

Oral History Interview  
with  
HAROLD STASSEN

Governor of Minnesota, 1938-43; served on staff of Admiral W.F. Halsey in South Pacific, 1943-45; and member of U.S. delegation to the U.N. Conference on International Organization, San Francisco, 1945.

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

June 26, 1973  
by Richard D. McKinzie, Harry S. Truman Library

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#### NOTICE

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[1]

RICHARD D. MCKINZIE: Governor Stassen, would you tell me how you came to be appointed to the delegation of the United States to the United Nations organizational conference?

HAROLD STASSEN: President Roosevelt sent a cable to Admiral Halsey -- I was serving then as his Assistant Chief of Staff for Administration in the Pacific war -- stating that he would like me to be on the delegation. I think President Roosevelt was then on his way back from the Yalta

Conference. There was Senator Arthur Vandenberg and Congressman Sol Bloom who were respective seniors in Senate and House Foreign Affairs and Foreign Relations. President

[2]

Roosevelt had decided, apparently, that he wanted me to be the third of the Republicans on the delegation. So, he sent this cable to Admiral [William F.] Halsey and Admiral Halsey called me in and threw the cable across the desk and said, "Here, do you want to do this?"

It was a complete surprise to me and, of course, I very much wanted to do it, because that was a basic objective, practically, in my life and I thought I had kind of left this behind when I went on to active duty in World War II, and I told the Admiral, "I'd like very much to do it."

He asked how we'd arrange my part of his staff work and I said, "Well, as you know you've always said we have to have men ready to take our place in case we get hit." And I said, "I'm not hit, but I want to go." I had two good assistants and so he agreed that Lt. Herbert Carroll could step up and take my work and I would go and report to President Roosevelt for this purpose.

Then, he asked me, "Well, when you're through with this, would you like to come back?"

[3]

I said, "I'd like very much to come back to join you again." So he wrote me a set of orders to proceed on temporary additional duty, to go report to the President for this purpose of his cable, drafting the United Nations Charter, and when completed for this temporary additional duty, return and report to Admiral Halsey. This literally is what I did. Of course, when I was in San Francisco, actually in the offices of the San Francisco *Chronicle* talking to Paul Smith, the flash came that President Roosevelt had died. This was about April 13, somewhere along in there, 1945. Then the delegation assembled and President Truman made a rather prompt decision that he wanted the same delegation to carry it forward. So he in effect then re-appointed all of us. Naturally, I personally appreciated it. I think, too, in the perspective of history, this was one of President Truman's rather typical, prompt, decisive conclusions, to appoint the same delegation to go forward with the United Nations Charter. He had, of course, the complete authority at that moment. He could have tried to add somebody of his personal acquaintance, or he could have shuffled

[4]

around or done anything he wanted; but he just laid it right on the line and both officially and publicly, and then to us, when he came out to San Francisco, that he wanted us to go right ahead with the work of drafting the United Nations Charter.

MCKINZIE: Had you met President Truman before this when he was Senator?

STASSEN: Very slightly, yes. I had met him in some of the Washington receptions and around the Senate a little bit. Of course, you see, before I went on active duty in the war, I was chairman of the Governors Conference, and this is the Governors of both Democrats and Republicans and we had quite a bit of contact at that point in the inter-relationships as the war approached, the Lend-Lease period, and so on. So, I had had some contact with him, but hardly have said that I

knew him. And some contact at some of the Washington dinners like Gridiron dinners and things of that kind.

MCKINZIE: When you came back to San Francisco do you recall what kind of preparations you were able to

[5]

make? Probably you weren't able to do very much before you left the Pacific; but do you recall any meetings with Senator Vandenberg or Representative Bloom or John Foster Dulles?

STASSEN: Oh, yes, the whole delegation met and, of course, we also -- see out at Dumbarton Oaks they had prepared, of course, a draft, and then they'd also, out at Yalta, they had some agreements and there were quite extensive studies; and then I decided that, of course, I needed some staff. Coming back from the Pacific I had to then leave my old staff in the Pacific that is, naturally, my military staff, naval staff. So, then I sent cables to the presidents of Harvard and Yale and a few other institutions and asked for suggestions of any of their students who had shown great ability in international affairs and studies and had been off to war and might have been wounded but not seriously and got back, that they'd make such a search.

They turned up with a number of nominations and the two that I selected were a young man named Cord Meyer, who had been a marine and was wounded and

[6]

had studied international affairs at Yale as I remember; and then a John Thompson, I think had studied at Harvard, as I remember. These two young men became two of my key staff members and then the State Department was to furnish two and they turned out to be Ralph Bunche and [O. Benjamin] Gerig, two young Foreign Service officers at that time. Then, of course, secretarial help and so on. So we began our research and our preparations and the review of the delegation books for the drafting of the Charter.

Then we met at San Francisco in preparation and in the very early part of the negotiations President Truman came to San Francisco and met with the delegation, met with all of us; met with Ed Stettinius who was Secretary of State, and we had a number of conferences at that time.

MCKINZIE: One of the very early interests that you took in that Charter concerned the veto provision in the Charter. Do you recall any of your conversations with high ranking members of the delegation about the real possibility of getting that changed? It had been agreed to at Yalta, as I understand it.

[7]

I know you much opposed that provision; did it seem to you that there was at any time a possibility that that might have been altered somewhat?

STASSEN: You see, we did get it somewhat narrowed in its definition and this came up, in effect, that if you could have a veto on a discussion of an issue, preliminary veto so to speak, you could choke off the whole process. And then there were some other issues, so that we reached

the conclusion, particularly Senator Vandenberg and I, that there were certain minimums that would have to be attained in order to make it worthwhile to have a Charter. That is, you had to make the judgment as to whether or not you had a beginning that was worthwhile or whether or not it would be better not to make the beginning, because of some of the Russian positions at that time. Of course, as you recall some of the Polish issues began to flare up versus the Soviet Union and other issues of that kind. I was one of those that recommended to President Truman that he send Harry Hopkins to Moscow to have more or less of a showdown talk with Stalin about the deadlock at San Francisco. This was again one of those

[8]

decisive decisions that he made that I think are very important in history and in what happened. He sent Harry Hopkins to see Stalin with a good briefing on what the issues were. At that time he got enough narrowing of the veto and enough resolution of some of the most difficult issues that it seemed clear that the Charter should go forward and we should make the start. At the same time, I had taken the lead on this matter of putting in the Charter another method of amending, and that was the so called "amending conference method" which is still in the Charter.

MCKINZIE: Article 109.

STASSEN: That's right Article 109, it became later, which was the basis on which you could really prepare a new charter and make a new start at some future year and which, of course, is overdue at this time.

MCKINZIE: Did I understand you correctly that this is precisely what you had in mind at that time was,

[9]

at some point changing it so that there could be a revision of the veto provision?

STASSEN: That's right, and other things too: the matter of weighted voting and the matter of better financing. There were a number of these things. In other words, we went as far as we could at San Francisco and President Truman backed us in going that far, and then having a document that could go through. But, I think, the issues as they stood, before Hopkins went to Moscow, were such that we felt that you could not in good conscience conclude a charter on the Russian terms. Then through the mission to Moscow by Hopkins under Truman's directions, you got enough giving on the part, enough yielding on the part of the Russians and enough open potential of evolution of the Charter to make it desirable, as we thought, to proceed.

MCKINZIE: At a later time, you were critical about the fact that the United Nations could not have an effective police force, a defense force. Was this a concern of yours at that time; at the San Francisco Conference?

[10]

STASSEN: Yes, to see how far we could go, of course, you did have the Dumbarton Oaks drafts which were some, in effect, base from which you had to work. You see, I had been advocating a United Nations for a number of years, in fact, this was quite clearly the background. When I first

was appointed and flew back and saw President Roosevelt in his office in the White House, he said that what caused him to appoint me was he never forgot the Gridiron speech I made back in about -- it must have been 1939 or 1940. Then I said that isolationism was dead and I hoped the senior members of my party recognized it before it was too late. I also said that the President should try to take the members of our party along on the foreign policy takeoffs as well as on the crash landings. That Gridiron speech, you know, it's an unusual atmosphere -- the President there and everybody, and I as a young Governor had been asked to speak. Apparently my philosophy, which, of course, is lifelong, was in President Roosevelt's mind. I'd done a lot of work on what kind of a United Nations there ought to be before this conference was called.

[11]

MCKINZIE: Was this in general in keeping with the sort of plan you had in mind?

STASSEN: That's right.

MCKINZIE: One point Governor, you used the phrase just a moment ago "being in on the takeoffs as well as the crash landings." Do you happen to recall whether that's a phrase you used in that Gridiron speech in 1939 or '40?

STASSEN: Yes.

MCKINZIE: You might be interested to know that Senator Vandenberg then picked that up and used it.

STASSEN: Yes, oh sure, as a matter of fact, that was one of the phrases that stuck out of that night. In fact, Arthur Krock of the New York *Times* wrote years later, about his recollection that I had originated the phrase and that Vandenberg had followed up on it and so forth. There is an Arthur Krock column somewhere in the New York *Times* about that relationship.

MCKINZIE: I wonder if we might go back, then, a little

[12]

bit to the San Francisco Conference. I understand that this is the largest delegation the United States had ever sent to an international conference and that obviously there were going to be some differences of opinion on the negotiable issues, and I understand that you had daily, or almost daily, delegation meetings.

STASSEN: Daily meetings. We'd start in the morning first thing with a U.S. delegation meeting, and we had a lot of what they called the four-power meetings, that is France, the United Kingdom, Soviet Union and the United States. And then, of course, into the bigger delegation meetings and then into many subcommittees. There was a very extensive work schedule over a period of time.

MCKINZIE: In those negotiations after the Hopkins trip to Moscow, did you feel that the Soviet Union could be negotiated with? I think it came to a point later on where the Soviet Union

simply talked and didn't really negotiate. But at that point did you feel that the future looked hopeful?

STASSEN: Well, yes, that you could get up to certain

[12]

minimum points and you had to be very persistent to get there. In fact, I can remember one session with [V. M.] Molotov, who was then Foreign Minister and the head of the delegation. For some reason or other -- I don't know whether I sort of raised my eyebrows or something before the translator had gone through -- he asked me, through the interpreter, whether I understood the Russian language. And I hesitated, and I said, "Oh, Mr. Molotov, I understand the Russian language to know well enough what 'nyet, nyet, nyet' means, but I want to hear also some words like 'da da da' and 'herishaw'," which were for 'yes' and 'agree', "if we're going to get any results." And we did work out, of course, many, many sections there with the Russians. You had to wait until they would hear from Moscow, and you had to go over things very thoroughly, but there was a meaningful negotiation in San Francisco and, of course, finally, a result that the then 50 members agreed to.

MCKINZIE: But you must have had some reservations because I noticed that you very much argued in favor of a

[14]

provision whereby there could be a regional response to aggression, such as this veto provision that was included. Was the Soviet Union the direct provocateur of that thought, that there should be this provision or was that just a general security provision as far as you were concerned?

STASSEN: Well, there was the question there, what the effect of the veto would be if serious regional issues came up. That's where another one of the initiatives that I took came up, that is, the introduction of the phrase that "Nothing in the Charter shall impair the individual or collective right to self-defense if an armed attack occurs." In other words, that, you might say, saving clause of self-defense and then that, of course, became the basis for organizing NATO and regional approaches to somewhat counteract the otherwise veto aspects of the Charter. That came up through those negotiations.

MCKINZIE: Do you recall any meetings particularly with Senator Vandenberg and John Foster Dulles, and Representative Bloom to establish what might be

[15]

called a Republican position on all of this?

STASSEN: No, very extensive work with Senator Vandenberg, of course, and with Congressman Bloom and with all members of the delegation, but this was a sort of a high point of bi-partisanship. Senator Vandenberg, of course, was at this stage very thoroughly working with President Roosevelt. You see there had been an earlier stage, and I had had extensive relations with Senator Vandenberg for many, many years in the earlier stage. He was quite isolationist, and we had many talks about it; and he finally took that dramatic change and then

was very strong on the international side. So that it was a high point under President Truman in those immediate periods at the end of the war and after the war, of bipartisan cooperation in foreign policy.

MCKINZIE: Since you raised the issue of the whole thing of bi-partisanship, from a very cold point of view, there are as many votes, I suppose, in taking a position against the administration's foreign policy as there are against taking a position against the administration's agricultural or labor policy?

[16]

There's some evidence now that some people in the State Department, namely Dean Acheson, really believed that he duped Senator Vandenberg into bi-partisanship: that he had made him think the national interest was so important that he wouldn't dare take another position. Perhaps you'd like to react to that? I'd also like to ask you if you think the election of 1948 might have been different if the foreign policy had been a larger issue?

STASSEN: I don't think so. It is, of course, a very complex and difficult thing as to how you handle foreign policy in relationship to partisanship; and, of course, the part of opposition, in fact, even members of the same party, always have the right and have to keep their options open that if they are basically and seriously in disagreement on a foreign policy, they have the right to blow the whistle on it and oppose it. But it is I think clearly in the National interest for both parties to try to reach a common understanding on foreign matters. This cannot be simply the opposition party going along with the party in office but it has

[17]

to be some adjustment of both. And, of course, both President Truman and President Roosevelt before him, conferred extensively with Senator Vandenberg, and at times with me and others, on these foreign policy issues, including at the time of the beginning of the Korean war, and that issue. But you see, the issues in many instances were sharper inside of parties than they were between elements in both parties. That is not surprising in a country as complex and extensive as ours, versus a whole world situation. But, if you like, in the development of NATO in which both Senator Vandenberg and President Truman took such a large part, the positions of former President Hoover and Senator Taft were very different than the positions of President Truman, Senator Vandenberg and myself. The issues tended to be, within parties and within the country, a gradually developing consensus between both parties. It's a process; and, of course, we have seen in more modern times, the extremity of the foreign policy issue of the Vietnam War. That issue cut across both parties and did many

[18]

other things.

MCKINZIE: But on the whole you feel that bipartisanship is an ideal to be hoped for and to be worked toward.

STASSEN: That both parties need to work toward, yes.

MCKINZIE: Strangely in the Truman administration that bipartisanship ideal didn't apply to all foreign policy issues. I wondered if you might have any explanation for why, on such issues as the United Nations, on the Marshall plan, which was pretty much a bipartisan thing, and as you pointed out on NATO, but yet Far Eastern policy was never a matter of bipartisan cooperation.

STASSEN: Well, that, of course, came up principally, I think because of the matter of the strong personality of General [Douglas] MacArthur and the unusual issue that came out of that. Likewise some of the issues centering around China in relationship to the Acheson position, and others of that kind. So some of these crosscurrents became pretty intense.

[19]

MCKINZIE: Do you recall after your discharge from the military your first encounter with President Truman?

STASSEN: I'm not clear just when, and I probably shouldn't -- I state at this point, that I have been following a busy schedule since you wrote, so I haven't had a chance to review my own papers, so my memory wouldn't necessarily be as clear as it might be. I have preserved all my papers but I haven't reviewed them before this interview.

Then, I would say the matter of the major importance in the postwar period would have been in a number of dimensions. First of all, I took a strong stand in supporting President Truman in going into Korea. In fact, I flew back from somewhere in the Middle West, I think it was St. Louis, to Washington to see Senator Taft when that matter broke about Korea, and to urge him to back President Truman and not to take an opposition position. We had some very extensive talks at that time, and I talked then to President Truman about my position that our Republican party should back him up. So this was quite a crucial and important time in which

[20]

I, you might say, somewhat keyed into President Truman's position. Then on the other side of the matter, when it reached the situation with General MacArthur, I disagreed with President Truman on that and at that time also, I had the position of being the spokesman for the Republican part in the congressional elections of that year. So that would have been in 1950, the in-between elections. And, in fact, I then spoke out very strongly against President Truman on the MacArthur and similar issues in that 1950 congressional election. So at that time you might say our contact was across the airwaves in political controversy in that way.

MCKINZIE: May I go back to your discussions with Senator Taft? Did you take the initiative in coming out to see Senator Taft? Then you saw President Truman after you had spoken to Senator Taft.

STASSEN: Yes.

MCKINZIE: Do you recall what President Truman said when you went in to speak with him?

STASSEN: He said pretty much, "Thank you Governor, I



[21]

appreciate it; these are not easy decisions. I think I made the right one."

I said, "I think you did, too, and I'll back you up in it."

I think another thing I did at that time -- you see, I had had my extensive conference with Marshal Stalin after the war and, of course, with Molotov after we drew the United Nations Charter. There was a transcript and the transcript was published. But I thought, also, at that juncture that one of the crucial things was the Russian interpretation of President Truman going on up into North Korea, because if Russia and China stood together against this it was possible that that thing could flair out in my judgment. I sent Marshal Stalin a cable at that point of my interpretation of President Truman's action in going into Korea, my interpretation of the support for it in our country, and some very direct and extensive language. I told President Truman at that time that I had done that. I tried to carefully word it in the standpoint, as you well know, a private citizen, which I then was, cannot

[22]

negotiate with a foreign government. But there isn't any law or rule against communicating with a foreign government. So, I drafted that message having that in mind. You see, there was the further point that what I had told Marshal Stalin about the United States economy and about the postwar situation had turned out to be unbelievably accurate in its anticipations. It was contrary to what I knew at that time the Russian advisors were telling Stalin about what was going to happen. Consequently, I had some reason to believe that I might have some credence as to correctly stating things.

You see, the papers naturally at that point, as they do so often, they had been rather widely publicizing some of the, you might say equally sincere, but in my view rather irresponsible statements against President Truman's action in going into Korea. You see I not only talked to Senator Taft but to others, and I thought that the country would back President Truman solidly and that the majority of the Republicans would. The first test vote showed that. I thought it was important that Stalin get from me immediately, my appraisal that there would

[23]

be bipartisan support for President Truman's decision. From my experience of how these things go in Government when an act like this happens, you get these emergency sessions right away and you got to get some pretty prompt input in order to keep the situation from starting down a wrong track where you then have great difficulty in correcting it.

MCKINZIE: I take it then you subscribed to Senator Vandenberg's idea that in foreign affairs in times of crisis, the country must, as he puts it, "stand united at the water's edge."

STASSEN: That's right. Yes, unless you're so convinced that your own government is taking a wrong action and that you are, in effect trying to call a halt to your own government, is more important than the unity of a position, you should mute your own lesser differences and emphasize the united stand. This is what I did in the Korean matter, and then, as I say, I did it the

other way around in the MacArthur thing because I had also felt at that time we should back, in effect, the second China, on Taiwan; and I

[24]

had at that time more support for, in my analysis, the long-term policy for what might be called the MacArthur position on the Far East than I did for the Truman-Acheson position on the Far East.

MCKINZIE: As an important official in your party, I'm wondering how much input you were able to make into the Truman administration in matters of foreign affairs. You made two round the world trips, and on return you published a number of articles, and made a number of speeches, but what about in an unofficial way as far as the State Department was concerned. Did you have the ear of anyone there, any of the Under Secretaries, the Secretary of State? Was it possible, in short, to get your major points directly to the people who could do something about it, or was this a matter of having to go through the public forum?

STASSEN: It was a combination. Whenever I was in a country like in the Moscow trip, I briefed the United States ambassador thoroughly on what I was doing and what was being done. Most sessions we would have a representative of the Embassy with me. Of course,

[25]

on the first Moscow trip after the war, I not only saw Marshal Stalin and Molotov but also [A. A.] Zhandov, [A. Y.] Vyshinsky, [A. I.] Mikoyan, and these various members of the Politburo on various special subjects. Then when I came back to the United States I briefed the State Department on the views. [Charles E.] Bohlen of course was very active and I had a long relationship of working with him, keeping him advised of what I was doing and in fact, listening to his viewpoints. The same thing was true in other countries. When I went into Poland, Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia, Germany, France, I primarily relied on the ambassadors in those points getting my observations back; but then also I felt --and you never can be positive of it -- it was a constructive way of publicly stating my view in order to affect the administration by the public thing. There always has been somewhat of a saying in Washington, I don't know if it has any validity anymore, that you can reach a President's attention easier through the columns of the *New York Times* than you can by a personal interview. That may have been decreased in its validity now, I don't know.

[26]

MCKINZIE: There are a couple of specific issues which you did pursue, and I'm wondering again what kind of official response you were able to get. You called in January of 1948 for the United States to convene a United Nations convention for the purpose of re-writing that UN Charter in which you've had very long interest. How did that die on the vine? Were you able to get to that into the Truman administration at all and get a direct response from that?

STASSEN: I don't remember that I ever got a direct response. Of course, I always took that issue as one that had to develop over a period of years and that you had to gradually develop the necessity of it.

Well, just like, as you know, last week, here in 1973, the Security Council has voted for the admission of the two Germanys. I started to advocate that about 15 years ago as the only realistic way to develop the world organization in relation to the German people. That it was very unsound to keep them outside and yet you couldn't expect either the United States or Russia to let the one half in without the other. In fact, I spoke at the World

[27]

Conference of Judges about the juridical and scientific, philosophic base for making the United Nations universal and bringing in the divided countries of Germany and China and Korea and Vietnam, years ago. Well, you might say I just waited until what I thought was respectable time after the first charter was ratified to begin advocating it, and believe someday it will come. The question is, will a tragedy have to come first or can you get a basic movement like that done.

MCKINZIE: Once the Korean war had broken out you advocated some revisions pertaining to the military potential of the United Nations, particularly one in which it would have been possible to use refugees from the Soviet satellite countries, Polish refugees I assume, and there were a lot of displaced Germans who had been moved. At the time, did anybody suggest that that might cause the satellite countries to withdraw from the UN. Were you willing at that point to accept that possibility?

STASSEN: I couldn't recall all of the implications of that immediately, but it is my impression that this was

[28]

at a time when there was a considerable apprehension as to how aggressive the Soviet Union might be in Europe. They were pressing very hard, maybe somewhere in the area of the Berlin blockade, and things of that kind, and I wanted to create an atmosphere on their part that they could not count on the Eastern European armed forces and the Eastern European peoples to stand with them if they became aggressive in Europe.

So, the basic part of that analysis was strategic at that time, that if we organized units of those refugees they couldn't be sure that the armed forces under their control, of Poland and East Germany, and Czechoslovakia, Romania, would join them against Western Europe, or whether they would defect along with these refugee units. I think that was a part of that. That was a sort of strategic military concept as I remember it. I'd have to review the studies and all the details of that time, but I think that was more directed toward its strategic and psychological effect than to any actual implementation at that time.

[29]

MCKINZIE: Very good. It's always difficult to find the originator of ideas, because I think circumstances quite often cause a number of individuals to think of something about the same time.

STASSEN: Well, furthermore, there can be parallel originations. They even think now that the wheel was invented in more than one part of the universe at one time. So that this is true, that

men addressing themselves, and women, to the same problem can come up with the same idea in different ways.

MCKINZIE: This then leads to the question of what I guess they now call "policy alternatives." You'd been critical of Mr. Truman's position vis-a-vis the Russians, namely that it was a defensive position rather than one which -- and lacking, I think the word was, in the sense of idealism. And in 1950, which is fairly early it seems to me, you called for holding the Kremlin strictly responsible (I think those are your words), for peripheral wars, brush wars, and that it should be the U.S. policy to move directly to the main fight. And that policy was later advocated by Secretary Dulles. Do you recall any early

[30]

Republican discussions about that position? Is it fair to say that you are, if not the, among the originators of that idea of ending the policy of containment and moving to something that would be more positive?

STASSEN: I couldn't be sure at this juncture of just how those ideas developed at that stage. There was a time I was concerned that if the Soviet Union felt that they could stir up these brush wars on the peripheral area and drain American treasure and blood, that they would be greatly tempted to do it, and that we should try to serve some notice on them that we wouldn't necessarily be just taking it on out there in the peripheral area. But this again was in this strategic situation that changed from time to time. As you know, I opposed sending the United States troops into Vietnam in 1954. Now this is, you might say, long after the Truman time, so it not be relevant, but it does indicate this point that you're talking about and that was that the United States should not let itself be bled in the peripheral areas, but yet had to develop

[31]

a strategy that you didn't turn the peripheral areas over to either Russia or China. And this was a combined analysis that was involved. So to properly evaluate that in the 1950 concept, you'd have to try to reconstruct just what was the then current Russian moves and what were we up to.

MCKINZIE: Your point here is mainly this: many of these specific things statements, have to be considered in the context of that time and that many of them are involved in a strategic situation, or to create a different kind of position vis-a-vis the Soviets, and some usable eternal policies.

STASSEN: That's right, and principles are more or less eternal if you get them thought through right; but the thing there was, of course, that you didn't want to have the Soviet at that stage just concentrating on how they might subvert and take over France and Italy. You had to have them also somewhat concerned about how they maintained control over Poland, and Czechoslovakia, and East Germany. In other words, it was to get away from too much a matter of letting the Soviet be undisturbed in everything that they

[32]

thought they had control of and only be defensive against them, which was a certain aspect of the psychology of one period of time. But you had to look upon it that we were concerned about the whole world and how the freedom peoples might unfold and try to have that freedom evolve

without the tragedy of war. I used to use a phrase back in there that it was my belief that man was meant to be free, and to find a way to evolve toward freedom without the tragedy of war was the highest essence of statesmanship and governmental philosophy.

MCKINZIE: In light of your subsequent guidance to aid programs could you speak to the point of your awareness of what the Truman administration was doing in regard to aid to what we now call the "third world?" Do you recall thinking at the time that those were adequate programs or that they were in some sense misdirected, that you had to make some changes after you came into that position in 1953?

STASSEN: Well, as you probably know, I was a strong supporter of President Truman and the Marshall plan and in fact had publicly advocated (it seems to me it

[33]

was in an Iowa speech) the devotion of a portion of our resources for the rebuilding of the war-torn nations and toward the peaceful evolution of the economies of the world, and supported the Marshall plan right straight down the line. And, of course, when President Eisenhower asked me to succeed Averell Harriman who had been handling these programs for President Truman, we had a congenial take-over, that is, Averell Harriman and I have always had respect for each other. I of course had seen him at various times during the war all the way back into San Francisco. I kept many of his main deputies and then did a thorough re-analysis, and it was more of the changing times, that we, of course, found that Western Europe was well on their way and that there wasn't any validity of carrying on economic aid any longer toward Germany, and the Netherlands, and so on. In fact, I think I said that they would soon reach the stage where their currencies would be stronger than the dollar. On the other hand, we had to start doing more in the less developed countries of Asia, and in South America. So, I changed the direction of policies at that time,

[34]

but that was because of the new conditions. The Marshall plan had been successful in Europe and now you had to move on to other things and also to get those nations -- I did quite a bit of pushing that the European nations should start to do more in aid for others.

MCKINZIE: You had as early as 1950, called for an Asiatic economic program which would be somewhat parallel to the Marshall plan, but, I'm sure you agree, with some differences, due to the change in local circumstances, that they simply couldn't digest that much development capital.

STASSEN: Certainly, in fact this was one of the real big battles inside the Eisenhower administration I felt we had to move in relation to Asia and Secretary George Humphrey was very much against it.

MCKINZIE: You espoused what you called a "sensible, practical internationalism," but the difficulty was, of course, what was a "sensible and practical internationalism?"

STASSEN: Right, there could be many different views on

[35]  
that.

MCKINZIE: You'll have to forgive me if I tend to be oversimplifying the story but, would you agree, or would you comment on the idea, that President Truman had accepted a kind of limited internationalism for the non-Communist half of the world, and that you at least during his presidency weren't quite willing to write off that Communist half of the world as a part of that international system? That you were more interested, perhaps, than he in bringing in nations which at that time at least were under some sort of Marxist domination?

STASSEN: Yes, I think there's some point there. Of course, he had, as you know, a strong measure of realism and practicalism about it, and at the same time he, as any President, is affected by the views of those who are operating for him and advising him. I tended to feel at the time, whether it was valid or not -- you historians will review for years -- that my views, really, and President Truman's views, had more points of relationship and reciprocal and acceptance and support, than did my views and Mr.

[36]  
Acheson's views.

At the same time, of course, Acheson's views and Truman's views had a lot of common factors. Those kind of situations came in.

MCKINZIE: Yes. One thing that is now tearing the historical world apart is the question of whether the Communist menace internationally and in domestic life was in fact as great as it appeared at the time. As you look back on those years does it seem to you that you were right or that there was something that was perhaps magnified, or larger, than in fact it was?

STASSEN: There's no way to be categorical about that. If historians ever get at the minutes of the Politburo and the records of the Soviet Government you might get some further dimension about it; but you have to keep in mind that there was an openly announced doctrine, among those who were in charge of Russia, that the war was inevitable, that they had to defeat capitalism. In fact you'll find quite a discussion with Stalin about the difference between classic

[37]  
capitalism as he spoke of it -- you see he looked upon Hitler as having had a capitalist government -- and the difference between that and what I said we were evolving in the West of a people's capitalism, and the different kind of dimensions of it. So that, up to the point where the Soviet leaders became convinced that they could evolve in competition to capitalism without war, and also to become convinced that if they tried the methods of war that they might well be defeated. In other words, if the United States, for example, wouldn't attempt to go marching into the center of Russia, but would punish them in other means of warfare; and that they might have their Eastern Europeans as well as Europe turning against them and striking out for their own freedom. These kinds of strategic concepts had to be involved. So that these kinds of factors were much in it. I think that clearly, as we went on through that period, the Communist threat

centered in the government of the Soviet Union, diminished, and diminished for a number of different reasons.

But you know one of the issues on that one came

[38]

up in the early part of the Eisenhower administration, after the Truman Administration, that is the opening up of inter-change which centered in the Geneva Conference in 1955. There were internal issues on that in the Eisenhower administration. Should you open up this reciprocal exchange, what would happen out of it, and so forth. And I know this would have been an issue in the Truman years. I always believed in opening up the contact but remaining very strong and very alert while you were doing it.

MCKINZIE: That question you said could not be answered categorically, I'm sure you'll say that about this one: and that is, if looking back, and excluding the Republican nomination of 1948, do you think that you should have done something very differently in those years in order to influence events in the direction of your beliefs, or, if you had to do it again, would you play it pretty much as you did?

STASSEN: Well, you know that's the kind of question I never try to even answer to myself. In other words,

[39]

my interests are still in the future of what happens to the country and the world and to humanity, and I literally don't do what I consider for an individual of my position a waste of time, of going over to try to recast. I appreciate the importance of historians trying to analyze those things, but I don't live that way.

MCKINZIE: All right, I'll accept that.

One more question, Governor Stassen. Is there anything that you can put on the record, which is not already on the record, about the problem in 1950 of the dismissal of General MacArthur.

STASSEN: No. I think that clash with President Truman was a public one and he, of course, stated his views and I stated mine.

MCKINZIE: But it was one in which there was some heat.

STASSEN: Uh, yes. Well of course it was right in the campaign you know, an issue. But I think I should say this about it. You know I saw President Truman later, after the presidency at the Truman Library and we had a very pleasant visit. Of course, I exchanged

[40]

various kinds of greetings like on his birthdays and things later after the presidency. As far as I know, I don't think he had any other than the view that I'd had a vigorous political clash with him over that and that this was, more or less, the way in which those issues had to be conducted.

Yes, the clash was very vigorous in that congressional election, and was a part of my conviction in the way to state it at that time.

MCKINZIE: I take it then you hold the view that in politics one has heated clashes and then that those do not carry over into long-range personal dislikes?

STASSEN: That's right, that is especially if there is an appreciation on both sides that a view that is stated emphatically and even heatedly in politics is a sincere difference of view.

MCKINZIE: Thank you very much, Governor.

## INDEX

Acheson, Dean, 16, 36  
Article 109, UN Charter, 8, 9

Bipartisanship in foreign policy, 15-23  
Bloom, Sol, 1, 15  
Bohlen, Charles E., 25  
"Brush Wars," 29, 30  
Bunche, Ralph J., 6

Carroll, Herbert, 2

Dumbarton Oaks, 5, 10

Foreign aid, 32-34  
Four power meetings, 12  
France, 12

Geneva Conference, 1955, 38  
Gerig, O. Benjamin, 6  
Germany, 26, 27  
Governors' Conference, 4

Halsey, William F., 1, 2, 3  
Harriman, Averell, 33  
Harvard University, 5  
Hoover, Herbert, 17  
Hopkins, Harry L., 7, 8, 9  
Humphrey, George, 34

Internationalism, 34, 35  
Isolationism, 10, 15



Korean War, 17, 19-23, 27  
Krock, Arthur, 11

MacArthur, Douglas, 18, 20, 23, 24, 39  
Marshall Plan, 32, 33, 34  
Meyer, Cord, 5, 6  
Mikoyan, Anastas I., 25  
Molotov, Vyachelslav M., 13  
Moscow mission (Stassen), 24, 25

New York *Times*, 11, 25  
North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), 14, 17, 18

Policy alternatives in foreign affairs, 29-32

Roosevelt, Franklin D., 1, 2, 3, 10, 15, 17

*San Francisco Chronicle*, 3  
San Francisco UN Conference, 1-4, 6, 7, 9, 12-15  
Security Council, UN, 26  
Smith, Paul, 3  
Soviet satellites, 27, 28, 31, 37  
Soviet Union, 7, 12, 13, 21, 24-26, 29-32, 36, 37  
Stalin, Joseph V., 7, 8, 21, 22, 25  
State Department, 24, 25  
Stettinius, Edward R., 6

Taft, Robert A., 17, 19, 20, 22  
Third World Nations, 32-34  
Thompson, John, 6

Truman, Harry S.:  
    bipartisanship in foreign policy, and, 17  
    Hopkins Mission to Moscow, and, 7, 8, 9  
    international programs of, 35  
    Korean War, bipartisan support in, 19-23  
    San Francisco UN Conference, meeting with U.S. delegation, 6  
    Stassen, Harold, appointed delegate to San Francisco UN Conference by, 3, 4  
    Stassen, Harold, first acquaintance with, 4  
    Stassen, Harold, relationship with, 39, 40  
    Stassen, Harold, similarity of views on foreign affairs, 35

United Kingdom, 12

United Nations:  
    Charter of, 3-9, 14, 15, 21, 26  
    Korean War, and the, 27  
    San Francisco Conference, 1-4, 6, 7, 12-15

Security Council, 26

Vandenberg, Arthur H., 1, 7, 11, 15, 16, 17, 23

Veto provision, UN Charter, 6-9, 14

Vietnam War, 17

Vyshinsky, Andrei Y., 25

World Conference of Judges, 26, 27

Yale University, 5

Yalta Conference, 5, 6

Zhandov, Andrei A., 25