

Oral History Interview
with
HENRY REIFF

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Arlington, Virginia
May 23, 1973
by Richard D. McKinzie, Harry S. Truman Library

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NOTICE

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REIFF: I was brought up in a Republican family and anybody interested in a Democratic president or party was synonymous with having a covenant with sin or something. However, I was very much intrigued by what Woodrow Wilson was saying in 1912, and increasingly so

during the war years. As a matter of fact, in 1916, in the fall, I went down with the so-called Progressive Republicans from New York to Shadow Lawn, New Jersey, where President Wilson was having his summer White House. There I had a chance to meet him and shake hands with him and give him some advice. The advice was simply that he should not mind the jingos. He laughed and said he wouldn't. So, that's my entry into the field of foreign affairs.

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I pursued that interest in American foreign relations thereafter very steadily. When I got to Harvard in 1921, I went to the meetings at the Harvard Union and there I heard Manley O. Hudson talk about the League of Nations and the types of agreements it was making, and its objectives and plans. Of course, I was very much interested in the American contest at the time, the discussion as to whether we ought to join or not join.

Mr. Hudson, who was Bemis professor of international law at the Harvard Law School, talked about the growth in what he called the multipartite agreements, which are, of course, the multilateral, many-participant types of agreements. He held out great hope for their use in international affairs as a form or sort of statutory enactment of international obligations. So when I got a chance to write my doctoral thesis later as a graduate student at Harvard, I chose the subject of "The United States and Multipartite Administrative Treaties." From that voluminous thesis I was able to publish various articles from time to time. One of the articles was entitled "The United States and International Administrative Unions: Some Historical Aspects." This was published in

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International Conciliation by the Carnegie Foundation in a pamphlet form.

In 1928, I became a member of the St. Lawrence University faculty and taught international law and international organization there for the next 38 years.

MCKINZIE: It must have been a very new kind of course in 1928.

REIFF: Yes, the "organization" course was. I also taught international law. I forget precisely when the "organization" course started -- maybe in the '30s. But I realized that in order to give a certain realism to my teaching I ought to have government employment sometime in the field. I got my degree in international law, but as a political scientist writing in treaty law, so I needed the experience in government.

Well, I tried. I had tried to enlist in the First World War but was rejected on the grounds of a slight heart defect. I also tried to enlist in the Second World War for the occupation forces when they were taking men. They thought that I had not had sufficient administrative experience, although I'd been head of the department at St. Lawrence for some time.

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So, I was frustrated again and again to get the type of experience I felt necessary to give some sense of background reality to what I was talking about and teaching.

Then came an offer -- twice, from the State Department for me to head up the section on commercial treaties. For some reason or other they had heard of my study in the treaty field, my academic experience, but I realized my interest was not in commercial treaties, but in the organizational type of treaty that dealt with international structures rather than bargaining treaties, even if they were multipartite.

So, in a very bold way I turned down both invitations, one which came about 1943, and another one in 1944 -- the same position was open as I recall. I told my wife, "Well, here goes, I turned down my last chance to get the service which I wanted."

But then, it happened that I sent to Denys Myers, who died recently, some reprints of my articles. I usually sent them around to colleagues and friends. Lo and behold comes this invitation from Mr. [Harley] Notter in the Department of State in a division, or a section, dealing with international organization affairs which was planning toward

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an organization in the postwar period. This was 1944.

This, of course, was just the sort of thing I would want. I went down to Washington from Canton, New York, and had a nice chat with Mr. Notter. He hired me on the spot.

So, I joined this section, or division, called International Organization Affairs in August 1944. The man in charge of it was Durward V. Sandifer. He was a marvelous chief for the division.

Apparently, one of the bits of evidence used to show some of my qualifications for the work they were doing was that very pamphlet on international administrative unions which showed the course of American participation in these unions since the 1840s. It suggested that I had some notion of the American record in that regard, and also indicated that I had some knowledge of treaty structure.

That brought me to the State Department just at the time the Dumbarton Oaks agreement was being worked out. I attended a few sessions of those "conversations" and then settled down to my prescribed work in that division. In that division, then, under Mr. Sandifer, I was charged with work relating to the responses to the Dumbarton Oaks agreement,

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which were circulated among the various United Nations, as these responses came in to my division. I worked on proposals for amendments to a forthcoming charter, or agreement: on the subject of the privileges and immunities of the organization and the delegations to it; some work on the court; on inconsistent obligations and some other clauses. You see, the whole subject matter was broken up and various of us were given the chores. It was my job to analyze these returns and prepare memos for my superiors as to the feasibility, desirability of the proposals, what was good about them, what was bad about them, and so on.

MCKINZIE: Which were particularly difficult to deal with? Was the proposed amendment procedure of any particular difficulty?

REIFF: I don't have a very clear recollection of it. I do know this, that the Latin-American states were very ambitious in their proposals. They thought they could write the millennium into a document. I found myself frequently cutting them down to size and demonstrating their non-feasibility more often than their feasibility.

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The toughest question I had to deal with was really privileges and immunities because we knew that this would be a much larger organization, and since the United States had not been a member of the League, we didn't have much experience with representation at a large-scale conference. There was always a possibility, of course, that the organization might locate in the United States, although we didn't anticipate that clearly at that time. If it became so, there would be many, many difficult questions arising.

Aside from that, the basic problem about privileges and immunities was how much privilege and how much immunity to give the representatives in a new organization. It had caused a lot of difficulty in the League of Nations. Any new organization, of course, would include the United States, as we had expected it would. The problem was multiplying into sort of geometric proportions because a large number of nations and a large number of delegates or personnel attached to these delegations would be really a big problem.

The problem would be one of privileges and immunities, that one thing, and the status of the organization. of course, many people thought it ought to be some type of a "super" state in order to safeguard it that way, but we didn't look

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at it that way in the State Department.

MCKINZIE: Were there any longish discussions on the world organization as a "superstate?"

REIFF: At that time, I don't recall any long discussions about it. Our view, as experienced technicians in this field, was that we couldn't create any kind of a super state. All we could do was give it adequate status, which would give it immunity and protection and the right to make certain types of minor agreements for its proper functioning. And that's the way it got written into the Charter, which is, I think, correct. Many of the suggestions coming in were of this lofty character. Oh, you got suggestions that an area should be provided something like a District of Columbia for the headquarters. There always would be fantastic, unrealistic proposals.

We took what I believed were feasible and practical trends and developments based upon the experience of the League of Nations and other agencies which had been set up under multipartite agreements. That was where some of my experience came in. I could see what had been done for the League itself since I had studied that, and for

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institutions like the Universal Postal Union, the International Agricultural Institute and the Pan American Union. We had these and many other established organizations as models to draw upon.

So, we built upon that sort of basis, just staying very close to feasibility and reality. I think it paid off. We weren't drafting a constitution for a new world because, well, we weren't geared that way. We as students of the subject matter knew that we would have to proceed with caution and conservatism to produce the best results. Also, there were two things that were never put in a memo, but which seemed to be, I am told, much in the thought of the people I was working with. I used to tell this to my students. One was that we must not invoke, or rely too heavily on, the League of Nations antecedents, that we ought not to let that creep into our memos too much, although that was the largest scale performance we had had up to that time. And you notice that our section in the State Department was set up as a division on postwar international organization. There was no mention in any of the descriptions that this was designed to be a successor to the League of Nations.

Now, to invoke the League of Nations was sort of a

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tabu, as strange as that may seem. The reason for it was that we all were old enough to realize how the mere mention of the League of Nations was enough to infuriate a good segment in the Senate, hence, the less said about it the better really. We could cite League of Nations experience and so on, but we ought to proceed and draft what we had to do on the basis of the new needs, reasonable needs, and what we had learned from the League experience without invoking it too often.

So, we drew up our papers without citing League experience too often, but utilizing that experience and making our judgments about that.

MCKINZIE: As a student of the League of Nations, were there any particular pitfalls that you wanted to avoid in writing this new Charter? You are an advocate of those kinds of international organizations and would like to see them perfected.

REIFF: That's right.

MCKINZIE: Were there any particular areas which you made your special concern?

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REIFF: These considerations didn't come into my special concern too much because they really involved the structure of the Security Council and the size of the General Assembly and the powers respectively of the General Assembly and the Council and matters like that. Those were really handled by other members in the section, the specialists in those areas.

All I was asked to do was to scrutinize these rather small areas. There were some fine improvements made upon the League of Nations, of course, in the Charter as written out. I think it's a much better instrument than the League of Nations covenant. But those matters that I

mentioned, the powers and functions of the General Assembly and the Council, really involved political considerations. I was far from dealing with political considerations. Mine were much more technical. So, the unwritten criterion of our work was, "Don't cite the League experience too much. Use it, but don't keep jabbering about it," to put it frankly, because there were too many Senators who were holdovers from the 1920-21 experience or had memories about it and would resent a League of Nations in a new guise.

The other desideratum and certainly the one which I

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and some of my colleagues used, was, "It might be a bright idea, but if it won't work, don't recommend it, because if it's not feasible, given a current situation and the participants, well, what's the use of recommending it?"

MCKINZIE: When you say "won't work," you mean getting it approved?

REIFF: Approved, or operate in practice, yes.

MCKINZIE: This took into consideration the U.S. Congress as well as the international situation then?

REIFF: Yes. Insofar as Congress and the Senate are concerned, they would be looking at the nature of the obligation and its feasibility and its effect upon the United States. That's what I would include in this concept of, well, even if it's a good idea, and it won't work either internationally, or it won't work in respect to acceptability by the Senate and the Congress, well, then chuck it.

MCKINZIE: Were most of these technical experts with whom you worked of the same general mind set as yourself about international organizations?

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REIFF: I think so. One of my colleagues (I won't mention his name), a younger man, younger than myself, had had no academic training so that he didn't have the benefit of a projection into the history of institutions. He was a lawyer, which I wasn't, and many of us weren't, but we knew institutions. That's a different matter. The lawyers often appeared at a loss in examining an institution and its workability and feasibility. Anyway, this chap used to suggest ideas which I would have to reject out of hand.

MCKINZIE: Were his types of the Clarence Streit variety?

REIFF: Oh, maybe not as far out, not as far, as extreme as the Streit suggestion. You're speaking of the World Federalists? No, but other things somewhere short of that, but much more advanced than our positions. Most of the men were very realistic, and the women, very realistic. I think they all followed these two unwritten and unpublicized emphases. Again, number one, don't chatter too much about the League of Nations, there are too many people who would be

gunning for a new institution if it was felt it was a mere successor of the League of Nations. And secondly,

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if it isn't acceptable to the Senate, forget it.

Now, many people criticize us and the Charter for not being bold enough. I think that they did a grand job, the master-minders; that would be [Arthur H.] Vandenberg and the other boys who were at the top echelon. They did a grand job, in working out the features which would be acceptable to the Senate. As you remember, it went through the Senate with only one or two adverse votes. This was marvelous. Instead of having great discord as in 1920-21, we had this initial unanimity practically, which was a wonderful achievement from my point of view. Of course, in many ways, the United Nations hasn't fulfilled our hopes and our expectations, but why is really a subject for analysis.

One unexpected problem I would mention offhand is the leniency with which new and inexperienced and nonviable states were admitted. At first we had about forty-five or forty-six, and now we have about a hundred and twenty-six or seven. There should have been adopted very early some criterion for admissibility of states on the basis of population and value to the community and so on; but that's another matter.

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I think the United Nations has made some mistakes, but I think, aside from those mistakes, any enlargement of the Security Council began to shift the Security Council over into the area of the difficulties that the League had with its increased council. The larger it got the less effective the League became; the larger the United Nations council has become, the less effective it has become, but that's a matter of subsequent history.

Now, I enjoyed working at this. I had a strange illusion when I first went to the State Department that somehow or other, if you wanted the answer to some international problem, all you had to do is to send a slip with a messenger boy up to somebody or other and he would pull the answer out of a file drawer and say "this is the answer." I found out, of course, that everyday we were studying and producing answers. Many of these things were new and fresh propositions. They needed some men with academic training and historical training and other types of "in-depth" training to scrutinize them carefully for the "higher-ups" who would have to make the decisions.

So many of the State Department personnel are operational personnel. They have to deal with matters which

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come before them for fairly immediate consideration, and they have to make these judgments, and that's a hard thing to do. There are research people, naturally, but I think, for example, one reason why [Henry] Kissinger has been so successful in so many ways is that he brings great scholarly capacity to his work. I think somewhere in the State Department there must be a more

"in-depth" examination of a lot of things. So often decisions are made on an ad hoc basis and then you can make mistakes.

MCKINZIE: But you're fairly satisfied that the staff work on the Charter of United Nations did have that historical dimension.

REIFF: Yes, indeed! It really got the benefit of the best thinking of the time.

MCKINZIE: Might you say something about how you came from those dealings with particular problems to the San Francisco Conference.

REIFF: Well, Dumbarton Oaks was a preliminary agreement which was a basis for suggestions and comments by the so-called

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United Nations at that time, this alliance against the Nazis. We knew that a conference would come up. The question was, "Well, why at San Francisco?" The answer as I got it was, "There were no other available places." We'd used Chicago for various big conferences. This was wartime and where could you go, where you had the hotel facilities? So, we got the word that it would be at San Francisco.

Then came a selection of personnel and I was asked to deal primarily, in a technical way, with what they call legal questions. I would go to a certain committee on legal questions in San Francisco. I was to be helpful to another committee on the court too. My committee was committee 4-2. That is commission 4, and committee 2 under commission 4, which was on legal questions.

We got a variety of questions submitted to us in that committee. I served under Mr. [Charles] Fahy, then Solicitor General of the United States, who subsequently became a Federal judge here in Washington. He was my boss in San Francisco, but I also worked in close cooperation with Professor [Philip] Jessup from Columbia. He worked on the Court Committee.

We went out by train to San Francisco.

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MCKINZIE: Did you go as a delegation?

REIFF: Yes, the train was completely devoted to the delegation, a special train. It took us three or four days to get there.

MCKINZIE: Was this a working trip or was it a kind of a pleasure trip?

REIFF: No, it was mainly a pleasure trip. We worked pretty hard during the year, but in going to the conference, we relaxed. I have an episode which might be of interest for the record.

You see, Mr. Cordell Hull resigned in the fall of 1944, as I recall, and Mr. [Edward R., Jr.] Stettinius took his place. Mr. Stettinius was a very agreeable person, but he was not experienced in international affairs. I suppose he was chosen because he would not interpose his will or views contrary to Mr. Roosevelt or Harry Hopkins or the other boys up there. He was a very agreeable person, and, as a matter of fact, he always had a ready smile. The Latin-Americans called him "el diente," because he was always showing those shiny white teeth.

On numerous occasions I would meet him in the hallway there in the old State Department Building, which was War,

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Navy and State, and I would say "Good evening," or "Good morning," to him as we would pass by. He would always respond, adding a "Sir." He was a very agreeable sort of person.

Well, there came a day in April of 1945 (the 12th) and I was leaving my office in the evening -- perhaps it was 5 o'clock and perhaps it was 5:30, I forget. But I would have to go up a couple of streets and take a bus there to my home in Arlington. I passed Mr. Stettinius in the hallway as he came in. His face was as red as a turkey cock. You remember he had white hair, so it was quite a contrast, very bright red, and he was puffing.

I noticed that because ordinarily he didn't puff when he walked. He dashed by, but he said good evening in his old way, but rather speedily, and he walked down the transverse passage which leads out of a little gate onto the White House grounds in that direction. I saw him go down that avenue.

When I got off the bus in Arlington and walked down the street toward my home there (this would be possibly 6:00, 6:30, something like that), a young woman that I had met at times at the bus stop was out on her front stoop and as I passed by she said, "Have you heard the news?"

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I said, "No, what news?"

"The President is dead."

MCKINZIE: Stettinius had been going to the White House?

REIFF: Exactly! That was the moment when Mr. Stettinius was going to the White House to meet the new President, Mr. Truman, when Mr. Truman was presumably taking the oath. As I found out later, that's going by the Stimson memoirs, it was also the first time Mr. Stimson told about the atomic bomb.

They used to tell lots of interesting stories about Stettinius. He was very friendly and I had lots of chats with him in London afterwards. As a matter of fact, I went over on the ship with him in the summer of 1945 at the end of the war to the conference to work out the operational details for the United Nations. We had our jokes about Mr. Stettinius. One of the boys told this story, which I'm pretty sure is apocryphal. Mr. Stettinius on one of his jaunts into the Latin-American

countries wound up in Mexico and was trying to tell the Mexicans how pleased he was in our association with Mexico. He told this Mexican gathering how much Americans loved Mexico and Mexicans, and he said then,

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"We just love your country. We would be proud to call it our own." That's sort of an apocryphal story, hardly diplomatic; it may not be true.

The other thing concerns his difficulty in composing his state papers. I think it was his secretary or one of his press men maybe, a young fellow -- we used to ask him, "Well, how are you getting along with the boss?"

And he'd say, "Well, it's all right, everything's all right, we get it all written out for him, but then the trouble is that he pronounces things on the wrong syllable."

Well, this is some of the lack of veneration in the lower ranks.

MCKINZIE: I was going to ask if you sensed any difference after President Truman took the oath of office?

REIFF: All right. Now, that's a very interesting point. Of course we were shocked with the death of the President who had given us adequate support and had convinced Russia that they ought to come in on an organization. After the death of Roosevelt the question in our minds was, since we all knew what presidential powers were, what Truman was going to do, because he had a perfect right to call everything off.

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But within, I think it took a day or two, not the very next day, but it was the second day, the word trickled down, "Resume, resume operations, the conference is going forward." So, that was a great relief.

MCKINZIE: You never felt that there was going to be less support, or a change in another direction?

REIFF: No. No.

MCKINZIE: No one ever suggested the possibility?

REIFF: No. No change in instructions. I'll say this much -- I wasn't in the State Department for very long and my position was primarily one as a technician -- but I was never told to do anything that I really conscientiously couldn't do. The only suggestion that I ever got along those lines was in London in one stage of certain negotiations we had there, but that's another story.

In London we were being pressured by Committee 5 on Legal Questions of the Preparatory Commission into adopting a convention on privileges and immunities and I was representing the

United States on that committee. For some reason or other the delegation wanted and I was asked to delay the

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adoption of the committee's text. I said to an older and more experienced member of our delegation, "I don't know how I can hold it up. I've given our views on certain clauses which were unacceptable to us." I realized that I couldn't possibly prevent the adoption of the resolution and its transmission to the General Assembly, the one that was going to meet in January, 1946. I realized that, but I thought maybe if the thing wasn't ready when the General Assembly met, then there would be a chance to argue it once again in the General Assembly. So, the question was, was it possible to delay the completion of the text of the convention. I brought this problem to the attention of my older colleague in the delegation. I said, "What'll I do in a case like this. I've argued, I've adopted delaying tactics, but I can't stop this thing going through."

He said, "Well now, I'll tell you, just try to dribble a little sand in the gears, but don't let anybody see you doing it." But there's a limit of how much sand you can put in gears orally or verbally, so it went through anyway and that's the nearest thing that I ever came to being told to do anything.

In the political areas, the political provisions, it

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it was a different matter. I had nothing to do with them.

MCKINZIE: Could we talk about the veto provisions of the Charter?

REIFF: Now this is a point on which the views of the realists would differ very widely with the idealists. The idealists would proceed on the notion of one state, one vote, and they would read into it a theory of a democratic operation. All you need do is count the votes and the majority ought to have it.

That would be all right in a society in which there was sufficient identity of interests, where there was agreement upon common ends, and where there is a basis for democratic action as such.

Internationally, it's not reasonable, not yet. The international community contains a great variety of political units, varying greatly in size, population, wealth, power, background, national objectives, viability, responsibility, and so forth. The diversity in characteristics and differences in power are enormous. In only one sense are the units equal, in the theoretical sense of possessing the same rights and duties as states under international law. Beyond

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that states vary greatly in power and capacity to maintain peace and order in the international community. In the great historical crises of the past several centuries, say since the Peace of Westphalia in 1648, it has been the great powers which have resolved the issues, producing whatever periods of peace we have had. If this view is sound, then any international

organization dedicated to the maintenance of peace, as the United Nations is, must give a superior determining voice to the great powers. The so-called veto power in the Security Council is designed to achieve that end. When the chips are down, and the peace is seriously threatened, it is the great powers who will have to act to restore some semblance of equipoise or peace in the community. Since they have that burden they will not likely accept decisions adverse to their basic interests, brought about by the formal votes of an aggregate of theoretically equal states. This does not mean the great powers can disregard their obligations but it does mean that they cannot be pushed into untenable positions by the votes of members of an organization whose contribution to the maintenance or restoration of peace may be small in fact.

Bismarck put it so well when he was unhappy about the

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German confederation. You remember his cliché, "What have we got here? We've got one great state, Prussia, which we can call a lion, and a half a dozen foxes, and a score of mice. In a situation like that now, just who should exercise the power?"

Well, that is symbolic of the situation in the world.

Take an example from the area of the settlement of disputes, say our controversy with Panama over the canal, which has been going on now for 60 or 70 years. Suppose by some resolution of the General Assembly they would demand that we get out, and turn the canal over to Panama. Suppose it's completely unacceptable to the United States. Suppose there are considerations there which are so vital to the United States that it could not accept it. But if so, it ought to be known well in advance that no combination of votes is going to put the United States in an adverse position which could spell what? Resistance, by force if necessary.

Again, for example, any attempt to vote Russia into some position which it felt to be dangerous to its international position, its safety vis-a-vis Europe, or some vital concern -- well, the only answer there would be for

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Russia to say, "You can have your vote; I'm going to leave."

So, realistically, you are given the international community as it exists. It's not a democratic community. It's one composed of many diverse groups, some with no contribution to make whatever in the maintenance of peace. That's one of my objections to this great number of little, tiny mouse states. What contribution can they make? They can't even afford a naval base. They can't supply anything in a great conflict, as we have seen in the Napoleonic wars, First World War, the Second World War. It's unrealistic to give them a commanding vote in such situations. If that's so, you might just as well recognize it in the beginning and be realistic.

If there is a matter of vital importance on which a great power feels strongly, it should have the right in the first place to simply say no. And that's the basis of the veto.

Now unfortunately, in the Cold War that followed the adoption of the Charter, the Russians did use the veto very freely on matters which we didn't think were of vital importance. But I want to say this much, from what I felt afterwards as a professor, that there was some ganging up on Russia diplomatically for a time. This was a response

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of the Russian attitude toward middle Europe. This is not a simple situation in which one can just hand out praise and blame carelessly, but many times I thought, just as a professor, that the issue was not important enough to put Russia in the position where they would have to veto a resolution. I suspect that some of the strategy in that postwar period was precisely to put Russia in that position. Maybe they asked for it; now I'm not going to argue that. But to get back to the basic business of the veto provision. Historically it would be a mistake not to allow the great powers to protect themselves against precipitant action by a large number of smaller powers that wouldn't have to put up the force necessary when the chips were down.

MCKINZIE: Where does the emotional attachment to the idea of sovereignty come into the demand for a veto right?

REIFF: That is unfortunately the product of the 18th century's thinking internationally, when various English and continental writers contributed to this notion of one individual, one vote. At that time, too, I think many of the writers in international law emphasized not only sovereignty, freedom from authority of another, but also, that if you did

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have sovereignty you had an equal voice. This equality of kings and sovereigns led into what I think is an historic error. There was a time when Germany had a couple hundred little states. They got in a lot of trouble working out conferences, simply because of that notion that one sovereign was entitled to equality of treatment with the next sovereign. This is unrealistic, because it confuses two things. There is such a thing as legal equality, that is, the capacity to make contracts and treaties and so on, and the enjoyment of certain rights. That's not the same thing as saying power equality; that's really at the heart of it. Of course, many people have worked at this business of weighted authority, weighted voting. We puzzled about it, political scientists and people interested in international organization. I spent many a class hour working on that. I have several lectures on this effort to discover if calculus could give a proper weight say to the United States or China or Russia, as against Costa Rica let us say. Well, you'd get into astronomical numbers if you did that. On the basis of trying to equalize the vote of the United States in an international assembly by weighted voting with Costa Rica or Nicaragua you'd have to have it

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in terms of relation of one to 46 million if you consider naval strength, military strength, population, communications, resources, availability of talent, availability in the technical services and so on. For example, the possession of the atomic bomb. What weight are you going to give to that? Or ability to fly a Sputnik, what weight are you going to give to that?

Those relationships, from the point of view of weighted voting, have become realistically non-measurable. Some of us in our division did study weighted voting, but we found it ran into so many fantastic directions, except in such cases as the Bank and the Fund, where they dealt with measurable units, that we had to rely on the formulas that were adopted.

Well, to cut through all that business, the best thing to do temporarily -- until there is some super states set up -- is to simply say the great powers in certain circumstances will have to depend upon their ability to get along with the other great powers in the community and that is in the area of negotiation and diplomatic pressure and economic pressure, and a variety of other techniques, which will be the substitute for mere outvoting.

That's what it amounts to.

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So, I say that I never quarreled with this notion of the veto power. I think they were smart to put it in. At times it was abused, unquestionably abused, but it wasn't expected that there would be many vetoes. When we adopted it, it was thought that only in the most extreme situations would the veto be used. But then you see we didn't expect the Cold War. Then comes the Cold War and upsets this whole calculation.

MCKINZIE: You didn't expect the Cold War at San Francisco?

REIFF: No, there were some foreshadowings of it. We heard rumblings or some background from upstairs in the Fairmont Hotel, that's where they had the political groups meeting.

We would hear that the committee was hard at work, but then one by one we got decisions to go along on certain lines, which was a political agreement. Then we would produce this technical expression of the political agreement and put it in the Charter. That's the way it worked.

What happened upstairs in the Fairmont is probably explained in that book on the formation of the United Nations, by Ruth Russell.

MCKINZIE: I wonder if you would say a little about the work

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you did on the change from the League of Nations to the U.N.? That was one of your responsibilities.

REIFF: Well, I was given that as one of my areas of study. I realize that one thing we could not take over from the League of Nations would be any political commitments, because there was disagreement in the United States as to the value of some of the League of Nations commitments.

So, the question arose as to which services of the League of Nations we ought to take over. There was agreement of course, that the United Nations should take over say, the responsibility of, well, all the humanitarian services such as the International Labor Office. Of course, we were

already members of the International Labor Organization, but to take over all the humanitarian services. We cooperated in health services, child welfare, many of the economic statistical commissions and others. We couldn't take over, or participate in, any of their treaties of political guarantee. We wouldn't want to participate, my recollection is, in some of the minority treaties that were set up after the First World War and for which the League was a sponsor or a supervisor. So, I went through all the agreements

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that we could participate in such as health, opium and so on. I think I wrote some memos on those which we could carry over.

Under a number of humanitarian treaties there would be a section in the League of Nations to cooperate with that treaty, as in opium. My work then was to recommend which of the functions of the League should be carried into the United Nations. And then there came the question of taking over the buildings and equipment in Geneva and the personnel attached to the League. That was all worked out in various sessions of the various committees on which I served. I have set forth the whole transaction in those articles on the transition printed in the *Department of State Bulletin*. I remember one day in London when the bill came up for what we were recommending, that is, the shares for the various governments in the cost of taking over of the League establishment, that is, the real estate and other assets. I remember that we adopted a resolution in the committee to advise the General Assembly. That's all we could do. This could be reversed by the General Assembly, but I remember that this question of adopting the resolution in its final form came up one day in committee. It would

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involve bills of something like 12 million dollars, the American share of the establishments. of course, as is peculiar of a professor, I felt some hesitation about casting a vote to assume an obligation for 12 million dollars, naturally. I don't deal in figures like that.

So, I passed the question on up through my superiors. I said, "Well, we're down to voting tomorrow morning. Now how about it, do we vote in favor of that resolution, or make reservation or what?"

The next morning just before the committee met, one of my superiors came along and said the word had come down, I think it was from Jimmy Byrnes who was Secretary of State then, to go ahead with it. So I voted in favor of the resolution and it was the biggest sum I ever voted.

Incidentally, my articles in the *Department of State Bulletin* were read by my superiors; there's not apt to be anything grossly in error there. It may be, and there probably is, a great deal which lies behind certain decisions, but I was just a technician in working things out.

Is that in answer to your question?

MCKINZIE: Yes, very fine.

REIFF: While we are on this subject of the League of Nations

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I might add a note about a conversation I had with Professor Korovin, the Soviet representative on the Preparatory Commission's Committee No. 8, which dealt with the problem of finding a site for the headquarters of the new United Nations. Numerous suggestions were made about a location. The British and other old League members wanted the United Nations to locate in Geneva; others offered alternative sites in Europe. The Soviets objected to any site in Europe. They wanted to locate the U.N. in the United States, preferably on the Pacific Coast. As the debate in the Juridical Sub-Committee of Committee 8 went on, week after week, the Soviets remained adamant about not locating in Geneva or in any place in Europe. Finally, one day, in a casual conversation with Professor Korovin, I remarked: "I don't see why the Soviet Government should be so opposed to locating in Geneva. After all, the United States was not a member of the League and there was some bitter opposition to joining the League, but we would not object to settling in Geneva." "Ah, but Doctor Reiff, you were not expelled from the League!"

So! Communist states also have national pride:

But, as the debates unfolded, it became evident that the Soviets did not want a United Nations, as a restraining

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influence or focus of opposition, located anywhere near what they might have in mind for Europe.

I might now say something about Truman. From the start he impressed me very favorably. I was very fond of lecturing in my days as a college professor on the formation of the Constitution. I always tried to give the point of view of people such as Jefferson and Hamilton and Madison. I have a long lecture on that subject in which I contrast these views in relation to the situation in which the Constitution was adopted. But my reaction to Truman, insofar as I followed foreign policy, and his decisions, is first. I admired his capacity to make decisions.

In that respect I would contrast him with Adlai Stevenson who was my boss in London after Stettinius left. Adlai was a very sensitive man. I think he could feel much wider and deeper than Truman in many ways. As it turned out later through his campaigns Stevenson had some of the subtleties and the difficulties of a Hamlet.

I remember clearly the time when he was nominated for President; he said he hoped that this cup would pass. He had many of the characteristics of the tragic hero as you get it from literature.

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The one thing I admired about Truman, though he was not as sensitive, was that he had his feet on the ground as far as American background and interests were concerned. I think that's one reason why he could make decisions without worrying too much about them. The bomb had to be dropped. There's a choice, do we take a loss of a couple million men or a half a million men, or who's going to take the loss.

Well, he didn't worry too much about it. He could have worried a lot about it, but when the chips were down he could act. As he often said in his utterances, he didn't worry much about many of the decisions he had to make, he could take it. Lots of men can't do that. While I was in the State Department this is one thing I always admired coming down from up above, that the decisions were made and they were fairly clear-cut decisions and that's it. Now, that's a big advantage.

MCKINZIE: On Stevenson...

REIFF: I'm going back to the fall of '45 in London. Stettinius was our chief there. Byrnes had replaced him as Secretary

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of State after the San Francisco Conference. Stettinius now was simply the leader of the U.S. delegation to the U.N. This is the humorous story about Stettinius. He suffered from, I think, gall bladder trouble and there was a time in the fall of 1945 when he had to go home for an operation. Well, there were some nip and tuck decisions to be made in London as well as setting up the United Nations. When Stettinius had to go home, I remember one of my Russian colleagues on one of my committees came to me and said, "I hear that Mr. Stettinius is returning to the United States."

I said, "Yes, he has been ill. He is just going home for a gall bladder operation."

And he said, "Yes, we have read that, but what is the real reason?"

Well, you get that sort of thing. Anyway, Adlai was a great boss. He got along fine with all the men in the delegation. We had briefings every morning before we went to our committees. I remember one morning he came in and said he had an experience the day before in a committee on which he served, which he thought he would like to repeat for us. He said (this was a period in which the Russians were pretty obstreperous): "The attendance was being checked and the roll

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was called." So, it went something like this.

"Australia."

"Here."

"Belgium."

"Here."

"Byelorussia."

The delegate awoke suddenly and shouted, "No!"

Adlai told that story; he told it very well.

MCKINZIE: Did he seem to be knowledgeable about the work of the other committees?

REIFF: Oh yes. You know it's very interesting about Adlai . When he came onboard, so to speak, in the State Department, he was a newcomer to us. We had heard nothing about him. He hadn't written in the field of international relations, he had not served in any responsible position before that time. So we asked around, "Who is this fellow Adlai Stevenson?" And the obvious answer was, "He's the grandson of the old Vice President Adlai Stevenson." "Well, what of it, but what is his competence to be in the State Department and particularly on this delegation to London?"

"Well, he's a lawyer."

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"Yes, but that's not sufficient."

"I'll tell you," (this would then be whispered) "you know he's being groomed for high state office in Illinois."

I said, "Oh, that's very interesting."

"Yes." And then the whisper went further. "And after that at higher office."

I was just amazed that so early, in 1945 knowledgeable people in the political field were focusing on Adlai Stevenson. As it turned out the party was getting him groomed with sufficient political experience to run for the Presidency.

I think, though, that I ought to say there's one important thing about Truman that I disagreed with. I admired him tremendously! I often compared him to Madison, not because he understood statecraft so well, but because of his intellectual and emotional balance. Madison, you recall from *The Federalist Papers* and his other writings, was very realistic. He realized that there were good men and bad men, and then there was good and bad in men. And remember in one of his papers defending checks and balances he said, "If men were angels we wouldn't need certain devices in the Constitution."

I've lectured on that point often. Truman would, I

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think, say the same thing. If he wanted to be rhetorical, he'd say, "Look buddy, I know this political process, and there's good and bad in men, and I'm not taking any chances on having the bad triumph, but I realize that you have to watch these things." I think that's one of the keys to his success. I may be wrong about it, but I've often thought he was like Madison in that respect and in some ways, he was like Jackson, in that he could make decisions and take the consequences. As he said, "If you can't stand the heat, stay out of the kitchen." I liked that about

him. So many Presidents are not willing to do that. They like to have somebody else take the heat. I remember often saying to my classes (who were pretty solidly Republican in background) when the history of the 20th century is written up, I think historians will say that Truman was the Jackson of this century.

I think the prime mistake that Truman made was to recognize Israel as an independent state. I think it could have been worked out some other way, to set up a state in Palestine in which Israel could have been recognized as an autonomous area. I think that he let his loyalties toward the Jewish vote in America warp his judgment in that case.

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It's a little reminiscent of the thing that Wilson almost did after the First World War. He toyed with the idea of accepting a mandate for Armenia. Well, it's a good thing that it was defeated because we had no real interest of that sort in the Middle East. I think Israel is a military liability for us. It's a case where the client state will call the tune for the big state. I think that, from my experience, it was Arab country. I've been there, I lectured for a year in Cairo, and I got some of their feelings. They feel that this is an intrusion into their orbit, and it is a very artificial situation. There were only a few tens of thousands of Jews there in 1945. All the rest is an influx of alien Jews, and the Arabs feel that very sharply. We could have achieved our end of keeping a hand in Middle Eastern politics with states such as Saudi Arabia and so on. We need not have lost our fulcrum in the Middle East if we had not recognized Israel. I think it's more of a liability than an asset. Israel is difficult to defend, it has no harbors, it's an irritant. That I think was Truman's major mistake.

MCKINZIE: You think that's his major mistake during his administration?

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REIFF: I think that that's his biggest mistake, yes. In some ways you might as well give Manhattan back to the Indians or give some section of France that was under Charlemagne back to the Germans, or this or that. You might as well do that sort of thing. It's a tour de force; it has sentimental value, but not real political-strategic value. In that sense it's a liability. Sentimentally, it'll get the votes; politically it's going to cost us plenty unless we are very, very smart and avoid getting sucked into defending a client state in practically an indefensible position. The day will come when something will have to be done about it. I just think it was bad, strategically, militarily, navally, and from the point of view of our relations with Arab states. For what purpose? To what end? To please whom? I think we'll still have to pay for that decision.

MCKINZIE: On the whole were you pleased to work in the Truman administration?

REIFF: Oh yes. There were people there who could make decisions and proceed on those decisions even if some of it turned out wrong, but at least there was somebody up there who could get the answers. As Truman said, "The Buck Stops Here. I'm

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not going to turn it over to another committee, another commission or this or that or the other thing. This is what we can do." Well, that is an evidence of confidence. Truman was not a synthetic man. So many modern executives are synthetic in a sense that they have to rely on their computers and various types of reports and different kinds of advice. A good deal of it's pseudoscientific. Truman was not pseudoscientific, he did his own thinking, he got his reports, made his decisions and that was it.

Professor Reiff has supplied two additional accounts of his government service during the Truman administration. Appendix A is a speech he made to the St. Lawrence University International Relations Club on April 15, 1965. Appendix B is a transcription of a tape recording he made on September 8, 1968 drawing upon a personal diary.

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APPENDIX A

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Reminiscences of the Formation of the United Nations
Delivered Before SLU International Relations Club
April 15, 1965

There are certain important dates in the formation of the United Nations: April 25, 1945, the beginning of the conference at San Francisco; June 26th, the signing of the Charter at San Francisco; and then October the 24th, 1945, the Charter became effective.

I've been over this story of the formation of the United Nations almost annually since then in a professional and an academic way, but I thought it would be opportune sometime, to put it in a form of personal reminiscences. So, tonight I will keep it very informal and highly personal and reminiscent. I think that I'll get some fun out of it at any rate.

Let us go back to 1912, the year when Woodrow Wilson was running for the Presidency of the United States. In that year I was an adolescent, and was fascinated by what Woodrow Wilson had to say, and how he said it, and the idealism which he expressed for American Government as well as a little later in international affairs.

In the next several years I followed his fortunes vividly, avidly, and became a part of a great deal of his thinking and his hopes. It's in those years that I formulated, or experienced,

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three ambitions, or three dreams. I can put them somewhat like this: I wanted someday to be a professor of philosophy. I'm glad that the field of philosophy didn't see that one achieved, they are better off. But I did become a professor, so, that's part of the dream realized.

The second thing I wanted to do was to travel, extensively, and in due course, I did so. I wanted in those travels to see three great monuments of the past; certainly Egypt with its sphinxes and

pyramids and temples of Karnak, the Valley of Thebes, and Valley of the Kings. These I wanted to see. I wanted to see the Parthenon too, and the great Taj Mahal.

Well again, in due course, these things came about. During the year that I spent in Egypt as a Fulbright lecturer we saw the great monuments of Egypt in great detail.

Then, just recently, in 1960, we were on an assignment for the State Department lecturing in the Far East and came around the world going westward. We then saw the other great monuments, the Taj Mahal and the Parthenon.

As a youngster I'd always thought, "Well, if I see those three things, the angel Gabriel can blow his horn and I will come." I've seen the three things, and I'm not ready yet.

The third dream which I had was that somehow I might be

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able to make a contribution to this problem of a distraught world, a contribution to a more peaceful and orderly world, if possible. I remember when I was in college I wanted to enter the diplomatic service, but by the time I was ready to take the examinations I was too old, so I passed that up.

Instead of that I became an academic person, and in due course, I did my graduate work in the field of multilateral agreements, international law generally, and multilateral agreements in particular. As an undergraduate I majored, of course, in government and did my special work in international law and that led into the graduate field. So, my graduate thesis then, my doctoral thesis, was on the subject of the United States and international multilateral agreements relating to administrative matters. On the basis of that, I published some articles and some monographs and so drew some attention to that work.

Then came the Second World War and the United States Government was working on plans for what they called a general organization to be set up after the war. They had begun this work early in the war. As early as 1942 committees had been set up by Cordell Hull, the Secretary of State to formulate programs and to work out possibilities for the United States to

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participate in such an organization.

In 1944 came this invitation from the Department of State to me to come down and work in the field of organization, international organization. Previously they had asked me to do something else in the way of commercial treaties. I passed it up, because I wasn't particularly interested in commercial treaties. I remember at the time that I passed it up I said, "Oh, there it goes, my last chance." But within a year or so came this second invitation, that was right down my alley. Sometimes those who wait, wait well.

So, we went down and I became what was called a legal specialist, or a technical expert, in this field based on my research and my doctoral work.

I remember the first two weeks I was there I was in the room with certain persons who were being briefed on what had transpired, what policy positions had been taken up to that time from 1942 on up to 1944. This was background material which we had to study and learn in great big fat black books. As soon as we would read one, the secretary would bring in another, and so on, day after day for a couple of weeks.

In that room with me was a man by the name of Andrew Cordier who as you may know, subsequently became the Deputy Assistant Secretary General to Trygve Lie and then (Dag) Hammarskjöld.

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Just recently Cordier resigned to become a professor someplace. We enjoyed this association. As a matter of fact, all through these years we made associations which have continued ever since, because here was a great number of professional minded people, people expert in various fields, dedicated to produce a successful some thing. They worked hard, worked long, and devoted themselves to this task. So a sort of confraternity grew up among these men and these women. We treasure this association.

In the fall of 1944 then, from August to September, there were held in Washington at this very lush estate called Dumbarton Oaks, certain conversations which were exploratory in character seeking to fix certain principles upon which the great powers could get together and formulate a new organization. These conversations, the first phase, were between the United States, Great Britain, and the Soviet Union, and lasted several weeks. The second phase was between the United States, Great Britain, and China.

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We were briefed about that and we kept informed about what was going on in the other part of town. On occasion we would go over and see how the conversations were going along. This was our first introduction to these high-level conversations which led into the formation of the United Nations.

Then the work came of circulating these Dumbarton Oaks proposals, which were a skeleton form of principles, circulating these to all of this alliance which was then called the United Nations. The name was first given to this military alliance formed in January of 1942 for the successful prosecution of the war.

This circulation of Dumbarton Oaks proposals to all these 40, 50 states, brought in their reactions. It was our task, then, together with dozens and dozens of other technicians to examine these replies as they came in in the diplomatic mail or by cablegram and take out of these replies the sections with which we were charged particularly. All the work was chopped up, so to speak: the Army, the Navy would get certain sections dealing

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with security; the Treasury Department would get sections dealing with finances; the other departments with matters dealing with welfare and so on. We had organization and other

technical matters brought to us. I was particularly charged then with certain areas. I will just mention them. They were gathered together under what were called legal questions.

There were a batch of us working on that in one room, must have been 6 or 8 of us. Among my colleagues was Clyde Eagleton, a very distinguished professor of international law at New York University. Many of these men I've mentioned have passed on regrettably. They were older than I was then and they have passed on.

The topics which I had to watch and write a memorandum about were related to the new court that would have to be set up; the privileges and immunities of this forthcoming organization, what should they be, how far should they extend, etcetera; the subject of inconsistent obligations; and the subject of registration of treaties. These four topics then were my responsibility.

As these comments came in I would prepare a memorandum which I would then give to my bosses up the line, just keep sending them up and tell them I thought the idea was a good one, or a

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poor one, was well-founded, or inadvisable or what not. I would have to make a judgment about it and pass on this information. of course, this constant stream of technical information and comment would go up through various levels until finally the sum of questions would be presented to the Secretary of State and the President. Then they would make the final decisions of course. This is a long process. Sometimes the papers come back marked "D" or "F," but they didn't for me. As a matter of fact, I recall once I got a paper back that was marked "A±", not bad. I wish I had the paper, but it's secret, so I can't do anything about it.

We did this work during the winter. During that winter there were two conferences held of great importance; the Yalta Conference in February 1945 at which it was decided to hold a conference in San Francisco in April, and specifically on April the 25th. This was agreed to by the British and Russians and Americans; the Chinese went along with it.

Now, why did they select San Francisco? Very simple, there was no room elsewhere. All the other great cities in the east were taken up with war activity, their hotels were preoccupied with missions of one sort or another. War is a huge occupation; it consumes even hotel space. So San Francisco was picked and

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it was a good choice.

During that winter also there was a conference in Mexico City which was held to pacify some of the Latin-American states who felt somewhat left out because these conversations at Dumbarton Oaks had not included them. But at Mexico City some important matters were decided with respect to regional understandings and regional arrangements. That was a good contribution to the Charter as it developed.

Then we kept on with our work and a little while later came a great unhappy event. I'll tell you how it occurred to me. Mr. Stettinius was now Secretary of State in the winter and spring of '44-'45. He had replaced Mr. Cordell Hull who was ill and was eager to drop the work.

Mr. Stettinius always was congenial in his contacts with his help, us; he always had a smile, and he always had a good morning or a good evening. One evening in April as I came out of my office I saw Mr. Stettinius -- who had white hair and if he was excited his face would get red like a turkey cock. I saw him moving fast down a certain corridor toward the White House. Nevertheless, he had a moment to say "Good evening," in response to what I was saying to him, "Good evening, Mr. Stettinius." I thought no more of it, but went home by bus. When I got to my

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street there were the women on the doorstep and one of them weeping said, "The President is dead."

This was a terrific shock to us, April the 12th, 1945; a tremendous emotional shock as well as setting up certain qualms. Would we go on with our work? We had worked so hard. Many of them had worked for years. As you know, it's up to the President to decide what the foreign policy of the United States shall be. And so, for about 24 or 36 hours we didn't know, but the word then came down for us to carry on, and that was the word of Harry Truman.

It later developed, to go back to that evening that I saw Mr. Stettinius, he was going at that time, maybe 5, 5:30, I don't know what time it was, to the White House. Mr. Truman was being sworn in as President. It appears from the memoirs of Mr. Stimson, as Secretary of War, that after the President had been sworn in he drew him aside and told him about the atomic bomb, and that it was his responsibility now to use it or not use it.

You never know what dramatic things lie under fairly prosaic overt happenings, but I'll always remember that night when Mr. Stettinius walked hastily by. We were authorized then to go on with our work and in due course we were given our

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instructions by the protocol officers and others to get on a train. We had a couple of special trains which would take us to San Francisco. There we arrived on April the 25th -- before April the 25th, a day or two earlier. The conference was to start on April the 25th.

The conference was organized into 4 great commissions dealing with four large-scale topics (I won't bother to go through them now). Under these four great commissions were 12 committees. I was assigned to committee 4-2; that is commission 4, committee 2, and my colleague on that committee -- (I always drew the lucky companions, because my roommate at the Francis Drake Hotel was Clyde Eagleton, what better companion would you want) my colleague on this committee, who was the other technical expert, was Philip Jessup who was professor of international law in the Columbia Law School and had been enlisted just as many others had been in this effort. As you know, Philip Jessup now is the American judge on the International Court.

So, Phil and I worked together as technical experts helping the American delegation which would be on this committee, our boss was Mr. [Charles] Fahy, the Solicitor General of the United States, a very competent superior lawyer who would be sitting at the table for the United States representing the United States

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in this committee. Jessup and I would be sitting back giving him whatever information he might need or whatever documents or prepared papers he might need in his negotiations.

So, the work went through those months. In passing I might mention the entertaining which the local people in San Francisco gave us. They organized trips every Saturday and Sunday: the local citizens would supply the cars and would take us all around the Bay area, and we had "open sesame" to all the wonders of the Bay area. If you know anything about the San Francisco Bay area you know how fascinating that can be.

I have a couple of samples of the programs that they gave us right there, the yellow one and a white one, right there, with a map showing where these trips would go. So, we'd take these trips when we could be free from our work.

On one of these trips we went through the great redwood forest at Muir Woods where there had been a celebration, a ceremony, dedicating those redwoods as a memorial to Franklin D. Roosevelt, and a small plaque had been put up. I was told last year by one of our students who had taken a trip out there that in this redwood forest there is another plaque, a big bronze plaque. On it are the names of the full American delegation, which runs into a hundred or a hundred and fifty, and

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your early beloved professor's on there. So, even if you all forget what we have done here it will be there in bronze, in perpetuity. Well, anyway, it was a very interesting surprise that this would happen.

While I was at San Francisco I knew, of course, that this was going on, not the official record, because I could get the printed material for this, and I knew that they would be published, but just asides, interesting conversations, or the things which did not appear in official accounts. Each night I wrote these in letters to my wife and instructed her to keep them very carefully. I did this throughout the conference and then when we went to London, as I shall tell you. I did it there also every day faithfully -- sent these letters home.

One reason why it was desirable and really advisable to do that is that in some services you are expected not -- of the United States or any government -- you're expected not to keep a journal or a diary, because if it should be lost you might inadvertently give some other person who is not entitled to the information, information which might be valuable.

I did this, and some day I will take these letters and perhaps make some use of them in some reminiscences, maybe in 10,

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15, 20 years from now, if we last that long. But we can use these letters as the basis for some printed stories about the formation of the United Nations.

At the same time I made a careful collection of newspaper articles out in San Francisco. I asked my wife also to keep track of the *New York Times*, the *Washington Star*, and *Washington Post*. She did this and wore blisters on her fingers cutting out these articles day after day, not only for the several months we were in San Francisco, but for the next six months when I was in London.

The day came when we could mount them and we mounted them and put them in the form of books (and there are two volumes of them). There are twelve volumes all together. I think this is the only clipping collection of that sort in America. I know of no one else at the Conference who did it, and I know of nobody in London who did it. That just about takes care of the possibilities of who might have done it. So, that also then will be a valuable collection some day.

There were some episodes at San Francisco which I can mention briefly. For example, the framing of the preamble. There were numerous suggestions of items to go into the preamble. If you know anything about the drafting of something, the

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problem comes in getting the thing into stylistically uniform shape. The solution is to have one mastermind get at it and take these 15, 20 or more suggestions turned in (in this case dozens and dozens of suggestions), and create something out of it. I remember the day when Jan Smuts brought in the preamble and read it. I'll just start it with you because, you see, this is practically prose poetry. He wrote it.

“We, the peoples of the United Nations, determined to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war, which twice in our lifetime has brought untold sorrow to mankind, and to reaffirm faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person, in the equal rights of men and women and of nations large or small, and to establish conditions under which justice and respect for the obligations arising from treaties and other sources of international law can be maintained, and to promote social progress, and better standards of life in larger freedom, and for these ends....to do certain things.”

I remember his reading it just as vivid as if it were yesterday, and now it's twenty years ago.

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There were men like that there, Jan Smuts and other great distinguished persons, and there were many amusing events. Among the distinguished people, I'll never forget Senator Vandenberg, who as you know, up until middle age was like Saul of Tarsus going about chastising the people interested in international relations. Then he saw the light, and seeing the light he became Paul. As Paul he was one of the greatest advocates of the United Nations that we had at the time. He died advocating it vigorously among all his colleagues in the Senate. To him you may attribute a great deal of the support which the Senate gave to the United Nations charter, when the same

Senate 20 years before or somewhat like that, 25 years before, had rejected the covenant thoroughly, the covenant of the League of Nations. What a change in 25 years.

Well, there were lighter moments in San Francisco. For example, there were the Saudi Arabians who always dressed in their lovely garbs with their burnooses, and oh, they were very distinguished, tall fellows. I said to Mrs. Reiff, "I ought to say that maybe they were like tall Rudolph Valentinos."

And she said, "No use saying that, the students won't know who Rudolph Valentino was."

Anyway, there were these marvelously handsome, tall Saudi

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Arabians (there are pictures of them in that book over there). They had their quarters, their hotel quarters, up in the Fairmont. Everyday they would come back from their meetings and go up this cordoned little path in the lobby to the elevators. Other distinguished people had their rooms up the Fairmont, too.

Well, many visitors and sightseers were in the lobby of the Fairmont and the story is one day there was a batch of women outside of this cordon when these handsome Saudi Arabians with their flowing robes came by and these women were chitter-chattering to each other, "What a handsome man." "Oh, my, isn't he striking," and so on and so on. Then one of these big Saudi Arabians turned around and said, "Madam, you should see us on horseback!"

I remember the day in May when Senator Connally, who was on the delegation, came dashing down the main aisle of the big conference room where there was a meeting of a commission or something, waving a newspaper, and there the headlines, premature, announced the surrender of Germany, early May. The final news, confirmed news, didn't come for some time later. But this sent a tremendous thrill through the audience, because if the Germans collapsed then the European allies would. Italy had previously, then there would be only one more enemy to defeat,

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Japan.

Well, I remember too, one occasion in a meeting, in which there were some encomiums passed out to the people who had done a great deal of work in the field of international relations and international organization and had forwarded the cause of peace. I remember one delegate getting up, reprimanding the whole gathering of over a thousand delegates, "Not once have I heard a word in praise of Woodrow Wilson." That's true. That was true. Now why?

I think what happened was that people wanted to disassociate this new effort to build a new organization from the collapse of the League and the memories of the League and the bitternesses of the League. Maybe it would be better to start on a new psychological and emotional basis; just forget it. At least forget the emotional aspects, although, as you know, the United Nations is built very firmly on the precedents and the experience of the League. But

there seemed to be a conspiracy of silence in the conferences about mentioning the League or about mentioning Woodrow Wilson. But I remember that delegate getting up and reproving the whole lot of them.

Well, after the conference the Charter was signed on the 26th of June. President Truman came and gave a speech that night.

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It was a very impressive ceremony, the signing of the Charter.

Then the conference set up an executive committee and a preparatory commission which would operate in the late summer and the fall to prepare the groundwork for the actual setting up of the United Nations. A great many regulations had to be worked out, procedure had to be worked out, a great many details putting the Charter into specific detailed operation.

After the conference, I got a vacation. I came up here and I was just settling down to some nice golf, when I got a telegram. "Return to Washington, such and such a time." I didn't know why, but I returned. When I got into the State Department Dorothy Fosdick said, "You know you're going to London?"

I said, "No."

"Oh, but you are."

I said, "How do you know, where did you find that out?"

"Oh, I saw the typed cablegram. Ben Gerig in London wants you to come."

Well, there you are, so you have to go to London; that's how it is, see? My family up here, well, they came down and so we got things together for me to go to London.

The first stage of the business in London was the executive committee stage of the preparatory commission. This

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committee then consisted of 14 members, the 5 great powers and 9 others. This executive committee operated through ten committees. These ten committees dealt with various aspects of the setting up of the United Nations, the Security Council, General Assembly, Trusteeship Council, etc., etc., etc. Our delegation gave me work; they asked me to be the representative of the United States on two of these committees. The one, to help set up the court and that was committee 5 and committee 9 to take care of the transfer of the League of Nations assets and equipment and buildings to the United Nations.

So, we worked on the executive committee and we produced our report in the form of certain documents (I have a copy over there).

The next stage was a preparatory commission consisting of 51 states. Here again it was divided up into certain committees. I again was in charge of two committees, the American representative on two committees: again the setting up of the court, and the one on the transfer of the League of Nations' assets and so on to the United Nations.

This stage then, involved the 51 states which were now members of the United Nations. The Charter was now in operation, that is after October the 24th. This stage operated for a month --

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from November the 24th to December the 23rd. It was during this stage that certain things happened, which I thought I would tell about.

Mr. Stettinius had been replaced in the meanwhile by Mr. Byrnes, who was the new Secretary of State. Mr. Stettinius went over on the *Queen Mary* for the executive committee stage. I was on the same ship and there we were, just a handful of us on the *Queen Mary*. If you know anything about the *Queen Mary* it was always full bringing troops back, but it was empty going over, so Mr. Stettinius and his family and I just rattled around in that *Queen Mary*. You can just imagine!

Well, anyway, we got acquainted there, and then in time he became ill. He had to return to the United States to have a very serious operation. We knew that this would be disturbing, particularly to the Russians, because some of the negotiations were pretty difficult at that point. They might misinterpret it; so we put in the paper, "Mr. Stettinius is returning to the United States to undergo medical treatment and surgery for gall bladder." Nothing could be more specific than that.

Nevertheless, the next day comes my colleague on the committee, the Russian, who says, "Doctor Reiff, Mr. Stettinius, he is returning to the United States?"

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"That's right. That's right."

"But why?"

I said, "Well, we told you why. We announced it in the press, he is going home to have an operation for gall bladder."

"Yes, we read that, but what is the real reason?"

That was my introduction to diplomatic illness.

So, his substitute then was Mr. Adlai Stevenson, and Mr. Stevenson took over. I was very much struck by Mr. Stevenson, as a congenial and humorous man, full of wit. I didn't know who he was, so one day I asked one of the other men, "Who is this fellow Stevenson? I never heard of him in the State Department. He's not a career diplomat, what is he anyway?"

This is the answer I got: "Well, he's an eminent lawyer, a successful lawyer from Illinois. He's the grandson of Adlai Stevenson the Vice President of the United States in the '80s and '90s, way back there. As we understand it, he is being given some international experience to build up his understanding of matters and his capacity to deal with large-scale matters, because one of these days they're going to run him for Governor of Illinois and then this will all be handy. They say too (whoever these mysterious theys were), they say too that after he's been Governor for a while then they are going to try to run him

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for something else."

This was all interesting, I've got it right in my diary. If you want to look it up sometime, there it is, 1945; in the fall, this occurred. I've often thought that it would be interesting if I could use a certain letter which Mr. Stevenson wrote us, all of us who had been on the delegation in London. You find it right back there, in which Mr. Stevenson thanks us for our work and then says, "I certainly hope that in some future occasion we can all work together once again."

I thought, "Well, if he is elected as President, take this letter down and say, "Well, now, Adlai, ahem..."

Well, I have had a good joke out of that. He may not even remember me now after 20 years, but at any rate, he was a wonderful, wonderful, chief of mission.

He told one story I think that I could tell. He was always telling stories at his morning briefing when we got together, the whole batch of us in his office. Then we'd tell what had happened to us and what we had proposed to do, and he'd tell us too what he wanted us to do, etc.; just briefing. But one time he told us this story about the Byelorussians. This was a time when the Russians were pretty obstreperous, although ordinarily we got along all right. This is supposed to indicate

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some of their obstreperousness.

At one meeting at which Mr. Stevenson was, the roll was being called: "Australia."

"Here."

"Belgium."

"Here."

"Byelorussia."

The delegate was snoozing. Somebody poked him. He woke up and yelled, "No!"

Well, Stevenson had a lot of stories like that.

I might mention that while we were in London the UNESCO constitution was adopted and we used to go over there and listen to the debates. I have the satisfaction of knowing that Mrs. Esther Brunauer, who was in charge of the American delegation to the UNESCO Conference, the specialized agency, had done me the courtesy and the flattery to ask me to run over the American draft for UNESCO and to find the bugs in it if there were any. I gave her one or two suggestions and they appeared in due course in the UNESCO constitution. So, there it is.

Well, now then: we went through the preparatory commission stage up until Christmas time, and put our work into certain recommendations and certain draft regulations, and that's in

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another document there.

Now comes January 10th to February the 14th, and we have the first part of the first General Assembly. Since we knew we couldn't hold the full General Assembly, we could only hold the first part and hold a second part in America. Now to the General Assembly came the big shots, the Secretary of State Byrnes; Mr. Dulles, then a delegate, subsequently Secretary of State; and other important Senators and Representatives, and the very important people who would finally have to sign things.

I was so glad they came because, for example, in our negotiations to transfer the League property to the United Nations, everything was drawn up awaiting the final agreement, or the final approval of what we had done. We had prepared this and I had participated in it and there was our share. The United States' share of what would be our responsibility for taking over these properties was 12 million dollars. I'd helped contract that. So, I was very eager to have somebody like Mr. Byrnes say, "Yes, that's all right," because you don't go around framing resolutions and obligations which amount to 12 million dollars without some qualm as to who's going to approve this, don't you know. Well, that was approved all right.

In this delegation also was Mrs. Roosevelt. I remember

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many a nice chat with her, a most friendly person. If I had time I would tell you of a conversation we had, with another delegate present, in a motor car going back from one of the meetings. Well, maybe I will tell you. Anyway, I told a story and I said, "I know I haven't got it right, because my wife always says I give it approximately, and I don't always tell it the same way."

So she said, "Well, you know, Franklin had the same trouble, and I would tell him, 'You tell the story differently each time'. And he'd say, 'What difference does it make; the point is always the same'. And it was, too."

So, I felt consoled; Franklin Roosevelt on my side.

Well, we had very nice conversations with these men. Among others at the meeting were Trygve Lie. I remember talking to him the morning he was elected to the first secretary generalship. I had a lot of nice conversations with Jan Masaryk, who was the son of Dr. Masaryk, the first Czech president after the First World War.

This Jan Masaryk had been brought up in Chicago. He liked to talk to Americans and we always had some chitchat. As you know, Jan Masaryk then became Prime Minister of Czechoslovakia.

In the postwar days just after this war, the Communists caused

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him to fall from a very high building and so he was killed. They said it was suicide, but it unquestionably is in the mind of many people a form of political assassination.

There's one story that took place in January, of 1946 that would be, which I've always enjoyed telling. This was at the Soviet Embassy. All during the fall we had these parties, naturally. Of course, many people who have not been in governmental service think, "Well, this is an awful waste of money," and so on, but it really isn't. You do transact some business at them, and furthermore, it really is essential to have social gatherings and lighthearted occasions, otherwise you just couldn't stand the pace.

I might say in passing that if you're a sissy, and you can't take it, don't enter the diplomatic service; just stay out of it. If you can work long hours and not regard your personal comfort, then, all right, be a diplomat.

Anyway, the Soviets then gave their party, at long last. We were all waiting for it, because we knew that the vodka would flow. In those days vodka was a new drink for Americans. Now, I understand (correct me if I'm wrong), it's a common drink.

So on the way to the big embassy there in Kensington Gardens, which was the old Czarist embassy built in the 19th century, I

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met up with Senator Connally's secretary, a fellow by the name of [Robert V.] Shirley. On the way up into the building we also picked up this Estonian linguist interpreter. She was a plenty smart interpreter, and we thought, "If we need an interpreter we might as well have one with us."

So, we went, the three of us, went up and sure enough this embassy was just Hollywoodish, rows upon rows of these crystal chandeliers, great galleries running this way and this way and that way, and the food was heaped high on great Czaristic silver platters. Oh, mountains of food! This was all by these hard pressed Communists. We stepped up to a table and asked a waiter to give us some vodka. When we got the glasses of vodka and started to drink, our interpreter said, "But no, no, first you must eat."

We said, "Well, all right, we'll eat."

So, we took a little canape, and a cracker, that sort of thing, and said, "Well, is that all right?"

She said, "No, first you must eat, I will show you."

So, she went down the line and took a piece of this, and a piece of salmon, a piece of chicken and salami and some caviar, and what not until we had a big pile of food and then she said, "Now, you will eat."

So, we ate. And then we said, "Now, can we drink?"

She said, "Ah, now you will drink."

So, all right, we drank. Now we were ready for another drink. She said, "No, now first you must eat." So, we ate again. This went on for quite a while and by and by we had to get back to our work. As we were going out, I don't know what happened to Shirley, but anyway, as we went out, we went by a door, where there was a little stand with a decanter of liquor on it. I just wanted another little toss of something, so I poured it out, and sure enough it was good liquor. Just then a Russian friend of mine came along from one of my committees, a man by the name of -- well, strike that out, I don't want to get him in dutch with his government -- anyway, this man came along and he said, "Dr. Reiff, you are drinking whiskey?"

I said, "Well yes, sure, there's no more vodka, they won't give us any more vodka."

"Oh, you come with me." So, he led me around to a little hall where the big shots had been having their vodka. We ordered up some more vodka. Soon we were drinking vodka and eating, and then we were exchanging compliments about the great American people and the great Russian people. Then he said, Oh, he'd been to Detroit, he had seen the most wonderful thing

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in America; to him it was that endless conveyor that produces cars and tractors and things. That was beautiful America.

I said, "Well, of course, we are used to that, but the thing that the Americans admire so much about the Russians is the magnificent heroic stand they made at Stalingrad." For that we shall always be grateful to the Russians because if you know the history, that stand saved the lives of possibly a million or two Americans; and they paid for it, the Russians. So, I was going into a full period of praise about the great stand at Stalingrad, and then I said, "But, the one thing that the Americans will never emulate about the Russians is their communism."

Quickly he said, "Dr. Reiff, you'll have some more vodka?"

That ended the conversation about communism and how desirable it was. So, we had our vodka.

Well, I must pass on. At the London meetings we also had the search for headquarters which was a long and difficult task. Finally it was solved by the donation of Mr. Rockefeller giving that little plot of ground in New York. The original idea was to have a sort of District of

Columbia for the United Nations on the boundary between Connecticut and New York, up by Westchester and whatever the other county is between New York and

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Connecticut there, to buy a plot of ground and make a sort of enclave, for international purposes, but the people of that area objected, and so we couldn't do it and we had to settle in Manhattan. That was finally solved as satisfactorily as it could be.

On returning to Washington, I came back on a troop ship and in Washington I helped to participate in the drafting of the headquarters agreement, which was the treaty under which the United Nations operates in the United States.

I resigned in the summer of 1946 and came back to St. Lawrence. In the meantime the United Nations was located at Hunter College and at Lake Success. The second part of the first General Assembly went into operation in the fall of 1946.

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APPENDIX B

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Narrative from Diary of Final Sessions of UNCIO, San Francisco, California
June 25-26, 1945

After 38 years of service at St. Lawrence University as a professor of government, and since 1944 head of the Department of History and Government, I retired in 1966 and now live in Virginia. Though retired, I am proud to be the Charles D. and John D. Munsell, Professor of Government Emeritus at St. Lawrence.

During the war years, 1944 to 1946, I served in the State Department as a legal specialist in international organization. I helped prepare for, and then participated in, the United Nations Conference on International Organization in San Francisco in the spring of 1945, which drew up the Charter of the United Nations.

In that conference I was a technical expert. Subsequently, from August 1945 to February 1946, I served as a technical adviser with the American delegation in London participating in the setting up of the rules and machinery of the United Nations.

I returned to St. Lawrence in the fall of 1946. Naturally, in my teaching at St. Lawrence I used this experience in my classes on the United Nations and International Organization and in helping to set up the annual model United Nations Security Council,

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which in 1968 held its 21st session.

Recently, one of my enthusiastic graduate students from St. Lawrence days, Gary Sparaco, asked me to record on tape some reminiscences of my experience in helping to set up the United Nations.

I puzzled over this request for some weeks, wondering what could be most useful for students of American History and international relations. Finally, it occurred to me, that some pages from my letter diary at San Francisco would serve the purpose.

I should explain first how this diary was kept. Every night after my day's work was done, or soon thereafter, I would write home to my wife in Washington, telling her informally about the interesting things that happened that day. Naturally, I could reveal nothing of an official character, but I could describe the sort of things that went on in this great conference which we knew would be historic.

My wife kept these letters and after my service in the State Department, we had them bound up in a book for preservation in our family archives.

I shall read the letter dated Monday, June 25th, 1945, which describes the arrival of President Truman in San Francisco for the final sessions of the conference and the signing of the Charter,

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and the letter of Tuesday, June 26th, 1945, which describes the events of late Monday night and all day Tuesday.

I should explain that the full big sessions of the conference were held in the Opera House. The committee meetings and the signing ceremonies were held in the Veterans Building, and the headquarters of the American delegation, as well as a few other delegations, were in the Fairmont Hotel. Several of the persons named in my narrative were simply professional colleagues of mine on the American delegation.

So, the first letter dated Monday evening, June 25th, 1945, begins:

There was bedlam today at the Fairmont; the President was coming. The Fairmont was in a buzz of excitement. After the parade through town, after flying down from Oregon, the President is to stop at the Fairmont. Secret Service men have been around for days arranging things. I don't know whether the President goes to the penthouse with the Secretary of State, Stettinius, or goes to another floor. I asked the guard which was which and he told me he didn't know -- which may be the truth.

But while all this excitement was going on we had

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to work on our report to the President. So, Marcia Maylott and I went to the mezzanine floor behind the flags of the United Nations and there worked this afternoon; the only quiet place in the offices.

While we were working there the President arrived a little after 4 p.m. They had had a great parade over the Golden Gate Bridge and around town and up Market Street. A great cheer went up in the lobby of the hotel and we bounced away from our work to see the back of the President's head. He was waving his hat out to the crowd in the lobby. Masses of people were there. We had a fine gallery view.

After that the President was scheduled to give a reception in the Fairmont. Only the big shots go, we have not been invited. Okay with me. So, we turned in our work and departed.

The whole place was roped off. We had difficulty getting back to our own offices in the Green Room near the elevator that the President used. At any rate, I left directly, bought a bottle of sherry by way of celebration.

Clyde Tagleton and I will get a bite alone and go

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to the evening session at 9:30 when the Charter will be formally approved. I don't want to miss any of those last dramatic moments. It's all very exciting, the President and everything. And to think, he is staying right upstairs in the hotel where my offices are. All San Francisco is keyed up with excitement.

Now comes the letter of Tuesday, June 26, 1945, written very late at night:

The last 24 hours have been packed with excitement. Last evening after I wrote you, Clyde Eagleton and I went down, had a bite of supper, and walked to the Opera House for the last meeting of the full conference before the signing of the Charter. We had tickets marked "Special Guest Orchestra." It was rather flimsy issuing of tickets like that to us technical experts, because we had to wait 40 minutes on line to get in, and then take a chance on a seat being vacant. The long and short of it was that we got no seats. Clyde waited a little while and then went home. I stayed and was glad of it.

It was a gala occasion. Lord Halifax presided. The presidents of the four commissions made their summary reports. The reports of the commission were adopted.

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Then the chairman, Lord Halifax, put the Charter to a vote, and as we knew beforehand, it was adopted unanimously by the 50 delegations present. It was a great moment, the audience applauded thunderously. It was a dramatic hour in the world's history as Lord Halifax said it was. Then the meeting adjourned.

Today, Tuesday, there was a great buzz of excitement at the temporary White House, my office, the Fairmont. Scads of Secret Service around, could hardly get in and out of my own office, the Green Room. Outside the hotel, streets were roped off; numerous police and military guards; motorcycle escorts waited to take the President to the conference; etcetera. The whole city was all keyed up with excitement, flags flying, crowds gathered about the Hotel Fairmont waiting to catch a glimpse of the President. My, what excitement all over the place!

They cleaned out the Gold Room to make room for the overflow for the President's dinner and reception, disrupting our work. During all this excitement Marcia Maylott and I had to work on the President's report. It was very difficult to keep our wits together, but we were helping out Walter Kotschnig who was stuck, and he

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asked us in such a nice way that we couldn't refuse.

We finished up that part of our work in time to get to the Veterans Building after lunch to see the signing of the Charter. After we had seen a few delegations step up and do their duty, we were told at 3 p.m. that the next delegation, out of the regular order, would be the United States.

Sure enough, in a few minutes, in came the President, and the American delegation. Our Sandy Sandifer was with them. All this was in the clear white light of lamps for movie pictures. There was a marvelous stage setting. At the rear was the emblem of the United Nations on a great big backdrop. There was a semicircle of all the flags of the 50 United Nations on their staffs. Then a large table, circular, about 10 feet in diameter in the front and center of the platform. One chair was there for the signer, two State Department treaty division experts routed the delegation. As each one was called it was announced for radio and movie tone. All delegations went through this routine of marching in and one or more of the delegations signed.

Sandy afterwards showed me his sheet of instructions

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issued to each delegation. Practically every step of every individual was plotted. There were chalk marks on the blue velvet flooring to show the places for every individual. Hence, the precision of the appearance which the public sees in the moving picture, beautifully worked out. The State Department aides sliding the two books over the table into position for signature, with the precision of a ritual in a cathedral. I commented to my pals alongside me that they reminded me of acolytes in a high church ritual.

And so at the appointed time the President and the American delegation came and signed. It was not announced to the public when they would sign, because there was not enough room in the little soundproof theater of the Veterans Building for a great mob.

The floor of the theater was used for movie cameras, staging on the side also got shots from various angles, and microphones all around got the applause of the crowd in the balcony where we were. After each chairman of each delegation signed, he gave a one-minute little speech which was sent out over the air and recorded on the movie films. We were warned in the balcony down in front not

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to say anything untoward, because the mikes in front of us were going directly out over the air. Perhaps you heard some of that program.

After the American delegation signed, we hurried out to go next door to the Opera House where the final meeting of the entire conference was to be held. We had numbered tickets for the dress circle, so everything was okay.

My, that meeting was dramatic! As of the first meeting of the conference, the representatives of the Armed Forces, one for each branch, men and women, stood lined up against the back of the stage until the President and the Secretary of State appeared. Then a band played "Hail to the Chief." In came the President all beaming, and the Secretary of State and the officers of the meeting. A great ovation. Perhaps you heard it over the radio.

The Secretary handed the President a gold banded gavel which he had used to open the session. Then one after another certain selected speakers made short addresses. Stettinius; Wellington Koo in Chinese; Gromyko in Russian; Halifax in English; Velloso, Brazil, in

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Portuguese; Padilla, Mexico, in Spanish; Jan Masaryk of Czechoslovakia, in English; the Crown Prince, Prince of Saudi Arabia, in Arabic. Each of these speeches were translated in advance, and presented in English in a little program we got on entering.

The best of these speeches from the literary point of view, was Halifax's. It had the flavor of Lincoln's Gettysburg Address. The best from the practical point of view was that of Jan Masaryk's. Therefore, no translators were necessary.

Then the President spoke about 20 minutes, simple, straightforward appeal to the American people. Everybody so pleased with his simple manner and modesty. He's smart, he's not trying to step into the shoes of Franklin D. Roosevelt -- nobody can do that -- that is so, he might as well be himself, and he is. He gives

you the impression of a man you could meet at any barber shop or in any drug store, the quintessence of American middle class.

After Truman spoke the band played the "Star Spangled Banner" in very good naval phrasing, with drums putting in effects at "bombs bursting in air," etcetera. Then the crowd dispersed.

The group of us, Sandy, Bill McCrae, and I, went over to the Veterans Building to see more signing. The signing takes about 8 hours. It started this morning at 10 a.m. and probably finished this evening at 8 p.m.

Yesterday and today were historic moments. I was glad to be here to witness them. They were gripping and touching, very moving. I think often of the boys for whom this moment came too late, as you put it so beautifully.

This tape was recorded on September the 7th, 1968.

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