them and we had an extremely long and busy week doing this, but in the week we redrafted the total thing throwing UNESCO's out, throwing ours out in part, and coming up with a brand new one we worked over that was in the end accepted by the meeting of experts.

Herbert Evison: Did it involve any particular loss from the American proposal?

Chet Brown: No, we could hardly believe our luck when we got through, though there were some very tough corners and points in there, but we ended up with one which was constructed with what the President asked and completely acceptable from our standpoint and it did go forward and was presented to Stockholm not for final action because it wasn't a plenipotentiary session, but it was presented and got strong endorsement from them and then as happens within the UNESCO machinery it was presented to their general assembly this last term, oh, October and November in '72. Their general session as they call it and it did go through. It was endorsed by UNESCO and has now been made available to the nations around the world for ratification. In this country it has moved from Interior and State

Department to the President and has gone to the Senate for ratification and we naturally are hopeful that it will be endorsed this year. I've been talking without defining really what a heritage trust is and as a matter of fact the word trust went by the board in the process because, interestingly, we found you cannot translate trust into some languages, specifically France.

Chet Brown:

They have no word for it and it's, so it ended up a World Heritage Convention and, in this sense, it is an international document which would do two or three things. First of all, it would provide machinery which would select, based on recommendations of the nations, it would select areas of worldwide importance from the standpoint of natural areas or the standpoint of historic and archeological areas which are of value to all peoples around the world. It would set them up on a register which would give them special attention. It would provide also a listing of areas endangered on which some problem had to be met and it would provide an international fund, both voluntary and mandatory, which could be made available when an emergency arose in which one of these internationally recognized areas was threatened and where the abilities and wherewithal of the nations involved was inadequate to take care of it. One major point of course, and this is this recognition – the register of areas and the machinery set up under the convention in no way changes or lessens the sovereignty of a nation over the areas that it has. This is a very important point and a completely necessary one in a convention of this sort. Briefly the machinery would establish an international heritage committee to be composed of the start of fifteen nations represented on the among those ratifying. It would go into effect when the twentieth nation ratified. The international committee subsequently could increase to twenty-one after the total number of ratifying nations went to more than forty, I believe, or something like that. The funding ended up as I mentioned in the second ago being partly mandatory and partly voluntary. Many of the developing nations, interestingly, were holding out for funding being mandatory and this was a little surprising. The philosophy in back of this was that they felt it would be desirable to have their nations know at the time they ratified it that they were going to have to put some money in it. The formula as to how much of course wouldn't require much from them. It was limited to not more than one percent of their UNESCO budget so that it really wouldn't hurt them much, but they would have some money in it. Actually, a very interesting situation was here, they were talking about the need for mandatory funding. The United States was almost adamant, that we had to have it voluntary, not because we were afraid of how much money we'd have to put in, but because the rather arbitrary position that we know Congress has, where they do not want to ratify international agreements which require funding. They're perfectly willing to recognize

they were probably voluntarily putting considerably more than the mandatory thing might be, but anyway the final solution of partial mandatory, partial voluntary was worked out. It – it was a bit awkward in a way, but it's perfectly satisfactory to us and we still end up with an international convention which meets all of our criteria and in the long run it won't gallop ahead fast, but I have great hopes for what this might do.

Chet Brown: It is a – it is another international forum where people from all over the world, all types of nations can get together and agree on something which is fundamentally motherhood.

Herbert Evison: Yeah.

Chet Brown: The value of heritage around the world to the people of the world.

Herbert Evison: Where is its headquarters to be?

Chet Brown: It will be headquartered under the convention under UNESCO. Under the United Nations, in turn under UNESCO.

Herbert Evison: Yeah.

Chet Brown: The secretariat is placed under UNESCO with the proviso that they will draw fully on the expertise of I.U.C.N. on the one hand in relation to natural areas, of ICIMOS, another arm of UNESCO in relation to cultural areas, and the so-called Rome Center where training is involved and so probably the – the geographic headquarters will be France, Paris, where UNESCO's headquarters is, but again this formula was one which did prove satisfactory. It took care of some concerns that I.U.C.N. had as to whether there would be balanced representation. It took care of some of the sensitivities of UNESCO where their prime interest had been cultural. It has had one other really quite surprising, and yet very fine reaction having sold this to UNESCO over some real problems in that meeting of experts. UNESCO has now admitted, okay, you have in effect pushed us into balanced consideration for natural and cultural. We're going to reorganize a lot of our other machinery to do the same thing down the line and this is an interesting spin off and a very significant one and a very healthy one, I think. Anyway, I must run. I've got another date and I think that winds up at least a quick pass over on this World Heritage which is a new and an interesting and can be, I think, an extremely significant step.

Herbert Evison: I'm immensely obliged to you, Chet.

[END OF INTERVIEW]