Q Okay.

A The institute as it existed in the '40s helped certainly in a specific mission oriented way with the production of synthesis of materials and chemicals and drugs to which the market was shut off. Well at any rate, one of the people who later became really and I think unfortunately so because of his nature—a person who made life very difficult for me—nevertheless he was an entrepreneur. He was a great impresario. Why, he was actually a journalist and a Zionist who knew nothing about science but Wiseman was his hero. And he actually was running and perhaps more than any one other person responsible for getting certainly the physical steps to that institute.

Q Who was it?

A Well his name was Meyer Weisgam W E I S G A M. And he was able through influencing people in the United States because he originally lived in the United States and continued to be a U.S. citizen, and people in Britain because the sea family played a very important role also in the Balfour Declaration in establishing the first institute, the first institute that Wiseman developed was called the Sea Free Research Institute and later became the Wiseman Institute. At any rate, Mayer Weisgam in his various activities was able to get loans in addition to contributions from rich Jews, a loan from the United States government which helped to provide the physical structure of the home so that this place which was originally as I said sand dunes became transformed in a Garden of Eden. And never
have I seen science being performed under more beautiful physical setting. More beautiful planting. Trees were brought from everywhere. Flowers. It was truly something out of this world. And certainly for Israel it was one of the most beautiful settings you could imagine. And many people, more practical people in Israel very often asked during that period, is this a luxury that Israel can afford and needs and so on. At any rate, quite aside from the fact that it was the most extraordinarily beautiful setting and already had the magnificent structures in which work was going on, and had many excellent people working at the level of really excellence which you will find in the best universities or institutions in the world and with a graduate school already in 1965 that was called an American school abroad because it was really established with an American board of trustees so it had a graduate school attached on to this institute of research. In something that the Rockefeller University did when it became a university, under Bronck did later, adding on a graduate school except that this was already much larger than that of the Rockefeller University, and the difference between that graduate school and that of the Rockefeller was that this graduate school encompassed all the fields of natural sciences and as I said, physics and chemistry and mathematics and the life sciences. Until it was a very, very stimulating--very stimulating place. And as I became involved as a member of, a scientific member of the board of governors and I attended every year the meetings of the board religiously, I got to know the problems of the institute and the problems were very great. Despite all the beauty of the
setting, despite the many first class scientists that were working there, there were many, many problems largely as a result of the fact that this man had no personal experience, the man who was in charge who was running it all the time, and had had several presidents before. I am not going through this in a systematic way. The first president of the Wiseman Institute of course was Wiseman himself who then became president of the country, of Israel at the same time. And then I think he was followed by Eban and then Aba Eban was followed when he became more involved as foreign minister Weisgam himself became president and he continued on and on and what was happening was that each year he would take some scientists out and appoint him as a scientific director. There was no continuity. And invariably Weisgam and the scientific directors would get into arguments so that the scientific director didn't last very long and while he was in he would make decisions. There was no decision making apparatus or mechanism that was worked out, and there was really along side of a good bit of excellence there was also a tremendous amount of bedlam, from the point of view of organization to make this excellent place operate better because just before I came, you see, there was an excellent man who was scientific director but he got into a terrific argument as all the others did with Meyer Weisgam and he quit. And he was a physicist, extraordinarily inspiring man, an inspired man so there were these problems, which I knew. I knew of these problems. And the problems always on making ends meet, of working on, with borrowed money, and doing things on faith. But of course I felt very strongly that all of Israel was built on faith that if you tried to it on,
tried to do everything on a cash basis there would be no Israel, there would be no Wiseman Institute. You had to do things on faith. Things were different in Israel. You had to do things on faith that ultimately somehow or other those debts would be paid back. Either by those people who were dedicated friends of Israel or by increased production in Israel itself and this was '65 you see. This was before the six day war. And then the six day war was another extraordinary shock because Israel again came close to annihilation because the people said how can Israel withstand the onslaught of Egypt with a tremendous military power that or military equipment came there for several weeks all around and of course the six day war came again as an extraordinary revelation of the military development of Israel and the capability to protect itself because it was really on the verge of being annihilated. There was a little less than ten mile strip that divided one part of Israel from another. It could easily have been cut. Well all of this added you see to my constant association going every year, association now with the Wiseman Institute, association with the Hebrew University, and as I said every year I would learn more of the problems of the people who were working for the development of Israel, the problems of the very large proportion of the Arab speaking population. By Arab speaking population I don't mean the Arabs, but already then half of the population of Israel, Jews, had Arabic as its mother tongue, people from a totally different culture who were absorbed in again in a most remarkable historic way. So that when in 1969 Meyer Weisgal gave, who was then already in his seventies, or had reached his seventieth birthday, said alright, now, I am
sorry you will have to find a president. And I was a member of the board still. I knew about this. And a search committee was set up to search for a president. I remember very well the situation. One of the scientific members of the board was a quite remarkable man. His name was Christian Anderson a member of--he was on the staff of the National Institutes of Health who had developed a very close relationship. He worked like many other scientists from other countries who come and work some of the part of the time at the Wiseman Institute, and as a non Jew he had very great esteem. And a very great feeling as a Jewish expression, called a shabus goy which goes back I don't have to explain it to you. You know it, but for those who don't I have to explain it to my own wife, in the old days, in Eastern Europe, the orthodox Jews who wouldn't be allowed to deal with fire or do certain things on the Sabbath, would have a non Jew do certain things for them, and so he was called the shabus goy. And Chris Anderson who was an American of Norweigan stock, Norweigan origin, called himself. He says I am the shabus goy of the Wiseman Institute. Well at any rate, he was on the search committee and Sir Ernst Shane of Britain was on the search committee. And of course I had gotten to know them during my association on the scientific--as a member of the board of governors, and I was in Washington in January, 1969, I got tickets for the inauguration of President Nixon. I was attending the ball and when I get a visit from Chris Anderson, who in a very devious was trying to sound me out as a scientific member of the board of governors as to who I thought might make some candidate for president of the Wiseman
and I thought there were a number of people. And finally he said well, how about you. Would you consider being. Now I was already a more or less a political figure in Israel by then for a very interesting reason.

Because following the war, and all of this is relevant, Following the war of 1967, actually during that period when the very life of Israel was at stake, there was found in the United States, an American committee for peace in the Middle East. And I will not try to recapture the feelings at that time but there were many academics, Jews and non Jews who became involved in this. And I ultimately became chairman of this committee. And early in 1968 we approached both Egypt and Jordan to find out if they would accept certain number of us to come in search of understanding. They knew very well our pro-Israel bias because there were advertisements in the New York Times and everywhere else but we wondered if they would let us come and talk to the leaders and to the decision makers and find out their point of view. To have knowledge, understanding as the basis for some future development. And I did spend, of this committee, there was a small committee. I will not say now but one man was director of the Harvard special--there was a division for Middle East studies and another man was from actually he was a professor of sociology and religion. He represented the national council of churches, a protestant. And there was a young man who was a professor of Eastern studies in the Communist countries. Well at any rate we spent a week in Jordan and a week in Egypt. We really did in depth studies. And always it falls on the chairman because after the thing was over
incidentally from Egypt I went on an air flight plane to Moscow
because following Nassar by just a few hours. He was going to
Moscow and I went to Moscow because my activities with the Soviet
Union were continued. This was in '68. And there was nobody
really left to write a report of the committee. I wrote this
report. And this is very important because it has a bearing on
it. I wrote a report of the impressions of the various members
of the committee and my own, which I entitled The Arabs Need and
Want Peace But--. The crucial thing was the but. This was a
report that we hoped would be published in the United States
and distributed to show the basic attitude of the leadership in
the Arab-countries and what one could do about it. But somehow
or other I sent copies of this report to the various people and
among them Tool Dihann (?) and Israel and to
Along and Aba Eban and as well as to others in the United States,
the State Department and so on.

Well it seemed that it caught Dihan's fancy. And I
received a call one day and the report had not been published.
From Dihann asking whether he could have my permission to quote
parts from that report that I had written on behalf of the
committee but I wrote it because nobody else did, although the
others had seen it by that time. In a speech he was going to
make to his students at Tel Aviv University. Well I gave him
permission thinking that he would only take a few statements.
But instead he gave it in considerable length and that report
became cause celebre. And I began to receive various calls to
release it for publication in Israel. I refused. I said I
wanted still to go over it with my colleagues, the other members
of the commission and to have it published in the United States. But you know, as usual there are different camps and others who had a copy of the report then took out pieces which out of context, which suited them and it became a matter of confrontation of important political confrontation in Israel. And then without my permission the report was translated into Hebrew and it was published in extenso in one of the most important newspapers in Israel and I became a political figure in Israel. So that, when I was asked to really approached as a possible candidate for president of the Wiseman Institute it was not only because I was already involved for years and knew the problems of the Wiseman Institute and I had some scientific status of my own, but because I was already known as a person who had, in search of deep understanding of the problems of the Arabs. At any rate,

Q Dr. Sabin, I am going to stop here for--

A Got the new tape.

Q Yes.

A At any rate, when Chris Anthenson asked me whether I would, myself mind if I would be put in among many other candidates for consideration my first reaction was one of uncertainty because I never had any thought of leaving my work in the laboratory and leaving the country to go and live in Israel. But, without too much hesitation, I said alright, put me in, but I had no expectation. You can't get really somebody good, you can't get anybody better, I would certainly like to help. And then very shortly thereafter, Ernst Shane got after me and tried to stress the importance of my accepting this job of being a serious candidate. Well it was a decision that I then
when I returned home early in 1969 began to ponder more seriously, preparing myself for a decision in case I am selected candidate. The selection wasn't going to come until April, end of April, 1969. And my thoughts, if I can recapture them now was somewhat along these lines. I was at that time involved as I described before, in a very extensive study on the search of a virus in human sarcomas using the various human cell lines that were developed in collaboration with the National Cancer Institute. I was also deeply involved at that time with my associate, a young Italian in the work on the possible role of finding a way to get to, to the possible role of herpes virus in human cancer. And there was already what appeared to be light. And I asked myself whether or not I wanted to give up and to give up the continuing search in the role of, possible role of viruses in human cancer for a totally different activity. Leave Cincinnati where I had been already for thirty years and had a very good life, leave my laboratories where I had been for over thirty years. Leave the work that I was doing and assume a totally different way of life. And some of the considerations were first, from a scientific point of view, the decision had to be made still what could I really do for the Wiseman Institute. What could I do? And I had to consider the question which comes to a scientist, various scientists at a certain stage in their life, whether or not the work that they themselves can do as individuals with some associates is more significant than that which probably they should do to make it possible for hundreds of others to do their best. And this was the way it occurred to me. Now I did have very great respect for the scientific effort despite all
the problems that was in progress in Israel. I think it was important. There was this very small country and this institute was really a big partner in the international scientific effort but beset by many problems of survival of being able to carry on. It was a matter of from hand to mouth kind of existence and it always had to struggle for support. And whether I was rationalizing it or not. There were many other subconscious impacts. I came to a conclusion that if I were indeed selected for the job as president that perhaps I could help the hundreds of others because there was already a total staff of not all scientists of about I think fourteen hundred at the time or fifteen hundred people working in the institute with a budget that was already in the millions. I think even when I started the budget was, including everything, about 20 million dollars a year. Whether I could help to get the wherewithall to make it possible for this institute to do its best and to develop in a way in which it would not continue to be and perhaps develop even more as an important member of the international scientific research community. But also because of certain concepts that I had to become more directly involved in solving some of the important problems of Israel in the way that science could perhaps help. And very much along the initial philosophy of Wiseman himself, who regarded science not only as a sort of spiritual activity, an intellectual activity which is part of the Jewish heritage as much as anything else is. But he also regarded science as a means of achieving a better life of the future, a means of developing Israel. That it wasn't doing so well.
So, with these considerations and also with the great involvement in as I, what I tried to describe before, my growing feeling for the problems and acquaintance with the problems of Israel, and the continuing challenge to its survival, I thought if it were offered to me, I would stop my activities in effect sort of phase out because the work was in progress. I had visualized the regimen, actually at that time and then my orienting discussion. I said how would it be if I would maintain my laboratory and staff here and would perhaps devote ten percent of my time to coming back and supervise an on-going program. Would that be acceptable. And sure it would be acceptable. So originally I visualized not entirely cutting the umbilical cord between my scientific activities, which again at that time it was in the sphere that you couldn't predict what was going to happen. And it was on the assumption that I would still continue to have my laboratories in Cincinnati but spend let's say about 90% of my time as an administrator, doing whatever I could to help the Wiseman Institute and indirectly help Israel in that way.

Well, as it turned out I, it was offered to me in April and I learned later incidentally that before it was offered to me the government of Israel was very much concerned about my political inclinations. That having already become a figure who dealt with the Arab government, sort of the adversaries of Israel, and also having had a very special association with Tito so that I also had dealt with Tito--they transmitted the at least to members of the board--the response of members of the board, that I would be acceptable only if I would promise not
to become involved in the politics of Israel.

Q That is interesting, sort of--

A And so I had a call, when the telephone call came in from Israel saying that it looks like I am the person for the committee but that the committee had selected, had nominated to be president. But they said now we must in all frankness tell you the concern of the government of Israel about your becoming involved politically in the life of Israel. So I said well, to be quite frank, I have no intentions of spending my time with one group or another in Israel although I will not certainly deny myself the right to speak to certain people as an individual. But my main activity, the reason for accepting is the thought that maybe I can help the Wiseman Institute. And also through the Wiseman Institute help Israel. But I can say that I will not align myself with one group or another politically. So at that, I was elected president of the Wiseman Institute at the end of April and I began to arrange my life in such a way for departure.

There were many other aspects which were difficult. Directly or indirectly this resulted in a break in relations with my wife at that time. My wife who had been divorced from a leading citizen in Cincinnati, a very wealthy one, to marry me. I mean she was suing for divorce before we decided to get married, had a young son for whom she struggled very much in the divorce settlement to have him live with her and spend part of the time with his father on week ends. And this meant that if she were going to accompany me she would have to leave her son. And there were other traumatic things which really ultimately
led to a complete break in our relations because although she herself came from a Jewish family that immigrated from Alsace-Lorraine to the south, to Birmingham. Well actually first Indiana more than a hundred years ago and continued to observe certain aspects of Jewish tradition. She did not quite have the same feeling. I mean she had feeling like many other American Jews have about Israel, mind you, but the idea of getting up and leaving the United States and going to live in Israel and most of all to leave her son was a very traumatic experience. But that wasn't the only factor. At any rate, my decision to accept this job was the first step in a break that ultimately led to a divorce. But at any rate, I had to make preparations and in the summer in July of 1969 I went for a number of weeks to really get to know the inside, to prepare myself and I did make arrangements to have the work go on, particularly the work on the possible demonstration of a virus in human sarcomas the way I described. And some people were left behind to carry that on. And at the end of '69, I went to Israel to become president of the Wiseman Institute. I regarded the challenge in two ways.

Because there were certain decisions that I had to make of priorities, of how I could be helpful because I wanted to be helpful. There were lots of fine things associated with the presidency that were fringe benefits. My salary was not greater than that I was getting as a professor at the University of Cincinnati but I had a beautiful house which Mr. Weisgam built for receptions and magnificently landscaped, etc. And, but I had priorities to decide on. One of the first priorities was
because I didn't know Hebrew as to whether or not I was going to spend a great deal of time. At first I thought I would be able to learn Hebrew even before I came to Israel at the end of December, 1969. But it was just impossible. And then I thought I might perhaps do it by taking lessons in the morning and then I found that that was impossible. So I had to make a decision that I am going to--my first priority will be to do certain things that I believed to be necessary at the Wiseman Institute. That I would like to have as my contribution to the Wiseman Institute. And, because I could carry on in English perfectly well. Everybody spoke English there, including Weisgam, who for all the years that he lived in Israel, never learned how to speak Hebrew.

And I set myself the following priorities. The first priority was to develop some decision making instruments or apparatus or mechanisms of basic decisions of what the institute should do and various priorities. You are always faced with priorities when you have to make decisions, when you have an institute covering so many disciplines, somebody's got to make decisions. And before that, as I said, Meyer Weisgam had appointed a member to be scientific director, and the latest one was a very excellent chemist, a man by the name of Gerhardt Schmidt who unfortunately died of Pullman cancer a year and a half later who was at that time scientific director. And I realized that that system could not continue. Where one man, as a scientific director would try to make decisions for the whole place. And that I was now president. I had every intention of drawing on the accumulated judgement of wisdom and
experience of Meyer Weisgam who was to leave the campus actually but he remained pretty much. Although he made it very difficult for me. But I was going to be my own man. I was not merely going to not rock the boat and let things go on as they did, and be there as a figure head and perhaps try to help raise money in the best way that I could. No, I wanted to have another kind of an impact. So the two things, one the reorganization, academic reorganization for proper decision making involving the faculty itself and different groups was one.

But the other one was, was a most important one. To which really scientists in Israel were very much dedicated that somehow or other the mechanism for doing it except in certain spheres was not found. And that was the question of how could science and technology as it had existed in Israel help especially now in the economic development of Israel. A wonderful book analysis of the whole question of the potential role of science and technology in Israel was written under the chairmanship of one of the excellent faculty members. One of the great biophysicists, at the Weizmann Institute his name was Afiné Pechowsky I say was because he had a brother who was also outstanding and in accord with prevailing dictum, particularly Ben Gorian, people assumed Hebrew names and the name that his brother assumed is Cotsia but Pechowsky kept his original name. Because he published under that name for years. Well the point was that he came up as chairman of the special commission with a remarkable book on what the resources were and what some of the needs were, and I relied on that a good deal and interestingly
enough I should mention right here that he is now the president of Israel. That when the president died--yes died because the president is appointed for life in Israel. He was chosen to be president of Israel. This brings other problems into focus which I will mention a little later.

And one of the first things that I wanted to do because I already have had discussions about it before with the scientific institute itself was the question of what kind of an organization would be needed to have side by side the most fundamental research to continue and at the same time to have what I was used to calling at that time mission-oriented research to deal with those problems that could help in the economic development of Israel which was really vital. There were already some remarkable examples of achievement in mission-oriented research in Israel which I kept in front of me. The development of agriculture already then by the end of '69, '70 in Israel was a remarkable example of a joint effort of scientists and largely perhaps working through a special government institute that was concerned with solving important agricultural problems and it wasn't a question of merely taking knowledge off of the shelf. It was a question of doing the research for which the knowledge was not available for the special problems faced by Israel. At any rate, Israel had already manifested a great capability of overcoming the problems of agriculture. Because in 1957 or so after the Sinai War. I mean the war in which Britain and France and Israel were involved in, as President Eisenhower in his memoirs himself, he gave an ultimatum to Ben Gorian and to Golda Maier and he said unless you
move away, move out of the desert, we will stop all food shipments. And Israel at that time would have starved if agriculture was not developed. And of course Israel had no choice but to give in under all sorts of promises which were never fulfilled and perhaps they couldn't have been fulfilled. But, agriculture had become developed in the most extraordinary way so that Israel not only could feed itself basically except for certain items without which you could really do. But it became an important export activity. But from the point of view of economic development, industrial development, that Israel had already reached the point in which perhaps at that time, I think at the end of '69 maybe 7% of the working population was now able to do all of the things that were necessary for agricultural production and you had Israel now having to emerge as an industrial and commercial activity. The jobs were not there. It was not only--it was no longer not just an agricultural state. It very quickly and rapidly made the transition from where the major part of the population was involved in agriculture to where, emerging industry was important. And what were the resources of Israel. What kind--it had no natural resources. It had some potassium in the Dead Sea, and later they found out there was phosphate in Arad in the desert they would buy. But what did it have. Brain power was its major natural resource. And how to use brain power to build up a structure in which there would be jobs for not only the poorly educated people, Jews who came from the Arab countries and constituted about half of the total population. But even for them, as they emerged with more learning and more development, how could you utilize this particular resource to build a more solid economy in Israel. That
was the real challenge. And I remember I arrived around Christmas time in '69. I remember that Weisgam called a most really influential man in the economy of Israel. He was minister of finance from private dinner in his home. They were very good friends. And I discussed this problem with him, and particularly the question as to whether or not there was an official body, a council for research and development attached to the prime minister's office and whether or not some of the recommendations that were made in the Cachowski report and many other studies that had been made before could somehow be developed into an activity that would be supported by the government, that would be participated in by all the institutions of higher learning in Israel into a concerted effort that would do the best that could be done with the excellent manpower that existed in Israel to find new ways in which let us say the economic development of Israel could be accelerated. Through brain power, proper utilization of brain power. And this man was very wise, this minister and he said to me. He is dead now. But I think Meyer Weisgam who is still alive and he hates me. He showed his hatred for me in a variety of ways for which I am sorry but I really don't think that I could help--. For which I am sorry but I don't think that anything I could have done otherwise would have prevented it. However, what Ben hur Sapire said to me. He said look I know the ways of the government here very well. And if we make this an official activity it will go on forever. I don't know when we will see any results. He says, why don't you do this.
Why don't you assume and don't you ever tell anybody that I told you that you had a subsidy, that the Weizmann has been given the job of getting groups organized and considering yourself a sort of shadow cabinet in this and see what you can do. Go ahead. Be the prototype of such an activity. And this really led me to the very first activity as president of the Weizmann Institute which was done before the new year in the following way.

I got together with many members of the faculty of the Weizmann Institute who had been playing a role in their own way in various fields. They were very knowledgeable and I called a meeting I think about thirty people from the different fields of scientific activity to consider how we might organize ourselves on a volunteer basis into certain task forces so to speak. I still have somewhere the precise plan in which there would be a delineation of ten or twelve important fields which could be investigated as to their potential contribution to the economic development of Israel in the very specific way determining what kind of new knowledge would be necessary to make it possible for those who would have then the job of integrating this into some sort of economic play because knowledge alone isn't enough to build business enterprises you need much more than knowledge. But to divide up into groups in which some member of the faculty of the Weizmann Institute would let's say act as chairman and he would get whatever people there are in other institutions of higher learning in Israel to work on a commission with a more--task force with him that would come up with an identification of

END OF TAPE