

Oral History Interview
with
H. FREEMAN MATTHEWS

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Washington, D.C.
June 7, 1973
by Richard D. McKinzie, Harry S. Truman Library

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MCKINZIE: Mr. Ambassador, I wonder if you recall when you first met Harry Truman?

MATTHEWS: Yes, it was a few days before we sailed on the *Augusta* for Potsdam. We went over with Secretary [James F.] Byrnes and others and discussed what was likely to come up at

Potsdam. Then, you know, we sailed on the *Augusta* soon after that, and had a delightful crossing.

What impressed me most was the great interest President Truman took in the books we had prepared as to how things might be handled at Potsdam and what might come up. I remember Yalta where President Roosevelt not only didn't read the books himself, but he never told Mr. Byrnes that they were on board. We met daily with

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the President and Admiral [William D.] Leahy, who, as you know, was with him there. Mr. Byrnes, Chip Bohlen, Ben Cohen and I had earlier talks together before we would meet with the President.

MCKINZIE: I take it that most of those talks were concerned with Germany?

MATTHEWS: Yes, with Germany, and what we might expect at Potsdam.

MCKINZIE: Were you optimistic, yourself?

MATTHEWS: No, not really. I had been to Yalta and seen how that had not worked out. Even in the last days of President Roosevelt, he was pretty well disillusioned about Soviet attitudes. So we weren't expecting a great deal. But we hoped that some of the problems could be settled, particularly we hoped to make some progress on the date and the timing for setting up peace treaties. And, of course, what loomed large too, was the question of the administration of Germany and the four power arrangements which had been set up there.

MCKINZIE: Following from your comment, is a question about how you perceived Mr. Truman's attitudes to be different

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from those of President Roosevelt. For example, in the matter of France I think President Roosevelt had rather different views than President Truman?

MATTHEWS: Oh, Roosevelt did. It was not until the end of the Yalta Conference that we finally got him to agree to give France a seat, so to speak.

MCKINZIE: But you never perceived that Mr. Truman had that same kind of reserve about French participation?

MATTHEWS: No indeed, I don't think he had that at all. I think that President Roosevelt had been influenced by his dislike of [Charles] de Gaulle and his activities in the earlier stages of the war; and I think Admiral Leahy didn't have any great admiration for de Gaulle either; and I think that had something to do with it.

Stalin also showed no interest in bringing France in at Yalta. The President was finally persuaded that it was the thing to do -- but we had to work on him, and luckily we had Harry Hopkins' very

strong support. The President announced that he was in favor of the admission of France, and without any delay Stalin said, "All right, I agree."

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I think probably he did this to please Roosevelt on something that didn't interest him too much and then he may also have been worried about the position of the French Communists. But that question never arose at Potsdam. There was the question of the Polish frontiers and reparations. Already the Russians at Yalta had demanded tremendous reparations. We had had a lot of discussions about that. They pursued it and it was probably the most sticky development at Potsdam, and one of the few in which progress was made. There was a final agreement on that.

MCKINZIE: May I ask something about your own views of negotiating with the Soviet Union? There are some career service officers who claim they have been "burned" -- they use that word. Ambassador [Elbridge] Durbrow, for example argues that very many people had had such experience with the Soviet Union that they didn't at all share the public optimism that existed about that time toward Soviet future actions. Did you share this skepticism?

MATTHEWS: I think at Yalta there was a lot of hope, neither [Charles E.] Bohlen nor I had too great expectations, but I think we all felt it was important to get agreements

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and then if the Soviets didn't live up to them that would be a litmus test, so to speak, as to their future intentions.

As you remember, the atmosphere then was such that the world was euphoric about the meeting. You read in every newspaper and all of the news publications that Yalta was going to remake the world.

Well, if they weren't going to play ball, you needed some evidence of that. And that was forthcoming. Certainly it was in their failure to live up to the agreements they made at Yalta on setting up a Polish government which was to be democratic, one in which everybody had a right to vote, and so forth. They just did everything to prevent that in the intervening period before Potsdam.

MCKINZIE: Were you present when Mr. Truman went to see Joseph Stalin to inform him about the success of the atomic explosion?

MATTHEWS: No, I was not.

MCKINZIE: Was this discussed in the delegation at Potsdam, but after Mr. Truman had informed Mr. Stalin? Did the success of that test impress itself upon the U.S. delegation as being an important tool in dealing with the Soviets at that point?

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MATTHEWS: No, I don't think so. I think they thought that it was important to tell the Russians about it, that it had taken place. As I recall it, I was not present. Stalin's reaction was, "I hope you

use it against the Japanese?" But he didn't give any indication that he knew all about it from Fuchs or someone else -- it was part of the show. Since our military people had been very much interested in getting Russia into the war against Japan, our chiefs thought that was an important matter to talk about. But it didn't seem to impress Stalin.

Then we were on the *Augusta* coming home when the bomb was dropped and I remember President Truman telling people about that, the officers on the ship and the crew. They were very happy about it because :to them it meant that there would be less American lives lost in the war. They thought it was a great thing at the time -- without realizing what the future held. But I remember on the way over Admiral Leahy told me, "I don't think this thing is going to work, this bomb. But, "he said, "if it does, it's going to have terrible, terrible consequences for the future," which proved to be right.

MCKINZIE: Could I ask about Mr. Truman's negotiating skills at Potsdam? There is a minor historical argument about

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whether or not he had all the reins in his hands the first few months that he was President, that he had not been consulted very much when he was Vice President and that he had no experience in this kind of summit international conference. Was it your own impression that he was competent in dealing in face-to-face meetings with the British and the Soviets?

MATTHEWS: Yes, I thought he handled himself very well and that's partly due to the fact that he was a man who believed in doing his homework. He read and tried to understand as much as he possibly could on our eight day crossing. He stuck fairly closely to it [the briefing books], and he turned occasionally to Secretary Byrnes for discussions. I thought he handled himself very well indeed. The only thing I couldn't understand was why he took Joe Davies along.

MCKINZIE: He never explained that?

MATTHEWS: No. There are ideas, but Joe Davies' only contribution, as I recall it, was to pass up this little note. Here was President Truman, Secretary Byrnes here, and Chip Bohlen, his interpreter and adviser...

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MCKINZIE: On either side of the President.

MATTHEWS: And then Joe Davies beyond that. And at one stage, he passed up a little note: "I think Stalin's feelings are hurt, please be nice to him."

MCKINZIE: Could you talk to the point of Secretary Byrnes' style as Secretary of State? Truman, of course, had four Secretaries and of those Mr. Byrnes is perhaps most enigmatic in the sense that he did not seem to use his departmental staff as much as Secretary [George] Marshall and Secretary [Dean] Acheson did. But I gather that you were very close to Mr. Byrnes.

MATTHEWS: I was, and I felt that he handled it very well, but that criticism was there, and it was justifiable. He liked to deal with just a few people that he seemed to know, like, and understand; and he kept things very close to himself. I have always felt that his great mistake, which led to his eventual resignation, was in not informing President Truman immediately of the developments at the Moscow Conference that December.

MCKINZIE: Yes, that was the next thing I want to ask you about, because it was an interesting delegation. James

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Conant was one of the members of that delegation.

MATTHEWS: He was there to handle atomic energy questions that came up. And he handled that aspect of it. But Byrnes, I think, took too literally the President's statement of his great confidence in him and for him to go ahead and do the right thing. He did not report. I think that was bitterly resented in the White House itself. The White House is always jealous of its prerogatives, no matter who is in it.

MCKINZIE: I notice in Charles Bohlen's recent book, he writes that Secretary Byrnes has been underrated as a Secretary of State, for the reason that he had to deal with such serious problems during the period that he was Secretary and that he really made a strong effort at Moscow in 1945 to start some negotiations on the peace treaties and to not arrive at a solid impasse with the Soviet Union. Would you concur in Mr. Bohlen's conception of that?

MATTHEWS: Yes, I would. I think it's quite accurate. In fact, he [Byrnes] went, I think, a little too far -- particularly in the agreement on Bulgaria. The discussions on Bulgaria went on until the night before we were due to leave. We were to leave there early the next morning and

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it was clear that Molotov wanted some agreement and Byrnes had held out against it. One handicap, I might say, was that both Byrnes and Ben Cohen were lawyers, and they would seek phraseology which could mean one thing to us and other things to the Russians. That's how this final midnight agenda on Bulgaria was resolved, and even at that time I think a lot of us, I know I did, felt that it was a mistake.

MCKINZIE: What was your own responsibility at the Moscow Conference?

MATTHEWS: General adviser, that's all. I had European Office experience, had a lot of the background on negotiations with the Russians. I was not there for any specific purpose. John Carter Vincent was from Far East, if Far Eastern questions came up. Jernegan came up from Iran if discussions on Iran became serious. Mine was just sort of a general factotum as was true later in the Paris negotiation.

MCKINZIE: On the whole, would you conclude that the Paris Peace Conference was successful?

MATTHEWS: Yes.

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MCKINZIE: That was not a particularly disappointing thing to you as far as it boded for the future?

MATTHEWS: It was something that was essential and necessary; to get peace treaties. It was very regrettable that they would not discuss peace treaties with Germany or the question of giving up the occupation of Austria. But the treaties themselves were necessary and essential, and they worked out. The great trouble, the most struggle, was with the Italian treaty.

MCKINZIE: The reparations question, or the Trieste problem?

MATTHEWS: It was primarily Trieste. At that time Stalin was very close to Marshall Tito. Tito was putting the heat on Stalin to stand by them and they wanted Trieste and all the surrounding country. That problem went on for weeks and months. They sent a delegation down to the area, one with four people, one representative from each of the delegations, to try to reach some agreement as to what the boundaries should be. They came back with four separate reports. Nothing ever succeeded in that, except that finally we held on to Trieste, at least for the time being. It wasn't settled until years later when Llewellyn Thompson working quietly in London worked it out with Yugoslav and

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Italian representatives.

MCKINZIE: I wonder if you would care to comment on Dean Acheson's remark about the Council of Foreign Ministers? He said, roughly, that it had no reason to exist, never accomplished anything. I'm sure I'm not doing justice to the way he would express it, but in essence I think he does make the point in his book.

MATTHEWS: I don't know what he wanted as an alternative. Mind you, I was a great admirer of Dean Acheson. I felt very close to him, and liked him. But if you hadn't had Foreign Ministers meetings you would have had to have some other mechanism for reaching peace treaties. You didn't have to call a meeting of the Foreign Ministers if you didn't want to. But all that [the CFM] was weeks and months spent in Paris and then in New York with the result that it finally produced these treaties and furthermore, after great battle, we succeeded in getting the Russians to agree that the other Allies should participate in the negotiation and have their say, and not be made what Molotov called "a rubber stamp." The curious thing is where he [Molotov] got the idea and why he thought it up, because we were trying to prevent our Allies from

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being a rubber stamp, and he said if you let them come in and talk and work you're making "a rubber stamp" of them. I think that he did this tongue in cheek.

MCKINZIE: There was one of those meetings that had all kinds of visible repercussions, the Moscow meeting in 1947.

MATTHEWS: That was the most futile of all the conferences. It made it clear that there was no point in having any more.

MCKINZIE: A number of people have said that they concluded, while at the Moscow meeting, that the Soviets believed that the situation in Western Europe was working to their advantage. Since they knew that, it was not in their interest to make any kind of settlement. Did you perceive that to be the Soviet position at that time?

MATTHEWS: Oh, yes, I think so. They were against any German peace treaty which they thought might weaken their hold over their zones, and they had decided they could get along better as they were.

MCKINZIE: Then you were not surprised when the Policy Planning Staff produced the proposal for the Marshall plan which came shortly after this meeting? It's been argued that

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since the Soviets found economic deterioration of Western Europe to their advantage, at Moscow in 1947, they simply didn't do anything because they saw the economic situation deteriorating, working to their advantage, and the Marshall plan was the logical response to that kind of Soviet position. The kind of question that I would like you to respond to was whether or not that seemed to you a logical and appropriate response to what appeared in Moscow in 1947.

MATTHEWS: From the Russians' point of view, they saw things coming their way, and were very happy. It's very fortunate that Molotov came [to Paris in July 1947]. Remember that Bevin picked up the ball right away.

He arranged a meeting with Bidault and Molotov. Then Molotov was given instructions not to attend the large meeting which was called. If he had attended it, gone along with it, given lip service to it, he could have stymied and delayed and blocked things and made the Marshall plan less likely to accomplish an early success.

MCKINZIE: Do you ever have any personal theories as to why he didn't stay?

MATTHEWS: Well, he had no say about it. Orders came from

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Moscow, from Stalin. I don't think it occurred to Stalin that it would be such an important and serious thing which would affect them so adversely. In other words, I don't think he thought it would work.

MCKINZIE: Could you explain the circumstances under which you became Ambassador to Sweden?

MATTHEWS: Well, in those days a Foreign Service officer could spend only four years at a time in Washington, and my four years were up. I went to Sweden. General Marshall, I think,

suggested my name to President Truman and I was sent there for four years. A number of the Marshall plan representatives came there, among them John Haskell. I then went back to Washington. I was Deputy Under Secretary of State (that was in June of 1950), and two days after I took up my duties, the Korean war broke out. But during the period that I was in Stockholm, I was largely an observer and read the papers and that sort of thing. I got into the NATO business a little, because the Swedes were trying to persuade the Norwegians and Danes, not to join NATO.

MCKINZIE: The Danish participation in NATO was almost essential for the success of the organization, was it not?

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MATTHEWS: Yes.

MCKINZIE: Because of their...

MATTHEWS: Geographical location. Well, the Swedes worked on them. They wanted to form a Nordic alliance -- just the three of them. But the Norwegians and Danes wisely realized they could get more protection from the United States and Western Europe than they could from Swedes who had carefully kept out of the last war.

MCKINZIE: It was kind of a baptism of fire then, wasn't it, to come back and find yourself, within a week, meeting with the President over what response the United States should make to the invasion of South Korea?

MATTHEWS: Yes, I was there. I wasn't at the first meeting. Jim Webb, who was then Under Secretary of State, attended that, and then he dropped out of that aspect of things, and from there on I spent most of my time, for the next several years, worrying about or having to deal with the war in Korea.

MCKINZIE: I understand that you were liaison man for the State Department with the Department of Defense.

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MATTHEWS: That's right, that was one of my first duties. It was very interesting, too. During the time when the situation was most critical we would meet over there sometimes two or three times a day -- Dean Rusk, Alex Johnson, who was then his leg man, and whoever else might be necessary. We'd go over there any time of the day or night. It worked very well once Louis Johnson resigned, because he had established this absurd ruling that there should be only one man in the Pentagon to talk to anybody in the State Department, and one State Department man talk with him. I was the State Department man and there was an over aged general, General Byrnes I think his name was (he had no connection with the former Secretary of State). We were the only two people that were supposed to speak to each other.

Well, one morning Larry [General Lauris] Norstad, who was high up in the command there, came over to see me with some statement they wanted to issue, on which we agreed without any

difficulty, and he took it back to Johnson and told Johnson that this was the statement that he had agreed to with me. Johnson just blew his top, completely, not about the statement -- he didn't even read that -- but the fact that Norstad had come over to the

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State Department instead of sending General Byrnes. Larry Norstad told me later that he was so upset about it that he thought it over for a day or two and decided to tender his resignation from the Air Force. And he was about to tender it that morning when he heard over the news that Johnson was out and General Marshall was in.

MCKINZIE: I gather that the whole State Department had some difficulty accepting Mr. Johnson as Secretary.

MATTHEWS: I think he must have been off his rocker at that time. I never understood why he was appointed.

MCKINZIE: Because of that particular arrangement you had with the Department of Defense, then, you were in a unique position to observe General [Douglas] MacArthur's conduct in Korea. I wonder if you would care to comment on the evolution of your own views toward General MacArthur's conduct of the war, and of the escalation of his public pronouncements on the conduct of the war.

MATTHEWS: My views would be very adverse. I remember, too, that there were long discussions before the Inchon landing took place. The Chiefs of Staff were very reluctant to see that come off. They thought its chances

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of success were minimal. But on the other hand, they are equally reluctant to tell the commanding general in the field what he should or should not do as far as his tactics were concerned.

That had been General Marshall's handling of World War II, that the commanding officer of the area should not be held down unless it was necessary. So, they queried General MacArthur, but they never forbade him to have the Inchon landings. Well, everything worked so beautifully at Inchon -- even the weather was ideal, it was such a great success -- that I think that gave General MacArthur ideas that the war was about over and he could handle it.

MCKINZIE: Rather early, though, he began to make some speeches. There was one particularly he was going to make to the Veterans of Foreign Wars which, as I recall, President Truman ultimately demanded that he...

MATTHEWS: Not deliver.

MCKINZIE: I gather that you were in all of those preliminary discussions about that?

MATTHEWS: I don't recall that I was in on the speech in

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question, but his statement about the handling of Wake Island was extraordinary I thought.

MCKINZIE: Dean Acheson said that a couple of days after, or maybe the day after the Chinese came into the war, that he attended with you, a meeting at the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and Acheson comments that at that point he, Acheson, lost all faith in MacArthur's judgment. What about yourself, sir?

MATTHEWS: Well, I think all of us were shocked when he split his forces, sent some up the east coast and sent some up the west coast, his estimate that the Chinese couldn't come into North Korea; if they did, they couldn't bring in 70 or 80 thousand, and nothing big could happen... In other words, he was so overcome with success, the success of the Inchon landing, that he thought the war was over. He said that he'd be willing to release a division or two for Europe before Christmas; the boys would all be out of the trenches by Christmas. This was incredible.

MCKINZIE: Were you willing, yourself, to go along with that until the Chinese entry? I'm trying to get at your own feeling about MacArthur.

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MATTHEWS: Remember I'm not a military man, but we all thought the splitting of his forces, sending General [Edward] Almond up the east coast was a great mistake. Partly, too, I think MacArthur believed in his Intelligence people. General [Charles] Willoughby was a very dubious character.

MCKINZIE: Mr. Ambassador, after that meeting where there was some general disillusionment expressed by people in the State Department with General MacArthur's conduct of the war, were you in meetings then where his conduct was discussed with the President?

MATTHEWS: No. I was delighted with the decision to relieve him of command, but I had no knowledge of it, beforehand knowledge. How that came about I don't know. Acheson, you know, had requested that he not go to Wake Island, because he knew that he would rub MacArthur the wrong way.

MCKINZIE: But it is also true, isn't it, that for a while there were people in the Department of Defense who did shield General MacArthur, perhaps on the basis that because he was the battlefield commander. At the time he was forbidden to deliver that Veterans of Foreign Wars speech, I seem to recall that there were people there who said, "Well, you ought not to make this very blunt."

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MATTHEWS: Yes, I think so. But I haven't a very vivid memory of that.

MCKINZIE: Could you tell me something about your dealings with the British during the Korean war? I understand that in a number of cases you dealt with Oliver Franks and other

British delegates at particular crises points. Also you know about the problem with oil in Iran and you were present when it was decided to send Averell Harriman to Iran to see if something could be worked out.

MATTHEWS: Well, I did see a great deal of Oliver Franks during that time, and he had even attended some of our meetings at the Pentagon. I think he was the finest and ablest British Ambassador that they have had here in this century. I think he was a very remarkable and very fine man, and certainly no one ever had closer relations with the Secretary of State than he did with Acheson. They were very close. He was quick and intelligent, could respect confidences without reporting them. He was an ideal Ambassador I think.

I used to see Hume Wrong of Canada quite a bit. He would come down and sit in on these briefings on what was going on in the world. As far as Iran is concerned, I attended some meetings on it, but I wasn't

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really involved in that. It was handled largely by the Middle East people.

MCKINZIE: There are now some historians who write about what they put in quotes as "a special relationship" between the United States and Great Britain. Some of them then proceed from that to make a moral judgment as to whether or not there should have been a special relationship with Great Britain. Is it accurate to say there was a special relationship with Great Britain in this period? What was its nature? Ought there to have been a special relationship?

MATTHEWS: Yes, I would have thought so. I did think so. I don't know that I can be specific about it, but we did have this close relationship. In the first place, we developed the bomb together, participating in that, that was a special relationship of its own. We were very close during the war.

I have no judgment about whether it's outlived its usefulness. But it certainly was very useful and very logical. You will find the third volume of Pogue's biography of George Marshall very interesting. We couldn't have operated during wartime without this special wartime

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relationship. Certainly I recommend that third volume. Marshall was one of my real heroes. He was an extraordinary man of great character and integrity, and probably the greatest man we've had this century.

MCKINZIE: Could you expand a bit on that? Was your admiration based upon his personal qualities or...

MATTHEWS: His personal qualities. The country stood first with him, not his own interests, not anything else. That deals in part, where I am now, with the whole question of whether he should have been made Commander-in-Chief of the cross channel operations. The book goes into all the pros and cons. It had been his great ambition to be that, and he sacrificed it when he realized that he was needed more as Chief of Staff, and he accepted the post. And then the poor

man, when he finally had gotten through the war -- this is in his wife's book -- they had just gone back to Leesburg and at last he could slough off all the burdens that he had been carrying. And she went up to take a nap; while she was napping President Truman called him, and asked if he would go to China. Just like that he said, "If you wish, Mr. President," and there he went. There are not many people who would

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have done that.

MCKINZIE: Will you comment on the strengthening of NATO? It wasn't very much, was it, when it was first born? It had not a very strong military backup.

MATTHEWS: It had us: We had a few bombs that nobody else had at that time.

MCKINZIE: Do you recall the emphasis that you placed in your own work toward getting additional commitments from European countries toward the military component of NATO? Any particular difficulties, or line of approach that you used?

MATTHEWS: Well, there were lots of efforts to get them to add to their contributions. Some were more willing than others, but they were all theoretically in agreement. But most of the money and equipment had to come from the United States, because this was still during the Marshall plan and they were not equipped financially to do more than that. I remember when I was sent as Ambassador to the Hague later, this is after President Truman's career, we had something called "offshore procurement" and I spent a good many days going around to different places to

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inspect the completions. Just a little ceremony of completion of some kind of vessel. Well, say an inshore minesweeper (wooden minesweepers) which we were paying for, which they would turn over to NATO's navies, but they financially weren't able to do much.

MCKINZIE: I recall, sir, that at one point a member of the Dutch military staff said something to one of General Eisenhower's staff in Paris to the effect that the way to get money out of the United States was to threaten to get out of NATO. He said that he didn't see why the Dutch should really strain, that their contribution wasn't all that much, and that they were going to be protected by it anyhow. Is it fair to say that that's an isolated incident, at a low level?

MATTHEWS: Yes, and it didn't represent the feelings of the Dutch government. My closest friend, I would say, during my four or five years there in the Hague was Caes Staff, who was the Minister of War there. I'm sure that he was as enthusiastic as he could be and got all the money he could to build up the Dutch, particularly the Army. The Navy was always first class, and the Air Force was pretty good, but the Army wasn't. One of the

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many handicaps was that the country was so crowded that they had no place to have maneuvers. They would have to get permission from the Germans to go over there to hold maneuvers several

times a year. But as for threatening to withdraw from NATO, maybe this man you quote thought it was a good idea, but it certainly didn't represent the Dutch. The people we knew were very enthusiastic about NATO. Whether they could have put more money in it I don't know.

MCKINZIE: There seems to have been emphasis on economic solutions to problems of postwar Europe at the end of the Second World War, and a great deal of power in the State Department was behind that idea of economic solution.

MATTHEWS: That was the idea behind the Marshall plan.

MCKINZIE: Yes, and even preceding the Marshall plan there was the idea that if somehow one could reconstruct the European nations and get them to integrate, to a certain degree, their production facilities and their marketing systems, there would be a mutual dependence which would bring about stability and peace.

MATTHEWS: Jean Monnet's plan. He was a great advocate of that idea.

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MCKINZIE: It must have been disheartening to those people to see that it wasn't working so well. In your view was the idea that economics would bring about stability a correct one?

MATTHEWS: Well, I hadn't realized it was disheartening, I thought they made progress on it.

MCKINZIE: Well, disheartening in the sense that after they implemented it, it was then necessary to come up with NATO. It turned out not to be completely enough.

MATTHEWS: Well, I didn't perceive it that way, with a tie between it and NATO. NATO was military defense, the other was economic reconstruction and, if possible, a common market as it exists today. That didn't progress as far as the people had hoped. Lots of people like George Ball, for instance, thought that all the barriers between the different countries of Europe, that is economic barriers, would disappear. Well, they haven't. I suppose it's arguable whether it would be good for us or not if they did disappear. But they have the organization which is certainly very active. The French seemed to be sometimes a lone partner in it, but the common market is a flourishing thing. The British have

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just come into it after many years. Now, whether from our point of view that is advantageous or disadvantageous, I don't know. But it certainly seems to me that Monnet would not be entirely disillusioned by this plan and certainly it was not tied to NATO.

MCKINZIE: When I said "disillusioning," I had the feeling from reading some papers of George Kennan's for example, that at one point he believed that the economic reconstruction would be enough. He opposed NATO in the beginning, you know. Perhaps it's a false assumption on my part, and that of some other historians, that George Kennan and other people believed that economic means were sufficient, and that military rearmament would in some degree flaw the economic plan.

MATTHEWS: Well, do you know George Kennan? He's a loner you know, very much a loner, very sensitive, very touchy. He tends to "forget about all of this stuff" and just concentrate on what happens to impress him at the moment. I like George very much and certainly as far as a historian of Russia he is extraordinary. That great telegram he sent, later published as an article by "Mr. X", did more to awaken the United States to what

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they would face in dealing with Russia after the war than anything else. And then he seems to have spent the next few years trying to repudiate his own telegram: He is an extraordinary person.

MCKINZIE: Well, you know, he resigned from the Policy Planning Staff.

MATTHEWS: That was later.

MCKINZIE: Yes, I'm leaping ahead in time here, but he resigned from the Policy Planning Staff at a point when he perceived his effectiveness to be diminished, because the recommendations of the Policy Planning Staff could no longer go directly to the Secretary. He seemed to be somewhat upset, if not contemptuous, of staff work within the State Department and the line of command, arguing that solutions to problems were diluted and modified in the course of having to get approval from line divisions before they went to the Secretary. He said it upset him and so he quit. As a veteran of a whole lifetime in the State Department, I would be very interested in your reaction to "staff work" and the idea that you can't get good solution to a problem adopted unless you can go directly to the Secretary with it.

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MATTHEWS: Well, I think George was certainly frustrated, but he frustrates very easily, and I don't remember this particular business. I think he was about to retire, go live on his farm, when I came back at the time of the Korean war. He was only there, I think, a few weeks. He had already decided to retire. Then he was going to run for Congress from his district in Pennsylvania. I think he had the idea that everybody would stand up and cheer. He didn't know what getting his neck into Pennsylvania politics would do to him. So, after about three weeks he dropped that.

He's a loner, a brilliant mind.

MCKINZIE: Obviously you don't accept the idea that in order to be effective you must be able to walk into the Secretary's office with your proposal totally unscathed by what other people in the hierarchy might do to it.

MCKINZIE: Oh, I think he exaggerates the importance of it. I think that most people can get in to see the Secretary if it's something of considerable importance. My job, when I was Deputy Under Secretary, was to have meetings three times a week with the heads of all the different bureaus, including Policy Planning Staff. Paul Nitze was

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there then, and we never had any difficulties as to when anybody could go see the Secretary, Under Secretary, no rigid line there. I think maybe Dean Acheson got tired of hearing all of George's wails. George could never really be satisfied with anything, and that's unfortunate.

MCKINZIE: Could you speak about the effect of the McCarthy movement on the effectiveness of the State Department as it dealt with foreign nations?

Now, I know that there are dimensions to the part that it bore on the private personal lives of people in the State Department, but did that have any effect upon the "credibility," to use the current term, of the State Department in dealing with foreign delegations, with representatives of other governments? Was the prestige, internationally, of the State Department hurt much, in your opinion, by the charges of Senator Joseph McCarthy?

MATTHEWS: No, I don't think it was. I think it was a tragic error and nothing could have been worse than McCarthy and that whole McCarthy period, but as far as our effectiveness in dealing with other countries was concerned, I never sensed that at all. I think we got a lot of sympathy from foreign ambassadors stationed in Washington when dealing with them. But as for its affecting our dealings

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with countries and problems -- whether it was oil in Iran or whatever it was -- it had nothing to do with that, really.

In the State Department during the period that Acheson was still Secretary of State, and President Truman was President, everyone felt that they had their whole backing and support, and held up very well. That was not the case after Secretary Dulles took over and made that speech in which he said that the times required "positive loyalty." The Department felt itself going downhill. And they felt that he [Dulles] had to be so beholden to some of the important and powerful Republican Senators that he didn't do all that he could have done by way of protecting us. He brought in that horrible man McCloud and he brought Don Lowry, who was a babe in the woods, didn't know what it was all about. Then, there was the real low pitch: Remember the Cohen and Schine trip to Europe and all that. I was just shocked by it all.

MCKINZIE: On a number of occasions during the Truman administration you had to deal with Mr. Dulles.

MATTHEWS: Yes, working on the Japanese peace treaty I used to see him from time to time and I had very good relations with him personally. I admired him as a Secretary of

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State. He, certainly in later years, did very well.

When they [the Eisenhower Administration] first came in they had the idea you could roll back communism by wishful thinking, or sending balloons over into Czechoslovakia, that sort of thing. They had to learn and it took a while. For instance, I received a visit from one of the

younger men who came in and of whom I thought very highly -- a good friend of mine -- and he had been instructed to find out ways to roll back the Communists. It seemed that the best thing, the weakest link to the Communist curtain, was Albania. Therefore, we must get Albania into proper hands. He came to me and said, "We're thinking of sending a battleship, a couple destroyers in near the harbor in the Adriatic and fire a few shots."

And I said, "Well, that isn't political warfare, that is active warfare. What is the demarcation line?"

"Well," he said, "if the shots just landed in the water that would be political warfare; but if they landed in the country, that would be real warfare."

I burst out laughing, I said, "You'll have to do better than that if you expect to get any acquiescence from me." But it was fantastic the ideas they would get.

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MCKINZIE: Without putting you on the spot, where, of all the Presidents you have served under (you've served under a number because I think your career began in the 1920s), would you rate Mr. Truman? And why?

MATTHEWS: I think he was the ablest and finest of the men under whom I've served. I saw more of him and of President Roosevelt at the Yalta Conference, and President Eisenhower (I was in the Torch operation with him in the Atlantic and in North Africa). Of the other Presidents I was too far down the line for anybody to know about my existence. The first one I met was [Calvin] Coolidge. There were eight of us who had just come into the diplomatic service who were taken in and presented to him; and we were out of there within 40 seconds, I think. He just wished us luck and that was it. And I only saw President Roosevelt at the Yalta Conference. As far as I'm concerned, Mr. Truman was the one whom I admired most and respected the most, and saw the most of.

MCKINZIE: Thank you very much, sir.

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