

Oral History Interview
with
JOSEPH E. JOHNSON

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Princeton, N.J.
June 29, 1973
by Richard D. McKinzie, Harry S. Truman Library

The Harry S. Truman Library
Independence, Missouri
July, 1985

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[1]

MCKINZIE: Mr. Johnson, could you tell me why you joined the Department of State, after all you had had an academic background?

JOHNSON: Well, the answer is very simple. When the U.S. got involved in the war I tried to join the Armed Forces and for reasons of health was turned down. The reason an old operation --

I was turned down. Then I decided I had better finish my thesis, which was not yet finished, and worked pretty hard in '42 to finish my thesis.

MCKINZIE: That was in colonial history, wasn't it?

JOHNSON: In colonial history, and by the summer of '42

[2]

it was obvious that Williams was going to be coaching naval flying cadets the basic stuff before they went to flight school, and this didn't seem to me a very interesting occupation. After all I had been in diplomatic history and I had been very much interested in all of the negotiations and developments leading up to the war, and was fairly committed. Williams was a center for active interest in support of U.S. involvement in the war, led by President James P. Baxter himself, and two or three other faculty members including me. So I began writing around and then tried to find out if I could get into the State Department. A friend told me of a very mysterious outfit -- which was kind of hush-hush -- headed by a man named [Leo] Pasvolsky. I wrote a letter to Pasvolsky and got a reply saying in effect, "Sorry there's no place in this shop for anybody with your qualifications." To anticipate a little bit -- two years later he offered me a job to take me out of where I was in the State Department and I told him about this letter. He didn't believe it. He had been right; in '42 I didn't have the qualifications

[3]

for his shop. It was what was then known as -- let me see, they had two sections -- Territorial Studies and Organizational Studies.

MCKINZIE: Yes. This was involved with the postwar planning.

JOHNSON: Yes, under Pasvolsky. A friend of mine had gone to Washington, and was in the History Section of the War Department General Staff, and another friend was in the State Department working in ARA (it was then called RA) -- Division of the American Republics. I told both men I'd be glad of a job with them and would take whichever came first. Both jobs seemed to have some relevance to my competence; after all I had at least heard of Tegucigalpa, which many people had not. The State Department job came through first and I told my friend in the War Department, "Sorry old boy, I've taken the State Department job." I went down there in December '42.

MCKINZIE: Coming from an academic background and going into the State Department at that level did you feel that you were moving up or down? I know that there

[4]

were extenuating circumstances because of the war and the change at Williams, but nonetheless as an academician moving into the State Department...

JOHNSON: No, I didn't feel this way at all. I'll tell you why. The section of the State Department I went into was a very strange one, which didn't last very long actually. The guy who got me down there had been a colleague of mine at Williams. He was a Yale Ph.D. in history;

and one of the people working for him was a fellow named Ted [Edward] Lambson who was a Harvard Ph.D. in history, and another one was a young fellow -- Larry [Laurence] Lafore, a novelist and also an academic. This was the outfit I went into. Our work was to follow the activities of various European national groups in Latin America. My assignment was the Free French, the Vichy French, the Free Italians, and the Free Austrians; all but the Vichy French were working very closely with the U.S. in one way or another. It was a semi-intelligence operation. Ours wasn't intelligence except in a very minor way. We were reading intercepts and learning what the Free French, and the Vichy French, and others were doing, because we felt

[5]

quite strongly that the role of the French on both sides, and the Italians, and the Germans (the Germans were not my assignment), and the Austrians should be quite important in relation to our relations with Latin America as a whole. The Chief of our division was Philip Bonsal, you may know the name; he's now a retired Ambassador. The Assistant Chief under whom I worked was Selden Chapin who is since dead, who was a career A.F.S.O.

Our little section was set up following the Rio Conference of January 1942, in which we got our Latin American friends to agree to certain activities relating to foreign (European) nationals. As time went on -- I came in, you see, nearly a year after it started. This work fell increasingly to a division of the State Department under Adolf Berle that worked directly with the FBI. So the work of our section kind of petered out; my boss went into the Navy and the other guys got drafted or went into the service. At any rate, the little office, which had a maximum of six or seven people at any time, sort of disappeared about September '43. Another fellow in the Latin American section of the Department -- ARA -- felt the

[6]

draft breathing down on him a second time. (He had been drafted in 1940 and released before Pearl Harbor.) So he got himself a commission in the Coast Guard, and he recommended to our Chief that I be reassigned to take his place in his work. He was the Officer in Charge -- that's a little strong -- he dealt with political relations with the inter-American system; the Pan American Union; there was something set up during the war called the Inter-American Defense Board (it was a way of making some of the Latino military attaches in Washington happy); there was the Inter-American Committee in Montevideo which Carl Spaeth and Ward Allen and a few other people were involved in the Inter-American Committee for Political Defense, I think it was called, or something like that. They were lawyers and they were drafting legislation in Montevideo (as close as they could get to Buenos Aires, you see), for action. And then there was the Inter-American Legal Committee or something like that, which was in Rio, and the American member was a fellow named Charles Fenwick, an international lawyer who died only a few months

[7]

ago. Well, my responsibilities had to do with them and the Pan American Union on the political side -- multi-lateral kinds of things.

The following is an example of the kind of thing I got into: Sometime in -- I guess it would have been September of '43 (the date can easily be checked) -- my boss Mr. Bonsal, called me in, and

said, "Joe, Mr. Hull has just learned from Ambassador Lord Halifax that President Roosevelt and Mr. Churchill have agreed to recognize the Badoglio Government of Italy next Wednesday." Mr. Cordell Hull was somewhat miffed when he learned about that only through the British Ambassador who came in and said, "What are we going to do about it?" Well, this hit us because we had gotten all of our Latin American friends, except of course, Argentina and maybe Chile, to agree to something that we pushed very vigorously at the Rio Conference -- that none of us would recognize a successor government in any of the three Axis countries without prior consultation with the others. My boss said, "Joe, you draft a telegram." Because you see, it was inter-American politically -- it wasn't any one country.

[8]

But I can still remember this message which read in effect (it may read quite differently from this if you see it):

You will recall, we agreed to consult before recognizing any one of the governments. We have decided we think it's time to recognize Badoglio, and we are now consulting with you, and we hope you have no objections.

MCKINZIE: They all had a chance to get a response in before the action?

JOHNSON: Yes, they did. Just barely, but fortunately they were all sympathetic to Italy. There were a lot of Italians in the countries that counted Brazil, Uruguay, Chile and so forth -- so they didn't mind really. If it had been anybody else we would have been in deep water, but this was what consultation meant on that particular occasion. Well, that's the kind of thing I got into.

MCKINZIE: In your dealings with those special political groups, and dealings with Latin Americans, particularly, did you have any sense of what Latinos wanted at the end of the war, particularly in the nature of changed agreements with the United States -- more

[9]

specifically in the nature of perhaps economic aid?

JOHNSON: Well, that comes a little bit later. Now, you see, by this time I wasn't any longer dealing with the Free Italians and the Free Austrians -- this was really no longer in our shop. Whatever remains there might have been, had come to my desk, but I don't recall anything important.

All right, you know, I was dealing with the political side of the military thing. I dealt with the funny little office in the State Department called U/L, which meant the Under Secretary's Liaison office where there were two career diplomats whose job it was to have liaison with the Pentagon. This was a sort of predecessor of the National Security Council.

Another episode was of a very different kind and quite a serious and interesting one. Here we got pretty close to the heart of some important policy issues. In the summer of '44 a request came through from the Chief of the U.S. Marine Aviation mission in Lima. One of the things, you know, we'd done

[10]

during the war was very carefully -- it was a military policy that the State Department had agreed to -- to replace all of the foreign military, naval, and air missions that existed in the Latin American countries before the war by U.S. missions in the hope that we would continue to have this relationship after the war. I don't know how it happened to be a Marine Air wing mission, but it was, and they were training the Peruvian Air Corps. The request came through for some dive-bombers for Peru. Well, you know enough about diplomatic relations to know that Peru has never been totally friendly to either Columbia or Ecuador, and it's been somewhat militaristic in the past and may even be under its present rather different regime. Lend-lease under which this request came was supposedly for efforts related to the war. By this time the Japanese were back to Saipan some seven thousand miles from Peru. I don't know whether I had the idea or my boss had the idea; at any rate it seemed to us to make sense in the changed circumstances to allow political considerations in terms of Latin America to have precedence over the desires of the military on

[11]

issues of this kind. So we undertook to make an issue of it, and we won. But this involved letters from the Secretary of State to the Secretaries of War and Navy saying, in effect, "We think the time has come to cut down lend-lease military equipment to the American Republic." We knew Peru could dive-bomb Columbia and Ecuador if it had the planes. We weren't so sure the Peruvians wouldn't like to do so.

Our letters led to quite a scrap. The colonel who ran the mission really was a tough guy. Fortunately the then Deputy Director of ARA was an equally tough Irishman named Joe McGurk, a bachelor who later became Ambassador to the Dominican Republic. Joe and I went over and met with the Army-Navy Latin American Coordination Committee, which consisted of some admirals, and captains, and colonels, and so forth and so on. We made our pitch following up on the letters to [Henry L.] Stimson. Stimson said -- I learned this because I saw a lot of the man later -- to one of his special assistants, "Oh, for god sake, Harvey, you handle this will you?" Harvey Bundy

[12]

called his friend Norman Armour and Norman Armour said, "Leave it to me," and I went over and saw Harvey Bundy. Well, Harvey later became the Chairman of the Board of the Endowment and is a very close friend of mine. At any rate we did stop the sale. But that was the kind of thing I was doing.

Then, I would guess it must have been in the late spring of '44, it was decided to set up a little group to plan for the next inter-American Conference. We didn't know when it was going to take place, but according to the rules, you know, a meeting of foreign ministers was supposed to be held every five years and the last one had been in Lima in '33.

MCKINZIE: The Rio meeting?

JOHNSON: No. Rio in January 1942 was special, see -- not the regular foreign ministers conference I think, as a matter of fact, the Argentines didn't attend.

In 1944, it was obvious that we ought to do some thinking now. I had not at that time, as far

[13]

as I recall, seen any indication that the Latinos or others were interested in changing the nature of the inter-American system. I was just asked to serve on this committee, presumably because I was the Inter-American political desk officer. The chairman of that committee is a man you might find is worthwhile talking to -- he's a good man -- he's still around; John Moore Cabot.

MCKINZIE: Yes. I'm seeing him next week.

JOHNSON: Oh, are you. Well, give him my best. Where are you seeing him?

MCKINZIE: Up in Manchester.

JOHNSON: Oh, good. Give him and his wife my very best. He and I worked together. He was the chairman of this little working group. There was a member from Pasvolsky's outfit, Harley Notter, who later put together that book on postwar planning (*Postwar Foreign Policy Preparation, 1939-1945*).

Charles Griffin was also involved in it; and a Latin American scholar from Vassar, M. Margaret Ball, a student of international organization who is now

[14]

dean at Duke. And myself. We met once every two weeks and talked about the reorganization of the inter-American system, planning for a conference the date of which had not been set.

Then came Dumbarton Oaks which began in August of '44. Jack Cabot was named area adviser for ARA to the U.S. Delegation, and I became in a sense his deputy back in the Department. Our boss by this time was Ambassador Norman Armour. Dumbarton Oaks took place in two stages, the Russian stage, and the Chinese stage. It was obvious that they were going to be quite different. In the Russian phase they drafted the document; in the Chinese phase, the Americans and the British were going to try to persuade the Chinese not to attempt to change even one semicolon or comma, because otherwise the matter would be thrown wide open again vis-a-vis the Russians. So the Chinese phase was going to be a holding operation. Cabot called me in and said, "Look, I can foresee a long period of no holiday for me." (By this time it was October.) He said, "I've told Norman that I'd like to have two weeks leave,

[15]

and I said I thought you ought to be the one to succeed me at Dumbarton Oaks."

I said, "This is wonderful," and that is what happened.

I was supposed to see to it that our inter-American interests were recognized, but because the Americans and British succeeded in keeping the draft unchanged, I had no policy responsibility. My sole job was helping get copies of the document out to all the other American republics, so that they would have them before it was released.

It was this Dumbarton Oaks assignment that brought me to Pasvolsky's notice. He had never seen me before.

MCKINZIE: This might be an appropriate time to interject a question. There were people in Pasvolsky's group who anticipated that there would be some kind of special regional alliances in the U.N. Charter, which was then in the drafting stage. If it worked out as they hoped it would work out it would negate the prewar regional alliances, including the one that the United States had had with Latin America. And

[16]

that must at some point in all of this have come to your attention.

JOHNSON: Well, I got right smack in the middle of that later. I'll tell you...

MCKINZIE: Did you address yourself to that whole issue?

JOHNSON: In early December of '44 (I was then still in ARA working under John Dreier who was then my immediate boss). Dreier called me in one day and said, "Joe, Alger Hiss wants to see you." (Alger was the head of the staff under Pasvolsky at that time.)

I said, "What's it all about?"

He said, "You go down and see him." I went.

Hiss had just returned from a speaking tour. He told me that a whole new reorganization of the Department was to be announced when Stettinius' new team was confirmed. (Stettinius, you know, had become Secretary in the fall and had proposed a major change of top officials.) Hiss said that the confirmation was expected shortly, and that the reorganization plans called for the creation of three

[17]

divisions under the Office of Special Political Affairs, one of which I was named Acting Chief. He added: "I thought you ought to be told."

MCKINZIE: Did he have anything to do with that?

JOHNSON: Yes. Well, I assume so, because of his position as Deputy Director of the Office of Special Political Affairs. But I think Leo Pasvolsky was mainly responsible for my appointment. He had asked me some weeks earlier (rather casually, as I remember it) if I would not like to come down and work with them.

At any rate, four days after Hiss spoke to me, the Secretary's "team" was confirmed, and I became Acting Chief of the Division of International Security Affairs.

The move, of course, brought me new responsibilities, although not all of them were different. In fact, one was the same, but with a twist. It was decided -- I don't know by whom -- that I should continue to serve on the "Cabot Committee", whose work now took on greatly enhanced significance and

[18]

and increased tempo, because of a decision to hold an inter-American conference (the Chapultepec Conference) that winter, before the proposed U.N. conference. (I knew then, yet, nothing about Yalta, although there were rumors of another heads of state -- we can now call it Summit -- meeting.) Nelson Rockefeller, who came into the department as Assistant Secretary for Inter-American Relations under that same reorganization plan, was therefore slated to be my boss in the old job. I guess he was already sitting at the desk waiting for the confirmation. At any rate, I went to see him to tell him I'd been offered this other job. He said, in effect, "I wish you'd stay here." I thanked him, but pointed out that the new post meant a very substantial promotion, and said that I proposed to take it. I believe he understood my decision.

At this time the preparation that our little committee had been engaged in merged into preparation for a real conference at which Nelson was clearly going to be one of the senior U.S. delegates. I think we believed that Stettinius would go but

[19]

we weren't sure.

I continued my membership on the committee, but was now working from a different perspective. My new boss was different too; Leo Pasvolsky. (Hiss played almost no role in the inter-American picture. He was concerned with the Yalta meeting, and was in fact at Yalta while we were preparing for Chapultepec.) It soon became clear that Pasvolsky and Rockefeller had different -- and clashing -- goals, one giving priority to the establishment of the U.N., the other seeking to re-establish and strengthen the inter-American system. I found out that I was going to be in the middle.

The Committee held long meetings, many of them with Rockefeller himself present, to prepare the U.S. position for the conference, which began, as I recall, the last week of February in '45.

I believe that the big disagreement between Pasvolsky and Rockefeller came out at the committee meetings. It certainly emerged before the conference began, and continued throughout. Rockefeller became the U.S. delegate on the conference committee

[20]

responsible for the reorganization of the inter-American system, and I found myself, a man committed to the U.N., assigned to be the chief adviser of the U.S. group assigned to that committee, whose head was committed to restoring the inter-American system. I am sure that

was Leo's doing. It was an interesting experience. I won't go into details. This is a story somebody ought to get around to telling, for it's a fascinating story.

MCKINZIE: I don't know whether we can get into that very much. There are historians now who when they work at U.S.-Latin American relations get stuck right there in early 1945 over the nature -- there are arguments even, about whether or not to re-enforce the Latin American people as something that was in itself viable and desirable for the future, or whether to simply use it as a kind of insurance policy against the possibility that the U.N. might not work.

JOHNSON: Well, there were very sharp differences not only on the intellectual or policy basis, but there

[21]

was another difference; that was the question of the future of the inter-American system itself. Argentina was in and not in. Chapultepec was not a conference of foreign ministers of the American republics because of the fact that Argentina was not invited. Now Rockefeller, when he came into office, had taken it as one of his major objectives to reconstitute the inter-American system, and a good part of his activity at Chapultepec was in relation to bringing the Argentines back in. It was quite clear that he worked with the Latin Americans. One of the chief people there was a contemporary of mine with whom I've become somewhat of a friend since. He was Alberto Lleras Camargo, then forty years old, and Foreign Minister of Colombia. He later became President of Colombia, and now is the editor of *Vision*. I think he had decided he wanted to reconstitute the inter-American system and give it a certain amount of leadership. So that there was, in addition to the relation of the inter-American system to the U.N., the issue of Argentine's coming back into

[22]

the inter-American system, which concerned many of us because of the fact that Argentina still at that time had diplomatic relations with the Nazis. Then there was a further element, a personal one, which I think can be put this way: Ed Stettinius made up his mind that he was going down in history as the guy who established the United Nations. He did not then and never till the day of his death, fully understand the United Nations. He was not an intellectual. (I had a good deal of admiration for Stettinius, but I won't go into that.) Ed Stettinius had made up his mind on this score. Nelson Rockefeller, who is a year or so younger than I -- then about 38 -- had made up his mind that he was going to move up the ladder as the guy who recreated the inter-American system.

I don't know if you've ever heard of Mr. Hull's attitude towards Nelson, but Mr. Hull would almost not let Nelson Rockefeller in the State Department Building. He had no use for "that young whippersnapper." I don't remember whether he used exactly those words, but that was something very close to what he had in mind. When Stettinius succeeded

[23]

Hull as Secretary of State Nelson clearly angled for and got this new assignment.

There was an enormous U.S. delegation in Mexico City, including prominent private citizens -- men like Eric Johnston and some labor leaders. I believe most of these people were chosen by Nelson and brought in by him. Adolph Berle, who was of course, in the State Department, an Assistant Secretary, was there.

MCKINZIE: Will [William L.] Clayton was there.

JOHNSON: Well, Will Clayton; but I'm not really talking about the government officials -- but these were -- I guess they were called delegates -- but about such people as [James G.] Patton of the National Farmers Union; and probably somebody from the American Farm Bureau Federation; and I remember a couple of women were there. It was, I believe, the first bringing in of prominent private citizens into a conference. It would be interesting to know who did this. John Dickey may have played a role in it. He certainly followed that pattern, only slightly

[24]

differently, for San Francisco. At any rate, here was this enormous crowd, many of whom seemed to have Nelson's interest in "the inter-American system first." In a sense I suppose you can say my role, maybe I was put there by Pasvolsky for this purpose, was to see that the people working on the development of the inter-American system did not wreck the machinery for the U.N. There is a story here; again, it's out of this picture, but I think it ought to be told, but I don't want to tell all of it right now.

Toward the end of the conference we learned (maybe I was the one who got the information) that the plenary session going on at the time was about to pass a resolution that had come out of our committee, which had been put through in rather strange ways. It was quite clear to me that its passage would be a victory for the regional people over the U.N. people. We sent up word to Chapultepec to postpone the vote until the afternoon. Our delegation was in a hotel about a mile away, and that afternoon three men rode in a car up to

[25]

Chapultepec to stop the passage of this resolution. And their names were Stettinius, Rockefeller and Johnson.

This is a long story which I would like sometime to tell to somebody who was working on that subject. It is the subject for a chapter in a book and I had a role in this and it does not redound to the credit of everybody. But at any rate, there was this issue, and in fact, I think it's fair to say that the U.N. people held the fort, insofar as seeing to it that the U.N. got established first. Now it is also quite clear that when we got to the San Francisco Conference the issue of the regional arrangement, that was Article 51, with [Arthur] Vandenberg playing a leading role, came back in very strongly.

The period between Dumbarton Oaks and the Mexico City Conference had been spent in quietly briefing all of our Latin American friends, indeed, all of the Allies, all of the United Nations, on the forthcoming conference. It was a planned operation. We held a number of meetings in Washington, with

[26]

Stettinius, I think, generally in the chair, in which there were questions and answers from the Latin American ambassadors about what Dumbarton Oaks meant, and simultaneously those on the European side were briefing all our European friends, and so forth and so on. The Latins were pretty familiar with Dumbarton Oaks by the time we got to Mexico City and they were very much concerned. They had plenty of time to prepare for Mexico City. At Mexico City we didn't know when the U.N. Conference was going to take place until at the very end. You may recall that Stettinius and Hiss flew from Yalta straight to Mexico City. Hiss only stopped for a day or so and went on to Washington, but Stettinius stayed through the end. It was at that time that the Yalta press release came out saying that it was agreed that the U.N. Conference would take place in San Francisco six weeks later, approximately the 20th of April.

MCKINZIE: Will Clayton was at some odds all along to prevent resolutions from being passed which concerned social and economic issues.

[27]

JOHNSON: That's right. I knew about these, but I was not involved in them. I know about them because, well, Pete [Emilio G.] Collado -- have you interviewed Pete?

MCKINZIE: Yes.

JOHNSON: You have. Well, he remains a very good friend of mine. We see each other quite frequently. Pete was there helping Will Clayton, and Sammy [Samuel W.] Anderson was down there too. Sammy Anderson was then in the War Production Board, I guess, and he went down there with Clayton. I heard about their part of Chapultepec through Linc Gordon in Anderson's shop. Linc is a fellow you ought to talk to, incidentally.

MCKINZIE: Yes, I'm going to. I've met him -- had lunch with him in fact.

JOHNSON: Yes. I knew Clayton had a very rough time at Chapultepec because, as you know, we had kept the Latinos from getting supplies they felt they needed during the war. We said the war was more important, and they were on short supply.

[28]

We also pointed out Americans were on short supply too. They didn't appreciate that. And it was then perfectly obvious at the war's end we were going to have to do a hell of a lot for Europe, and Clayton had the problem of saying to the Latinos, "It isn't going to be at all as you'd like it in the postwar period." And I think I can understand some of their resentment, because they had had some difficult times, and they had been on the whole -- the majority of them, all except Argentina and to a lesser extent Chile -- very useful friends. Brazil had made a major contribution. There were a lot of issues that came up. One of the issues that came up that I did have something to do with even before the end of the war -- again this is a military thing -- the desire of our military to keep some of the bases that we had been given access to only for the duration of the war. Galapagos for example; we had an installation on Galapagos and we tried to negotiate with Ecuador to get continuing naval air base rights in Galapagos in the postwar period. These were things that created difficulties with the Latin Americans who were hoping

[29]

that they would go back to greater, shall we say, independence or equality. I may say that during that period I formed an impression of the difficulties of dealing with our friends from Latin America, which I put in terms of the picture in *Gulliver's Travels* of Gulliver being tied down by the Lilliputians -- remember that picture of Gulliver on his back and the Lilliputians drawing the strings over him. One has not infrequently this kind of picture of an effort, and from their point of view this was understandable.

At any rate, we moved on to San Francisco and these issues were still there very much in San Francisco, and still the issue of Argentina admission, you know. The issue of Argentine admission held up much of the work of the conference for quite an appreciable time until Nelson finally won.

MCKINZIE: What, if anything, did the death of Roosevelt and Truman's coming into the Presidency have on your thinking about these continuing problems as you moved from Chapultepec to San Francisco? Not that there had been that much strong direction from Roosevelt personally, but did you anticipate or did you actually

[30]

have any change in instructions with Truman?

JOHNSON: Not that I recall. At my level -- I was, I don't know how far down, but I certainly wasn't at the top -- I didn't see much of all of this. I became conscious, obviously, in the spring of '45 of the Lublin issue and the struggle about the Poles; but I have tried occasionally, not seriously in a systematic way, to reconstruct that period, my own role in that period. I did play a role in the preparations for what I later learned was Yalta. I don't know again where the proposal came from, but we got word very soon after -- I guess it was around the turn of the year, it must have been late December or early January -- to prepare a declaration on liberated Europe.

MCKINZIE: Which group was this?

JOHNSON: A small, ad hoc group. Alger Hiss was one member of the group; Jack [John] Hickerson, who was then still in EUR; maybe Doc [H. Freeman] Matthews, his boss (I've forgotten whether Doc was there at that time); and I, and I've forgotten who else.

[31]

Don't ask me where it came from. We met mostly, as I recall, in Hiss's office. But we worked on the declaration and we, furthermore, added to it -- and I'm not at all sure that this was on instructions from on high, and I'm not sure how high on "high" was -- we added to it a protocol on liberated Europe, which never got into....ever heard of that?

MCKINZIE: No.

JOHNSON: I think it's in Walter Johnson's Stettinius file. Well, that's a whole other story, but we did work on this, and the declaration was adopted with some rather significant modifications.

Obviously one of the things we were doing -- this was still before Mexico City -- as I say I worked on that protocol, and we didn't know where we were going until in Mexico City we learned the Conference was to take place in San Francisco. Then there was a period of intense preparation to get all of our "ducks in a row" for San Francisco. I can't recall much of what went on in that period, except that we were not unoccupied. Pasvolsky would not get in an airplane

[32]

so this meant those who traveled with him traveled by train.

MCKINZIE: The Santa Fe scenic route.

JOHNSON: There were three trains, I think, that went from the East Coast all the way to San Francisco. They didn't change cars or anything. Ours went to St. Louis, I guess, and Amarillo. I know we went through Amarillo. It was the Santa Fe. I think we may have shifted to the Southern Pacific up through California, I've forgotten. One train went overland, I guess through Chicago, and I've forgotten how the third one went. We also went by train to Mexico City and back, because we had our own -- not a train, but a couple of cars that went all the way to Mexico City. Pasvolsky and [Green H.] Hackworth, who was then the legal adviser of the State Department and Pasvolsky's team. So we traveled in a very pleasant manner, indeed. I came back from San Francisco by air, because I bummed a ride. My wife had had her appendix out while I was away, and I wanted to get back.

At San Francisco -- I don't know how much you

[33]

want to go into my role there, after all Mr. Truman did not appear -- let me come around to your question about Mr. Truman...

MCKINZIE: It's the event rather than Mr. Truman we want to get, because that meeting is an important one; it set many precedents.

JOHNSON: Yes. I have, as I say, no real impression of the impact on the things I was dealing with of Mr. Roosevelt's death. There was no change in our particular machine, you see. Stettinius as far as I knew was still Secretary of State. I didn't know anything about the change (his replacement by Byrnes) until the day it happened. It was not announced before the signing of the Charter; as I recall, it was announced when Stettinius went down and [James F.] Byrnes went in all on the same day.

MCKINZIE: There's some evidence now that it was all set up before.

JOHNSON: Yes. I think this is probably correct, but it was quite proper of Truman not to undercut Stettinius in the middle of the Conference. So as far as we were

[34]

concerned there was continuity.

When we got to San Francisco, the conference was stymied by the issues of whether Poland should be admitted to the Conference, and whether Argentina should be admitted to the Conference; while these issues were being discussed the rest of us really didn't have very much to do. These were being discussed at the Secretary of State level -- [Andrei A.] Gromyko, Stettinius, and [Sir Anthony] Eden, who was there at the beginning. To a certain extent we twiddled our thumbs.

MCKINZIE: You mentioned in the case of the Chapultepec Conference that one of the important issues was what would the future nature of the inter-American system be? Now the question it seems to me that parallels that in the case of the United Nations was, was it clear in everybody's mind what the future nature of the United Nations would be? To what extent would it be supranational? To what extent did Leo Pasvolksky believe that it ought to be supranational? To what extent did he believe that it ought to have military potential if not military

[35]

hardware? Did you have a clear perception, and do you think the delegation had a clear perception, of that?

JOHNSON: I think all of us on the staff had a very clear perception. How clear the perception of the delegations was, one doesn't know. The delegates who dealt with the areas that I was concerned with did have.

I want to go back to Mexico City for one more minute replying to something you mentioned. Let me do that even though it's going to sound funny here.

I should have pointed out that one of the major issues at Mexico City was the issue of -- I guess it was called the Declaration of Chapultepec or something like that, which was "all for one and one for all." One of the things that happened was a real effort on the part of some of the Latinos to get us committed on this in a statement that was unacceptable. Now the U.S. delegate in charge of handling it in committee was Senator Warren Austin. The issue involved was that of possible violation of the U.S.

[36]

Constitution. It was very hot; the pressure was so great that soon Senator Tom Connally, the Chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee, who had not originally planned to come, was urged to come down. Austin held the line saying, "Please, gentlemen, this is a matter of the responsibilities of the Senate of the United States. We cannot commit United States forces without a very special constitutional action." He did hold the line at that particular point. I came down with "turismo" for forty-eight hours and was out of the picture at the crucial point, so I don't know first-hand all that happened. But Connally did come and the resolution was substantially modified with the introduction of the language, "in accordance with their constitutional principles." I believe, and here this is really a matter of record, I believe we committed ourselves to translating the language of the Declaration of Chapultepec into a treaty at a later time, and that became the basis for the Rio Treaty of 1947. Almost the last thing I did in the Department before my departure in 1947 was to work on the language of the provision about mutual

[37]

defense in the Rio Treaty. (Parenthetically, the day I left the Department I went to say good-bye to General [George C.] Marshall's assistant, General Pat Carter. He said, "The 'old man' is free. He is getting ready to go to Rio. Would you like to say good-bye to him?" Of course, I said, "Yes." So I had half an hour with a totally relaxed General Marshall.)

Well, I just wanted to mention the fact that the constitutional hassle was a major issue in which I was directly involved in Mexico City -- for as long as I was on my feet, and after I got back on my feet, a really serious issue.

MCKINZIE: Wasn't there considerable desirability, however, of postponing that future treaty? Most of my knowledge is on the economic side, that is Will Clayton didn't want to get into that right then...

JOHNSON: No.

MCKINZIE: ...because it would bring up too many, and in fact there was some problem about having that

[38]

conference, because they were afraid that it was going to be both military and economic.

JOHNSON: Yes. I'm vague on that. About postponing the conference, I just don't recall. He just had to give on this point (the Declaration of Rio) to get what he wanted on the nineteen others we were determined upon. I think this was a negotiating point at Mexico City; and I am sure that the reason Tom Connally came down was precisely to make this change, this action, acceptable to the Senate. Austin could speak to a certain extent for the Republican side, but Connally had to be there.

(I remember -- again, this is anticipating -- that I had a fair amount to do with putting together that section of the report of the Mexico City Conference that dealt with the Act of Chapultepec or whatever we called it. In that connection, I went to call on Senator Connally to clear a draft or to get his recollections of certain episodes. There he introduced me to Lieutenant Francis O. Wilcox, U.S.N. who was about to be sprung out of the Navy to become the Chief of Staff of the Senate Foreign

[39]

Relations Committee.)

To return to the San Francisco Conference -- I was one of four members of the U.S. delegation staff who were designated Chief Technical Experts.

The Conference was divided into four commissions and each of those into several committees. Several "technical experts" working under my general supervision were assigned to the committees -- sometimes to more than one. The work of transforming the Dunbarton Oaks

Proposals into the Charter was done in the committees which met in private. My four, all under Commission III, dealt respectively with the organization of the Security Council, peaceful settlement, enforcement action, and regional arrangements. The regional arrangements one I didn't have much to do with. Bill [William] Sanders was the fellow who handled that working directly with Vandenberg. I would guess Andy [Andrew] Cordier had something to do with this, although he was mostly concerned with the General Assembly.

Essentially our task was to hold the line on everything relating to the Security Council –

[40]

organization, including voting, responsibilities, etc. There was to be no change from the proposal and, of course, the Yalta formula on voting. This had been agreed among the U.S., the U.S.S.R., the U.K., China, and later the French.

MCKINZIE: How then did you deal with Harold Stassen who arrived right out of the Pacific to argue for the elimination of the veto provision?

JOHNSON: I can't answer that fully, There may have been talks with him inside the delegation, at the top. What I do know is that he was not assigned to Committee I of Commission III where the voting formula, as we preferred to call it, was dealt with. The responsible delegate there was Senator Connally, with Jack Hickerson and me as his principal aides, Stassen's assignment on the security side was to the committee on peaceful settlement. I'm quite sure I was never in any meeting with the U.S. delegation, or elsewhere, at which he spoke against the "veto."

Committee III, I, had a very painful time. When

[41]

the voting formula was formally introduced by the "big four," it was supported by speeches from all of them, and angrily attacked by representatives of smaller countries, most memorably by Herbert Evatt of Australia, and -- much more intelligently -- by [Sir Carl August] Berendsen of New Zealand. They all asked a whole lot of questions, and were far from satisfied by the answers. Finally they said, "By god we want a statement from you sponsoring powers of exactly what Article 27 means." So the meetings of the full committee were adjourned for, I would say, about two or three weeks, during which we prepared what is known as The Declaration of the Four Sponsoring Powers. France, you see, hadn't yet been brought into the "big five;" the French delegation worked on the Declaration and went along with it, but they didn't sign it.

As far as I can recall, I spent all my time during this period on the Declaration. We worked essentially on two levels. There was a five-man committee consisting of Pasvolsky, Gladwyn Jebb from the U.K.; Llang Yuen-li for China; Fouques

[42]

Duparc of France and [Arkadya] Sobolev for the Soviet Union. I was on the working level below that. I believe we wrote the first draft of what became the Declaration of the Four Sponsoring Powers. I cannot recall how that was handled in the U.S. delegation. I should know, but I don't.

MCKINZIE: Of course there were daily meetings with the entire U.S. delegation.

JOHNSON: Oh, yes, there were indeed; but, you know, they would ask, "How are you doing, Leo?" And Leo would say how he was doing; "it is coming along."

As you say, there were daily meetings of the delegation and I attended them regularly after the first few days. It was partly a matter of prestige. [Durward] Sandifer and [O. Benjamin] Gerig, the chiefs of the other two departmental divisions under Pasvolsky attended the meetings in their capacities as Secretary and Deputy Secretary of the delegation.

But it was more -- I felt then and feel now -- a matter of "the need to know."

At any rate, I became a regular attendant at the delegation meetings. To be sure I sat in the

[43]

back of the room, but I was there to hear and to be called on, and I was called on.

The Declaration, when finally approved by the five delegations, went back to Committee III, 1. There was a vigorous, often angry, debate.

In effect the five -- or at least the four, said "take it and go home." Since it was a declaration by the four powers, it did not have to be voted on; it surely would have been defeated. Fortunately, although reports of the debate got into the press afterwards, the press were not present. As I remarked earlier, the working committees of the Conference met in private. I have always believed that, if they had not, it would have been virtually impossible to agree upon a charter.

MCKINZIE: You had full exchange.

JOHNSON: Oh, we had full exchange and people could go out afterwards and say anything they wanted to the press, and they did. Evatt told the press his version of every meeting he was in as soon as he got out of it. So did Vandenberg; and so did [John Foster] Dulles. I don't know whether

[44]

you've ever heard about "Operation Leak?"

MCKINZIE: No.

JOHNSON: This is one for the San Francisco Conference. The press followed Vandenberg and Dulles because they were much more prepared to talk than the members of the Government were. Vandenberg had made clear his position that as a United States Senator he wasn't going to be bound by an instructions from anybody. The officials and officers of the Government knew that, and so did the press. So, when he walked out of the big four meetings of the delegation, or of the Conference, the press would flock around him; the same was true of Dulles. Dulles was only an adviser to the delegation, but he was known to be there representing one of the potential Republican candidates, to wit [Thomas E.] Dewey, titular head of the Republican Party. One

result was that the newspaper stories tended to give the Republican version of what went on both in the U.S. delegation meetings, and in the Big Four -- subsequently the Big Five -- meetings in the Fairmont Penthouse. And finally, somebody persuaded Stettinius, that

[45]

really this couldn't go on, that he had to have for the sake of the Government and for himself -- the Democrats were the Government -- had to have for the sake of the Government some people who were talking pretty freely to the press and giving the U.S. Government's position. So they created something nicknamed "Operation Leak," which had three members. One was a guy already there named Edward Miller, who later became Assistant Secretary of State, who was in Assistant Secretary Acheson's office and was really Acheson's man in San Francisco. Another one was [Thomas] Finletter; and a man with certain political status whom none of our crowd had ever heard of before -- named Adlai E. Stevenson. Stevenson was brought out specially for this job and I think Finletter was too. That's where I first met them both.

MCKINZIE: Just to give a press briefing, background.

MCKINZIE: Just general press and background, and keep the press happy, and talk to Scotty Reston who was getting an awful lot of stuff out of everybody. At

[46]

any rate, this did take place, but Stevenson never sat in a committee for the U.S., he wasn't a member of the delegation. To go back to the -- this is one of the most fabulous things in my experience -- to go back to the Latin American thing. Nelson Rockefeller was not on the U.S. delegation to the San Francisco Conference, and without a by-your-leave from anybody he rented rooms in the St. Francis Hotel, which was where a good many of the Latin American delegates stayed; and he and his colleagues, chiefly a fellow named John Lockwood, and a fellow named Dudley Bonsal, who is now a Federal judge in New York, came out and sat themselves down in the St. Francis and Nelson didn't hesitate to come into delegation meetings. It was really very funny, if you look at the list, I think you will not find his name on the list of members of the U.S. delegation at San Francisco. But he got the Argentines in. Argentina became a member of the Conference; it signed the Charter.

MCKINZIE: Well, of course, the issue about the Argentines was a very touchy issue.

[47]

JOHNSON: Yes. The Russians were very annoyed because they wanted the Poles in too. You remember the compromise was that the Poles were going to be allowed to sign the Charter the day the conference ended.

MCKINZIE: Did the delegation have any sense of the Soviet using the Argentine issue as a kind of barometer of U.S. friendliness, or possibly of hostility toward the Soviet Union?

JOHNSON: I probably wouldn't have seen that. I attended a good many of the penthouse meetings but not all of them. I attended those, really, on a need to know basis. If they were dealing, for instance, with the voting formula -- and I became "the expert on the veto"

supposedly at that time; not an expert like Pasvolsky, but I was at the expert level -- I attended those sessions. But I didn't see from where I sat -- I think it's awfully hard if you are working at a technical level to grasp problems of tone. It is true these were not only technical but also political problems, but they

[48]

were not immediate U.S. versus relations with the Soviet Union. At my level the task was to get the Charter through with as few changes as possible, and not to do things that would alienate too many people. We really concentrated on that technical problem -- at least I did. I don't think I ever made a speech for anybody. I certainly wasn't in any of the politicking. I don't mean that word in a bad sense. But the political advisers who worked on these things were such men as Charlie Yost and Jack Hickerson; I've forgotten who the other political advisers were; they were the ones who went around arm twisting and were in contact with other delegations. I saw my Soviet opposite numbers and had some dealing with them on specific things, but we tended to get our instructions, all of us, from the Pasvolsky group which was a sort of a working group of the Big Five. A working group on charter issues, you see what I mean. Maybe I was blind but I just was not seeing all of these other things. For instance, toward the end of the conference a coordination commission, consisting of representatives from twelve or fourteen countries, was created. Its job was to take all the

[49]

drafts coming out all of the twelve committees and put them together in one unified document with a minimum of contradictions and inconsistencies. Pasvolsky became the chairman of that; and obviously the Russians, and French, and the Chinese, and English were all on it. I can't remember who all the others were.

That committee met almost day and night for ten days at the end of the San Francisco Conference and it never took a vote. When the issues would get so sharp that Pasvolsky was afraid they might be hung up, he'd say, "Look, we'd better think about this one some more, and just lay it aside and move on to the next." It was one of the most skillful jobs of managing with intellectual authority, a very difficult task. I spent a fair amount of my time, but only on the Security Council matters, with that committee. I don't know if this is very responsive to your question?

MCKINZIE: Yes, it is. You say you did not then have to go to the Latin American delegations and explain these Security Council provisions?

[50]

JOHNSON: Not really, no.

MCKINZIE: You worked them out.

JOHNSON: Yes. We worked with the political officer to a certain extent and let them do the explaining and negotiating -- it is the pattern that's still followed at the U.N. Normally, I think, the political officers try to do the arm twisting with the help of the technical people.

At the Conference I worked. most closely with the British, the Russians, the French. I had very good friends on the Canadian, and Australian, and the New Zealand delegations. The Canadians, you know, had an extraordinary thing happen. Their delegates were politicians and they chose to have a general election in the middle of the Conference, so the politicians all went away, and the next level were some civil servants named Lester B. Pearson, and Hume Wrong, and Norman Robertson, and Mike Rasminsky, who is now president of the Bank of Canada. All first class guys. They got more of what they wanted out of San Francisco than any small country

[51]

delegation. You know, they didn't make the fanfare that the others did, but they worked for what they wanted and they got it. I did not have much to do with the Latin Americans at this time.

They were concentrated on the regional arrangements business.

MCKINZIE: You mentioned that as a kind of general guideline your purpose was to prevent any more changing than was absolutely necessary to what had already been agreed by the big powers about the Security Council.

JOHNSON: Yes. This was the one about which the Russians really cared and where we cared in relation to the Russians, and this involved the whole veto business, you see. Everybody else called it "veto," we insisted on calling it the unanimity rule, which it was, and which it still is; that is the language of the Declaration of the Four Sponsoring Powers. I used to have a sort of standard speech on the unanimity rule. You can say it was a phony, but I don't think it was completely. One of the concepts underlying the

[52]

unanimity rule was very clearly the concept that by being forced to be unanimous in order to do things that they wanted done, the great powers would be forced to compromise. It was quite a good thesis as a matter of fact. It wasn't solely a question of letting them veto things that they thought were not in their national interest, but it was designed supposedly to force them to get together on issues, as had been done during the war time and again.

MCKINZIE: Well, the standard kind of answer as to why the United States took that position was that much earlier than this, perhaps at Yalta, Roosevelt decided that you probably couldn't get it through the Senate -- thinking about [Woodrow] Wilson's trouble at the end of the first World War -- without this provision, and that the United States insisted on that for that reason.

JOHNSON: That was one of the elements; there is no question about that. I imagine Ruth Russell's book on the Charter put out by Brookings -- I know Ruth well, but I've never read her book all the way

[53]

through. I imagine she had this pretty well documented. That was certainly an important reason within the U.S. and it was not because the Russians wanted it. Now one of the interesting things about the voting formula is this: we assumed at San Francisco on the basis of this doctrine of unanimity, that everybody had to stand up and be counted. I can still remember a meeting in

which the question as to whether you could abstain came up, Jimmy Dunn, who was one of the chief political advisers said, "No, everybody's got to stand up and be counted." (I can't tell you in what room that was.) Now this was the Pasvolsky view; the doctrine changed completely following San Francisco; after the Charter got through the Senate, Byrnes brought Ben [Benjamin V.] Cohen into the Department and Ben became the top level guy in charge of things here involving the U.N. and Pasvolsky and Cohen -- both of whom I'm devoted to -- hated each other's guts. Cohen was the one who introduced the doctrine of abstention.

I may say that I met Mr. Truman at San Francisco,

[54]

that was the first time. As you know, he addressed the final session of the Conference. I'd be interested to know who wrote that speech, because it was a damn good speech, and the tag line is one I have frequently used. Do you know what it was? "Oh what a great day this can be." It was just the right touch, and it was a very impressive touch for me. I've never forgotten it.

MCKINZIE: That capsulized your feelings about what had transpired.

JOHNSON: That's right, yes. It was a combination of hard boiled realism and -- altruism is not the right word -- idealism. It was always there. There was much more realism than there had been at Paris, at least on the part of the Americans. Mr. Wilson was not as realistic I think as the U.N. delegation to San Francisco.

MCKINZIE: As a historian is it a fair question to

[55]

ask if you were personally drawing any kinds of conscious or unconscious parallels between Wilson's experience at Versailles and what was going on here?

JOHNSON: I think everybody in the U.S. delegation was conscious of this.

Adolf Berle, who had participated in the early planning in the State Department, had been on the staff of the U.S. Delegation at Paris.

MCKINZIE: Dulles had been there, too.

JOHNSON: Dulles had been there; and these guys were conscious of it, and the whole thrust of Hull's preparation and Pasvolsky's had been "Let's not let it happen again." So that we all were imbued with an awareness of the importance of keeping the U.S. Senate aboard; and this is one reason why Vandenberg was given his lead to a considerable degree on issues, although Ralph Bunche and others fought him and the military pretty hard on some

[56]

trusteeship issues. Moreover, Connally was put in the forefront of handling the Security Council questions. That wasn't any accident at all. These guys went back to Washington -- as I'm certain

Congressman [Sol] Bloom did -- committed to the Charter. The recollection of 1919 was a terribly important constant element in the picture.

One other thing. I think, but am not sure, the first time I became aware of Mr. Truman's impact was in connection with a major impasse with the Russians that held up the Declaration of the Four Sponsoring Powers. It was on the application of the so-called veto to the introduction of a item to the agenda.

MCKINZIE: Right. The so-called discussion vetoes.

JOHNSON: Discussion vetoes. The story I heard was that Stettinius made up his mind that we simply could not accept the Russian position on that issue, and that he called the President, and maybe even called Mr. Hull. (You know Mr. Hull

[57]

was a delegate in name, although he never came out. There were eight delegates originally, supposedly, and Mr. Bull was one of them but he never got there.) He may have gotten Mr. Hull's help. At any rate he called the President and asked the President, please to get Harry Hopkins to tell Stalin when he was in Moscow has he then was), that if the Russians stood pat on that issue he (Stettinius) was prepared to break up the Conference. I have never verified this, but it certainly ought to be verifiable from the Stettinius papers or from people like Wilder Foote. Is Wilder Foote one you've run into at all?

MCKINZIE: He's in Maine. I'm going up there next week.

JOHNSON: Oh, you are. This is a nice job you have.

MCKTNZIE: Yes.

JOHNSON: Well, Wilder would be one to ask about both the organization of "Operation Leak" and that

[58]

particular subject [the discussion veto]. Because he was very close to Ed Stettinius at that time. Charlie Noyes was also close to Stettinius.

Well, as I say, when Truman came out there, there was his speech. .And then -- I've forgotten whether it was the night before or that day -- Stettinius gave a reception for the President in a suite of rooms in the Fairmont Hotel. My recollection is quite vivid. When I got there the room was rather dark -- it wasn't heavily lit up -- and there gleaming through the dark were Los dientes and the white hair of Stettinius. (You know he was called "Los Dientes" by the Latinos) and one was very conscious of those teeth and that hair. He said, "Hello, Joe." And then he said, "Mr. President this is Joe Johnson, one of the members of the U.S. group." (He may have said some nice things about me too.) I was struck -- Mr. Truman was modest -- retiring almost: The fact that he was beyond -- almost

[59]

behind -- Stettinius, and much shorter, strengthened the effect. I was impressed that the President of the United States was such a modest and retiring guy.

The next time I saw Mr. Truman in person close-up was several years later. Then his assurance was very much noticeable. But I'll never forget the impression I had of him that first time. He was truly modest, truly retiring. I couldn't possibly use the word insignificant, but -- vis-à-vis Stettinius in that room at that time he did not stand out, shall we say.

MCKINZIE: Well after that signing which was...

JOHNSON: The 26th of June.

MCKINZIE: Yes. Then I gathered you stayed on with that kind of work in preparation for the first meeting.

JOHNSON: I did. They had the so-called Preparatory Commission in London with the Executive Committee

[60]

of the Preparatory Commission, and I sent the guy who was then my number two to London to work on this Preparatory Commission, whereas I stayed home and backstopped him. And then we changed over. I went over to the Assembly in January of '46 -- the Assembly and Security Council -- and he came home and ran the shop while I was over there.

I told you I flew back from San Francisco because my wife had had an appendectomy. That was a mistake. A lot of other people took their holidays out in California after the Conference. It was decided -- I can't tell you by whom or when -- that we would try to rush the Charter through the Senate just as fast as we could. Those of us -- the few -- we unhappy few -- who were on hand had to do all the preparation of the testimony before the committee -- before the Foreign Relations Committee. I could guess that that began about the 10th or the 12th of July, I can't recall. It was very early, you know, there was a lot to be done. Remember, by this time Stettinius was out as Secretary of State.

[61]

But the President had named him the first U.S. Representative to the U.N., and he was to be the first witness before the Committee. We had quite regular briefing sessions in his apartment in, I think it was the Wardman Park, it may have been the Shoreham.

MCKINZIE: The one on Connecticut Avenue there.

JOHNSON: Yes -- the one on Connecticut Avenue -- I can remember being up there in July -- this was before air conditioning was widespread -- and we sat in Stettinius' hotel room and it was our function to think of all kinds of questions to trap Stettinius. I think he recognized he wasn't a very good witness, and we sure did, too. I remember I asked him some question and -- he was a very pleasant guy -- he said, "Well, Senator Johnson." Hiram Johnson was one of the ones he'd

be appearing before. It was a very interesting exercise. Dean Acheson was there a good part of the time. He was the one, I guess, that Byrnes had

[62]
assigned.

MCKINZIE: He [Stettinius] called this his practice session before giving testimony.

JOHNSON: Yes, exactly. Actually to a certain extent you might say they were wasted because Stettinius just made his statement and the Senators excused him, and then Pasvolsky sat and answered the questions. This was the third intellectual performance that I'd seen Pasvolsky pull off. The first was at Dumbarton Oaks where he and Gladwyn Jebb were the two people who really persuaded the Chinese at the end of Dumbarton Oaks to accept as it was the document that had been drafted with the Russians. Then came his performance in the commission that drafted the Charter in its final form; and then this testimony before the Foreign Relations Committee. They were all three superb performances.

MCKINZIE: Can we talk about Pasvolsky for a minute? You mentioned that he was an important influence

[63]
at more than one point in your life? I have the impression -- this is only a personal impression -- that Pasvolsky was a great idealist, at least in the planning period, that he did envision some kind of brave new postwar world. In fact, I think he even used the phrase "a second chance to make the world safe for democracy," at some point along the line.

JOHNSON: I don't remember that.

MCKINZIE: I guess the question is, was he fully satisfied with what all of his labors had wrought in the sense of the U.N. Charter? Did you have a feeling that here was what everyone wanted or in the sense of politics it is that which is possible, which perhaps is something less than what people wanted? Do you have any ideas on Pasvolsky's view on all of that?

JOHNSON: Pasvolsky I'm sure was basically an idealist, but he was I think an intensely practical person

[64]
aware of political possibilities. He was willing to fight very hard for what he felt was important. For instance, on the issue of the OAS versus the U.N. Pasvolsky fought very hard, and he fought, you know, during the hearings. Some Senator said, "Well, what about the Monroe Doctrine?" Pasvolsky's answer to that is just fascinating. I haven't read it for twenty years, but I can remember the occasion, how he avoided being pinned down. I think he was an idealist who believed in the possibilities of doing better this time.

Leo Pasvolsky was a person of great intellectual authority. He had a first-class mind. I was devoted to him. He was a very important person in my life. He treated me well and I admired

him. Physically he was short and roly-poly, and had a rather pompous manner. Someone once spoke of him as "the brain that walked like a man." He reminded me of the third little pig in Disney's version of that fairy tale -- the one whose house could not be blown down. He possessed a puckish sense of humor. But he was

[65]

a good boss -- at least to me, and to others also.

Some people have, because he was Russian born and spoke Russian, you know, raised questions about whether he was Communist-minded. I would say that Leo was as good a liberal economist as I know. I think Leo may have been a little too timid in some respects -- I think he was so much influenced by his recollection of 1919, that he may have cautioned -- and also, Mr. Hull was a hell of a cautious man, and Leo was very, very close to Mr. Hull. I don't know whether you realize how close he was. It was still impossible for me to say a word critical of Mr. Hull in Leo's presence, and there are other people who were close to them who are still alive, like Virginia Harley who's still in the Department of State, to whom you just can't criticize Mr. Hull. Oh, I can, but you couldn't with them. His so-called biography is a real mausoleum. But it's not as inaccurate or untruthful as Byrnes' book...

MCKINZIE: *Speaking frankly.*

[66]

JOHNSON: *Speaking Frankly* -- it's the most misnamed book of all time.

Well, speaking about Leo. Leo was a person who understood, as well as I think anybody I had seen up until that time, how the academic intellectual had to function within the bureaucracy. He told me a story once -- I guess it was the time when he offered me the job, and we sort of sat down and talked for an hour or so. He said that there was a man in his division who was given instructions to prepare a policy paper on some subject -- he may have told me, but I don't now recall -- to go on up to the top [i.e., the Secretary], and to include alternative recommendations. When the guy brought the paper back there was just one recommendation, and Leo said, "I asked you for several alternative recommendations."

This man said, "Well, I'm a scholar; when I study an issue I draw my conclusion and there can just be one conclusion, one recommendation

[67]

that makes sense."

And Leo said, "You better go back to your books. You're no good at this place." As I recall he added, "You may think you have all the facts, but you are not in a position to know about all the considerations that must influence the policymaker."

MCKINZIE: He speaks volumes in a way.

JOHNSON: Yes. So Leo did have this real sense, and he was awfully good at demanding alternative proposals. He carried this on, you know, after he got out of the Government. When he went back to Brookings, he organized their international relations programs, and he carried the concept of the policy paper there; he held annual conferences -- among the best things that I ever attended -- in various parts of the country, and he'd get academics in who had not been in the policy process and a few people who had been. The conference papers dealt with policy problems

[68]

laying out the background and basic facts, but omitting alternatives and conclusions. The whole conference, a four or five day affair, was spent examining and elaborating alternatives, but Pasvolsky wouldn't let us reach a conclusion. He said, "It's not your business to come up with a policy."

That was his approach, so that I think it must be said that Leo had a real sense of the practical, which was well mixed with the ideal. I shall only add that there is no question in my own mind, no question at all, that the Charter is more Leo's document than it is anybody else's.

Now, although an economist by profession, Pasvolsky was not much interested in the economic and social aspects of the Charter, and as you know Dumbarton Oaks was somewhat lacking on that side.

It was in those sectors that the real imaginative expansion took place in San Francisco. It came from various sources, including many American

[69]

non-profit groups. Jim Shotwell, my predecessor at the Endowment, was one of those people who worked with Fred Nolte and Judge Proskauer and many others on human rights.

Pasvolsky was essentially an academic, a scholar, but he had had a lot of exposure to a wily politician, Mr. Hull. You know he first came in to the State Department under Hull to work on the Trade Agreements Act.

He left in early '39. Then Hull -- Leo told me this story once -- Hull called Leo up, he was somewhere in Maine -- it must have been the summer of '39. He said in effect, "Leo," (he probably called him Pasvolsky) "they tell me I'm a damn fool and Borah specifically says I'm a damn fool, but I think Europe is going to have a war, and I think it's very important for us to be prepared for our role in relation to that war, and I want you to come back to Washington and work with me on postwar planning." Now, that ought to be verifiable.

MCKINZIE: I never read it.

[70]

JOHNSON: I don't know what's happened to Pasvolsky's papers.

MCKINZIE: They are at the Roosevelt Library.

JOHNSON: They are. Mrs. Pasvolsky is still alive.

MCKINZIE: Yes. I have had some correspondence with her.

JOHNSON: Have you, yes. Well, I don't know what else I can say about Leo; he had a good sense of humor; he loved to tell a story about the difficulty of working with Mr. Roosevelt. He said on one occasion when they were preparing for the U.N. -- I don't know at what stage it was - - they went over to see the President. They had sent ahead a memorandum of major questions on which they needed the President's decisions. Such questions as: Is it to be composed of four regional organizations, as Churchill wants it, or is it going to be a unitary organization? Who are going to be the members? Well, they had a session

[71]

and the President gave his answers to all of the questions, and then he looked up as they were leaving the room -- I suppose Hull was there, too -- as they were leaving the room he looked up to Leo with a twinkle in his eye and said, "Would you like a record of my decisions?"

And Leo said, "Yes, Mr. President, it would be very useful to have one." He grabbed this paper and initialed it simply, "Okay -- FDR" and handed it back to Leo with a great big grin.

MCKINZIE: Oh yes, that's Roosevelt all right.

After he took over the testimony at the Senate hearings did you have any particular role in that? Backstopping him?

JOHNSON: I was there all the time, ready to backstop him, but he didn't really need backstopping, you know; he had really total command of the Charter. Of all Americans he'd gone through it more than any single other person, because the climax of all his work had been the commission at San

[72]

Francisco that really drafted the Charter. We were there behind him, but I don't recall that anybody ever had to lean forward and whisper a word to him, I may be wrong on that. It was quite a performance.

MCKINZIE: Then you sent Durward Sandifer out to London on preparatory.

JOHNSON: No. Sandy and I were at the same level. The three of us -- I don't know whether I was Chief or still Acting Chief of my division -- but Sandifer and Gerig, and I were the three heads of the divisions, and over us were Alger Hiss with -- I guess, Jack Thompson was his deputy. Harley Notter was on the side as a kind of consultant. My number two was Donald Blaisdell, who now teaches at City College. He was the one who went to London, from my shop; he was there from July until about Thanksgiving time, I guess, then came home and I went over in January. Almost the whole U.S. delegation sailed on the Queen Elizabeth on either December 30th or December 31st of '45.

[73]

MCKINZIE: Plus Eleanor Roosevelt and Adlai Stevenson and...

JOHNSON: Adlai was already there to my recollection.

MCKINZIE : Perhaps he was.

JOHNSON: There were Tom Connally, and Vandenberg, and Byrnes. On the ship was a general officer Major General John R. Dean -- Russ Dean he was called -- who had been head of Harriman's military mission when Harriman was Ambassador to Moscow, and who had been assigned as a sort of Chief of Staff for the American members of the U.N. Military Staff Committee, who were all big shots. There were two four star and one three star guy on the Military Staff Committee -- Dean was only a two star -- Chief of Staff, you know. The question of the handling of the nuclear weapon was very much up at that time, and Byrnes and Vandenberg were having some vigorous arguments up above, when we heard about these. Dean said, "You know this thing is more explosive than dynamite," and then realized what he'd said!

[74]

But I was involved in the early atomic stuff, because after Hiroshima people looked around and there had been some talk by the President about internationalization of this thing. People looked around and said, "Well, who in the State Department has any authority in this field, any responsibility; and since my division had to do with U.N. military matters -- Security Council matters they said, "Well, at the working level it's Joe Johnson." And very quickly a system was set up. Ben Cohen was given the responsibility at the policy level under Byrnes, and Ben had a policy committee which consisted of [J. Robert] Oppenheimer, and [Major General Leslie R.] Groves, and I don't know who else -- Harrison and another guy. I had a working level committee -- a fairly sizable group.

MCKINZIE: Interdepartmental?

JOHNSON: Interdepartmental, yes. I first met there a guy named James McCormack, who was a colonel on the Army general staff working for my friend then General [George A.] Lincoln, in an extraordinary

[75]

section of the Pentagon, the P.M.S.S. If you want to get some of the business of policy in this period, he's the man to talk to and his successor General [Cortland Van Rensselaer] Schuyler. Lincoln was Marshall's chief planner; and he put together one of the most extraordinary groups of people that I ever saw. Lincoln himself was a West Point Rhodes scholar about my age. He had been overseas planning for the North African landings then was brought back. He was then a Brigadier General. He put together a staff that included Colonel McCormack, later Major General McCormack and later still the first head of COMSAT; also Colonel [C.H.] Bonesteel, much later Commander-in-Chief of the U.N. Forces in Korea; Colonel Parker who later became the number two in Paris to [General Lauris] Norstad of SACEUR; and Lieutenant Colonel [Andrew T.] Goodpasture who is now SACEUR himself. The group also included a colonel

named Dean Rusk. He was the only non-career soldier or Air Force guy -- it was an extraordinary outfit. Ben Cohen said,

[76]

"You go talk to President [James] Conant;" and I talked to Conant and Conant sent me over to Dr. [Vannevar] Bush, and I met his three young assistants who are all still close friends of mine. There was a lawyer named Oscar Ruebhausen who is now counsel to the Council on Foreign Relations; and a scientist named Caryl [P.] Haskins who is a member of the Board of the Council on Foreign Relations; and kind of a management engineer named Carroll [L.] Wilson, who is also a director of the Council on Foreign Relations now. These three came to the meeting of my working group. I also had two consultants that I got hold of very quickly. One of them was Frederick S. Dunn, who was then at Yale -- later he brought several of his colleagues to found the Center here -- he became one of my closest friends. His widow still lives here and still is a very close friend. The other was Professor Harry Smyth of Princeton who had just published a book.

MCKINZIE: *The Smyth-Report.*

[77]

JOHNSON: *The Smyth-Report.* Gordon Arneson came to the meetings -- he'd been in the Manhattan project. Oh, I've forgotten who else. Well, anyway, it was a thoroughly interdepartmental thing. I got another fellow who'd been in the Pentagon and was ready to get out, and he came in and joined me. For reasons I never knew he didn't pan out. He was a very bright lawyer, also a former Rhodes scholar -- named Bill McRae, who died just the other day -- a Federal Judge in Florida -- he worked with me specifically on this business.

We then went to London to the General Assembly and when we came back, things had marched past; I don't know quite how it happened.

MCKINZIE: You mean out of your preliminary conversations about possibilities, and then when you went to London it was already beyond these preliminaries?

JOHNSON: No. When we went to London they had to do something, the planning could not stop, and the Acheson-[David E.] Lilienthal group was credited

[78]

and all of this took place, and it was right.

Our group had been very active in the fall, before Byrnes went to Moscow in November or December of '45.

MCKINZIE: December.

JOHNSON: December, I wanted like the devil to go. I even asked Ben Cohen. This gets to be more about Byrnes than it does about Truman...

MCKINZIE: James Conant in fact went, didn't he?

JOHNSON: Yes, he did. This was following the Truman-Attlee-King declaration which was in November, as I recall. And Byrnes -- you know, the old crack about Byrnes, "The State Department fiddles while Byrnes roams." Byrnes worked very closely with a very small team of which Cohen, Bonesteel at one stage, Sam Reber, Doc Matthews, and Russell were members. I said then to Cohen, "Can't I come to Moscow?"

And he said, "Sorry, no chance."

[79]

Then I said, "Would you see if the Secretary will send reports back, and we could get some of these reports?"

He said, "I'm afraid Secretary Byrnes doesn't send many reports back to the Department."

In any case, preparation for international action about atomic energy occupied a good deal of my time in the fall while I was at the same time giving instructions to my colleagues in London.

MCKINZIE: May I ask if you recall whether you thought the internationalization of atomic energy was a feasible solution, your personal views, and the talk about policy alternatives in your working group?

JOHNSON: I guess they may have changed over time. In the first place, in a sense our working group was presented with essentially a policy decision. The President had said, "This must be dealt with at the international level," and, therefore, our question was, "How do you deal with it?"

[80]

MCKINZIE: Not should it be dealt with?

JOHNSON: No. And of course, for many of us -- for most of the people there -- I don't know when this group of ours started meeting, but it certainly must have started meeting by September, because we were moving along before the Truman-Attlee-King declaration. I guess we did some drafts. I'm very vague on this for some reason. We did some drafts of things that might have been included in the declaration. Various ideas that -- I'd like to go back and look at the documents and refresh my memory on all this. Simultaneously -- and this was my introduction, really, to the Carnegie Endowment -- Jim Shotwell who was not then the President -- organized an independent group of citizens to consider problems of the control of atomic energy and invited me to be a member of it. I used to go up to New York to those meetings. But when I went to London in late December of '45, I dropped out of that picture completely. When I came back I never got close to

[81]

Shotwell's group again. I knew almost all the Acheson-Lilienthal team. But I did not get back into the atomic picture again until the spring of '46.

MCKINZIE: Could you carry on that story then through the Security Council -- all those meetings of '46?

JOHNSON: Yes. One thing I do want to mention, I don't know whether you have been aware of this at all, but the U.S. in the fall of '46 had four separate and distinct delegations meeting in New York simultaneously. Did you know that?

MCKINZIE: No, I didn't.

JOHNSON: It's just one to think about if you want to talk about Government organization.

I spent most of the time from the end of March until June or July -- I was in New York five days a week because I was going up and serving as the American representative on the committee that wrote the so-called Provisional Rules of Procedure

[82]

of the Security Council, which are still provisional, unchanged, except for taking care of the additional members.

Baruch came to New York. His group must have come up about the first of June. I kept in touch with the Acheson-Lilienthal crowd. I was in New York, and I still, as far as the U.N. was concerned, had responsibility in relation to arms control. This was in my division in the Department, the Division of International Security Affairs it was called; and also I was Stettinius's adviser working with the U.S. representatives on the Military Staff Committee. I was essentially a member of the delegation in New York for those spring months. Actually I attended the first U.N. meeting on U.S. soil, because it preceded the Security Council meeting by a few days -- the committee of experts' meeting. I worked on everything that came along at that time. When Baruch's team came up somebody on their team said, "We need a guy to help us in organizing the [U.N.] Atomic Energy Commission."

[83]

I don't know if it was Stettinius or who it was said, "Well, Johnson is supposed to know about the rules of procedure of the Security Council." So I went over with [Ferdinand] Eberstadt who was -- Baruch had this team, you know, all of his own people. Eberstadt and John Hancock were his two deputies. Then he had a man, who in my view was nearly the world's prime "son of a bitch," Herbert Bayard Swope, as his public relations fellow; and he had a fellow named [Fred, Jr.] Searls, I think, who was his atomic expert, and then he got various other people. He brought Oppie [Oppenheimer] in there for a while, and he had [Richard C.] Toleman, who was Oppie's sort of mentor from Berkeley, and I think [Lincoln] Gordon came in at that time. I got involved because, I guess, John Hancock said to me, "Who would be a good secretary of the U.N. Atomic Energy Commission?" And I said, "I think Linc Gordon would be ideal for it." Linc and I were quite good friends, and we had lived together the summer of '43 in Washington. It turned out Hancock thought it was a wonderful idea, but by

[84]

the time he got Lines name in Pendleton Herring, who now lives here in Princeton, had become secretary of the U.N. Atomic Energy Commission. So they took Linc on Baruch's staff. Linc was the only person that ever made Mr. Baruch have some understanding of the veto.

At any rate, I helped Eberstadt in the preliminary meeting when they were sort of establishing temporary rules of the U.N. Atomic Energy Commission, and then I went to the first Atomic Energy Commission meetings through June. I got into a little hassle there, because I went to a briefing for some American citizens by Mr. Swope. The press were not present. The gist of Swope's remarks was, "Now if the Russians don't want to do this, we are going ahead, to hell with them." I thought we were supposed to be having some kind of cooperation with the Soviet Union, and I went to Eberstadt and expressed my alarm at this performance. And Eberstadt said, "Are you going to write a memorandum to Acheson about it?" I did not then know that Acheson and Baruch thought poorly of each other

[85]

and I said I supposed I would. He said, "Would you mind sending me a copy?" And I said I would. I thought Eberstadt was to be trusted. About this time a long planned first vacation in five years came along, and my wife and I disappeared into the mountains of Wyoming with our children for a month. When I came back and was wandering around the halls of the Department I ran into Mr. Acheson, and he said, "You've sure given me a hard time." It seems this memorandum had been shown to Swope, and Swope raised hell, and Baruch raised hell." Baruch had never been willing to cooperate with the Department of State. He would take instructions of a kind from his friend, and fellow South Carolinian, Jimmy Byrnes, but as far as taking anything from Dean Acheson or anybody else in the State Department, God, no, he would not do it.

MCKINZIE: Is this by way of saying that neither Swope nor Baruch were too very much interested in cooperation in this whole question? Or is that a

[86]

misconstrual?

JOHNSON: It is true of Baruch, As for Swope, I think Swope was an irresponsible man, and really very dangerous. I'd known his brother, Gerard Swope, slightly before, and they were totally different.

MCKINZIE: He evidently did, however, have some influence over Baruch.

JOHNSON: Well, you know what has happened...

MCKINZIE: Baruch's correspondence at Princeton is full of Swope letters.

JOHNSON: The story is that Baruch took Swope from the old *World*, saying, "If you'll make me famous, I'll make you rich." Had you ever heard that story?

MCKINZIE: Yes, I did.

Lincoln Gordon at one time said that he at one point thought that American technical people and Soviet technical people had come to

[87]

some important agreements on the matter of atomic energy and so forth, and then it had to be approved somewhere higher up?

JOHNSON: Yes.

MOKINZIB: Were you present at that time?

JOHNSON: No, I was not. This was in the summer of '46, and by this time I'd finished my job on the rules of procedure. I had taken my month's holiday, and I was back running my division in Washington. The Baruch team was organized in New York and doing its own thing on the atomic energy side. I was aware of it. I knew that Linc was working with them. I knew that Toleman and Oppie were. I had met Oppenheimer in his early days right after Hiroshima. I knew that they had reached substantial agreement at the technical level. I am not sure what happened beyond the technical level. I would guess, and this relates to where I began to get back into the act a little bit, I would guess that we really had put the Soviet policy-wise "behind the eight

[88]

ball." Our proposals -- the Baruch proposals -- they simply could not accept for the reasons that...

MCKINZIE: The inspection...

JOHNSON: The inspection -- the whole thing. The kind of American offer to -- well it wasn't just inspection it was after all international ownership. If Baruch didn't go the whole way of the Acheson-Lilienthal proposal, he went pretty damn far. The Russians couldn't accept that; they were losing out in the competition for public opinion.

This brings me to the autumn when we had the four teams. When Stettinius resigned, apparently suddenly, in June of '46 from the U.N. job, Warren Austin was appointed to succeed him. The story, which you may have gotten from a better source than I am, was that Acheson went to Byrnes and said, "Mr. Secretary," (by this time Acheson was Under Secretary) "the Republicans are running high, and we are probably going to have a Republican

[89]

Congress in '46. It seems to me terribly important for the sake of the U.N. to have a prominent Republican as our U.S. representative in the U.N."

Byrnes said, "I think you are exactly right."

Whether it was Acheson who suggested Warren Austin I don't know. From the story I've heard, it was. And Byrnes liked the idea so much he went to the President and it was done just like that. Now that must be in somebody's records somewhere. I don't recall that Acheson mentions it in...

MCKINZIE: I don't think he mentions it.

JOHNSON: I don't recall the Byrnes book. At any rate, under the law Austin could not become the representative until after that Congress ceased to be, because the law establishing the representative was passed by that Congress, and you know the rules. So he could not become the permanent representative until the next Congress, 'til January. He could, however, become the chairman of the U.S. delegation to the General Assembly.

[90]

So, Herschel Johnson, a career Foreign Service officer who was acting after Stettinius left, was up in charge of the permanent U.S. mission -- it wasn't then called "permanent mission" -- at 250 West 57th Street, which was the first headquarters of the U.S. mission. Then when the Assembly turned up in September the Assembly Delegation took offices in the old Pennsylvania -- now the Statler Hilton -- with Austin in charge, and Herschel was not even named an alternate delegate to the General Assembly. He blamed Alger Hiss for this to me personally. Whether Alger was responsible I don't know, but at any rate, Herschel wasn't there. He said he was damned if he was going to have anything to do with the delegation to the General Assembly. So he never, as far as I know, even came down to the Statler Hilton where we had our offices. Meanwhile, of course, Baruch had moved into the Empire State Building in June, and at this particular time there was a Council of Foreign

[91]

Ministers meeting at the Waldorf. Byrnes was at the Waldorf with Bonesteel, and Cohen and Sam Reber. Baruch was at the Empire State Building with his team. Austin was at the Statler Hilton with his team and Herschel was sulking up at 250 West 57th Street. I was literally about the only person at the "working Indian" level who had friends on all four delegations. I had not originally been on the delegation, but somebody had the idea -- I've forgotten how it happened, but they had a discussion of the veto, and I, as I say, was supposed to be the expert on the veto, so I took the train up one night. I guess I knew what had happened that afternoon -- the U.S. had plans for Austin to make his speech the following morning. Mind you this was the first U.N. Assembly on U.S. soil, and people had kind of forgotten about the little London session in the winter of that year. We had chosen to speak on that particular day and the Russians then decided to speak ahead of us. Molotov made his speech calling for disarmament --

[92]

not just control of nuclear weapons, clearly in our view then, and in my view now, to take the play away from the U.S., which had really been getting lots of "Brownie points" from the Baruch plan. I arrived the next morning and found a group in Austin's office drafting a new introduction to his speech, which would in effect say we welcomed the Foreign Minister's proposal. I've always felt very badly about what happened. But I didn't -- and still don't -- think I could have done anything about it. This was supposed to be an area of my interest, too, obviously -- arms control was surely under me in the Department. But by the time I got to the meeting Wilder Foote and Jack Ross, who was on Austin's staff, had essentially drafted this and the group were all for accepting it. I thought then it was a mistake. I'm sorry now that I had not been there

sooner. I just couldn't do anything about it. Maybe this is afterthought, but I had always approved of the view of disarmament that was

[93]

expressed in the Charter phrase, "and possibly disarmament." Pasvolsky's whole thesis was: We should not only have a ceiling over arms; we should have a floor under arms. We need (and this comes back to an earlier question of yours) for the big powers to have arms under the control of the Military Staff Committee to play their role in maintaining the peace; and, therefore, disarmament was put -- in our minds, although not in the Russians; because they got this phrase "possible disarmament" in -- but in our minds, way back on the back burner. We weren't paying any attention to disarmament at all. I thoroughly believed in that.

The group in Austin's office were drafting this introduction, you see, and the pressures were terrific. Austin was going to speak, maybe at 2 o'clock that afternoon, or maybe even later that morning. I remember Austin got on the phone and called Jimmy Byrnes over at the Waldorf and read it to him. We were all in the room, and

[94]

Byrnes said, "Okay you take it down or get it taken down to Baruch. I'll take responsibility for the Army and Navy" -- this was before the Department of Defense existed. That was the way that speech was cleared, on a telephone call. Now I may be wrong about his saying, "You go down to see Baruch," maybe he said, "I will talk to Baruch" or something like that. I remember him saying -- I guess I didn't hear it, but I heard Austin report what he said -- "I'll take care of the Army and Navy."

And there we were in the middle, you see, and the phone brought all four of the U.S. delegations in New York together. After that came the draft Soviet proposal on disarmament, and a resolution which we sweated over a large part of that fall. I still was on veto business, but I got drawn directly into the disarmament thing.

MCKINZIE: Now this is where you worked under Lincoln Gordon on that.

JOHNSON: Well, I didn't work...

[95]

MCKINZIE: Did you work with him on any of that?

JOHNSON: Not very much -- a little bit. But I remember I picked up the phone once -- Connally, you see, was handling this resolution in the General Assembly and we were trying to get a unanimous resolution. It was one of the lousiest resolutions I ever saw, but it was unanimous. I remember going to the phone out at -- not Lake Success -- the plenary assemblies were held in this New York State building out there, you know, near Shea Stadium. I think it was there; maybe it was Lake Success. Anyhow, I got on the phone to call Ben Cohen at the Waldorf to ask whether he would clear some language and I found myself talking to the Secretary of State, Mr. Byrnes. I had been close to Ed Stettinius, but Byrnes was a different matter. So I

cleared this with the Secretary of State on a call at Austin's request from wherever we were meeting. Baruch's people were there and I was working

[96]

with them. Of course, Bonesteel was a close friend of mine. He'd been at San Francisco, and he had been technically under me, because he was a technical expert and I was the chief technical expert at San Francisco. Bonesteel and I were good friends and I knew Cohen quite well. I was in this strange position, and Herschel [Johnson], of course, was way out in left field, having nothing to do with it.

I've always wondered what would have happened -- I don't suppose basically anything serious would have happened if Austin had made his speech first, and had captured the headlines; or if we had said, "Look, this is too important to answer today. We are going to have to think about it seriously;" or if we'd said, "What an interesting idea, but we don't think it's very good." Being against disarmament though is like being for sin. I've never been able to get anybody to understand why I disliked the word disarmament. I think I may have been responsible for the title, "The Commission

[97]

on Conventional Armaments," which was subsequently set up, because I didn't like the title disarmament.

MCKINZIE: I did want to talk a little bit about the Policy Planning Staff, and there probably are some other issues here on the U.N. I don't know whether you'd want to comment on that Committee on Conventional Armaments.

JOHNSON: No, not particularly -- I'm rusty on it.

One of the topics which has always fascinated me, was a political issue. I never knew the story and I would like to know. Baruch suddenly resigned in December '46. First of all one member of his staff left, and then suddenly Baruch and the whole damn crowd resigned, very suddenly; and only about a week later Jimmy Byrnes resigned. I have often wondered what the story was behind the resignations. I don't know whether Baruch knew Byrnes was going to resign and wanted to get out first? Have you read any of this?

MCKINZIE: No. I've never seen any link whatever between

[98]

the two resignations, which doesn't mean it didn't exist.

JOHNSON: I'm sure there must have been. I'm just positive there must have been.

Well, on the policy planning staff...

MCKINZIE: I'm intrigued by how people got appointed to that thing, because it was created so suddenly, and they brought people in from all kinds of areas.

JOHNSON: Well, yes...

MCKINZIE: In March I think, of '47.

JOHNSON: April. I received a letter from Jim Baxter, the president of Williams, inviting me to return to the faculty. I wrote him a letter, and I can date this very exactly, saying that I accepted with pleasure his promotion of me from Assistant Professor to full Professor, and that I was coming back that fall with great joy. Just after that -- a day or so later -- I don't recall whether it was Acheson, whether it was Dean Rusk, who was by that

[99]

time my boss, whether it was Kennan -- at any rate, I was told...

MCKINZIE: Had you known Kennan at this point?

JOHNSON: Yes. I had known Kennan slightly. He had been the senior civilian on the staff of the new National War College -- and I had met him. At any rate, somebody said a Policy Planning Staff was being organized and asked if I would be interested in joining it? And I said, "Well, I have just told Jim Baxter I'm going back to Williams this fall." At any rate, I finally said, "Yes, I will join and stay until mid-August." I was going to leave earlier and have the summer off, but I said I'd stay until mid-August and then get back to Williams, because this was too fascinating a task to turn down, and I couldn't. At any rate, very soon, as always happened in Washington, things leaked. Then one of the members of my division called me up at home one evening and said, "Have you seen *Newsweek*" [or *Time*, whichever it was)?

[100]

It says there is going to be a Policy Planning Staff and you are going to be a member of it."

I said, "Oh, Jesus," -- I don't think I hid it because there was no point in doing so. So I sat down and sent Baxter a telegram saying, "I assure you, I promise you, that I'm coming back to Williams this fall as I said I would, despite whatever you may read." But it didn't work. Baxter reads his New York *Times* in bed in the morning before he gets to the office, and thus he saw the story before my telegram reached him. He was somewhat aggravated.

As for my appointment, I think what had happened was that it had been decided to appoint someone with a U.N. background to the new planning staff. I suspect Dean Rusk, then head of U.N. affairs, pushed this idea, and also suggested me. Certainly, he would have argued vigorously for it.

MCKINZIE: Did he want someone committed to the idea of the U.N. or committed towards not circumventing U.N. prerogatives?

[101]

JOHNSON: Well, I don't mean to be quite as specific as that. It was merely that the U.N. was a new element in the world and American foreign policy. I suspect Dean Rusk already knew that

Dean Acheson was somewhat skeptical about the U.N. and knew that George Kennan didn't think in U.N. terms very much. Rusk was himself thoroughly committed to the U.N. In sum I really don't know -- you could ask Dean this question. He and I were quite close, you see. I had brought him into the Department originally. He then went back to the Pentagon under Howard Peterson, and then I was one of those who urged his being brought back to succeed Hiss in January of '47 as my boss. I was very pleased to have that happen.

At any rate, the idea was to have a U.N. type on the staff. When I left, first a fellow named Ike [Isaac] Stokes, who also had been in the U.N. side of the Department, succeeded me, and then Dorothy Fosdick who also was on the U.N. side succeeded him. So, that in those early days

[102]

of the Policy Planning Staff there was always somebody who had been in, or whatever it was called at the particular time. The U.N. was part of the picture, and the idea made a good deal of sense.

That's how I got chosen.

MCKINZIE: Perhaps you could comment about those Policy Planning Staff meetings? You perhaps have read George Kennan's account of the early meetings.

JOHNSON: Yes, I have.

MCKINZIE: And he characterized them as "tough," I think is the word. He said that there was really "bareknuckle" kind of discussion -- so intense in fact that at one point he walked out and walked around the building and wept. He was touched by these kinds of hard intellectual things. Do you concur in that?

JOHNSON: Oh, absolutely; it was a fascinating group. The secretary, as I recall, was Carlton Savage who had been Mr. Hull's sort of, if you will,

[103]

policy planner in a very mild way. Did you ever run into Carlton Savage? I don't know if he is still alive or not. He wrote a couple of fairly good books on diplomatic history way back. Carlton was a mild person. This had been his area of expertise.

Tick Bonesteel was a member but his name never appeared, because in those days -- nor did he ever appear -- I mean in public with the staff, because military officers still had to wear uniforms in Washington when they were on duty in those days. He couldn't walk around, you see, in civilian clothes and not have people see him. They would just see this colonel, and the Policy Planning Staff, you know, was the cynosure of a good many eyes at that time. Jack [Jacques J.] Reinstein was a member. They wanted an economist, and they had tried to get an economist (that's another story) who couldn't come, so Jack, who was already in the Department was appointed pro tem as the economist. There was also Ware Adams who

[104]

was a Foreign Service officer and I think that was all. Chip Bohlen sat in with us a great deal. I remember he told me that on the way back from Moscow (the staff had been set up while Secretary Marshall was in Moscow). The decision had been reached before he went off.

MCKINZIE: I didn't know that. I thought it was created after he returned, and he'd called Kennan who was at the War College and told him to...

JOHNSON: No, no, Kennan had been called before Marshall went to Moscow, or maybe while he was over there. He was there when I called in and told, "When the Secretary comes back we are going to set up a Policy Planning Staff, and it's going to be all ready -- we're chosen in effect. It's all been cleared." I don't know when or how it was cleared by the Secretary, whether he told Dean Acheson to go ahead and do it or whether he'd reached the decision on paper, and so forth and so on. I

[105]

think he probably knew that I was going to be on it, because I had had one encounter at least with him -- when we were drafting a speech for Warren Austin to make on atomic energy shortly after Marshall came in the Department. I got word one morning at, let us say quarter of nine, that we were to have a draft of a speech for Austin to be delivered that day, on the Secretary's desk at 9:30. Well, I made it within fifteen minutes. The word soon came that my boss, Jack Ross (this was after Hiss had left and before Rusk has come in; Ross was Acting Director of the Office) and I were to go up to the Secretary's office. We soon found ourselves sitting around the corner of the Secretary's desk with three copies of my draft, redrafting it. The Secretary was a crafty guy. I'm sure that this was arranged so that he could get an estimate of two people whom he might be working with. He was very fresh in the Department, and I don't know whether he used this method with other people, but I'm sure

[106]

that one reason for having us in and drafting was to see what these guys were like. It was quite an experience to be introduced to General Marshall that way. I wish I'd kept a copy of that draft for my personal files.

MCKINZIE: Well, of course, the charge of the Policy Planning Staff in the very beginning was to study the problem of the deterioration of Western Europe and what response the United States might come up with here.

JOHNSON: Now that's a question I'm not sure about. The Policy Planning Staff I think was set up to plan policy in general.

MCKINZIE: Yes, indeed, but with this as a specifically presented problem by Marshall, as I understand it.

JOHNSON: Well, I'm not certain about that. I suspect that is right, but the...

MCKINZIE: In fact the old State War Navy Coordinating Committee -- SWNCC had already done some work on

[107]

this subject of the deterioration of Europe.

,JOHNSON: Of course, Acheson had already made his Cleveland, Mississippi speech by the time we first came into existence -- no. Very shortly after, I think. Certainly that was our mission as soon as we got together.

But I've always believed that General Marshall had brought the concept of a small planning staff with him from the Pentagon. I believe that my friend, Colonel [Abe] Lincoln (whom I mentioned earlier) who had been General Marshall's chief planner and had been in contact with the State Department for many years, may have had a word or two with Secretary of State Marshall. I also find it significant that Colonel Bonesteel, one of Lincoln's men, was a member of the Planning Staff.

At any rate, we certainly were charged with this particular issue, and it was put in very simple terms.

Messages from Britain reported a serious impending financial crisis; it looked as if we

[108]

were going to have to go to Congress for a third loan, and we knew we just couldn't get a third British loan through Congress within eighteen months. Congressmen were going to ask, "When is this going to stop?"

We had to search for some alternative approach; loans were not going to save Europe. So the new Policy Planning Staff set to work.

I do not remember as clearly as I should how our discussions developed, but I know there was consideration of possible instruments to carry out the tasks proposed. At this time a new United Nations body, the Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) was about to hold its first meeting in Geneva. Both because it was my responsibility and because I believed in the U.N. approach, I agreed vigorously for giving the assignment to ECE.

Then Will Clayton, the head of one delegation to the ECE returned from that first meeting. He met with the planning staff and reported on the Soviet performances. At first there was doubt that they were going to participate, then they

[109]

turned up at the last minute with eighty-five people, demanding hotel rooms and then proceeded to obstruct the whole ECE meeting. When Clayton reported this, I said, "I yield. We obviously can't use the ECE."

MCKINZIE: But until Clayton's presentation you had been making a very strong case for the ECE.

JOHNSON: I'd been making a strong case for ECE. It seemed to me the logical organ. You see no decision had been made at that time that the Russians were not to be included in what was to be the Marshall plan.

That wasn't a bitter fight. I've forgotten what it was about, but I can remember at least one very, very -- my recollection is a little different than George's -- he's probably more accurate. Jack Reinstein and I had a major scrape with George. Maybe he can remember it; we talked very bluntly and George talked very bluntly. It was a really hard, intellectual battle. Tick

[110]

Bonesteel was in it more or less on our side, but never being quite as sharp about it as both Jack and I -- Jack was sharper than I, but I was pretty sharp, too. My recollection is that we battled all morning and finally George said, "We better all -- it was a Saturday -- we better all go over to the Watergate." The Watergate Inn, you remember -- you probably don't remember that.

MCKINZIE: No.

JOHNSON: Well, there was a Watergate Inn right there where the Kennedy Center is now. We went to the Watergate Inn. It was the nearest place where you could get a drink and have lunch. When we went back to the office, George said, some thing like, "I think you fellows have got a point," and we went on from there. Now that's the particular battle I remember; but Bonesteel was there, Reinstein was there, I guess Ware Adams was there and George, of course was. We ought to be able to reconstruct it accurately.

[111]

MCKINZIE: I'd like your reaction to my impression that this was a huge responsibility, because, as I understand it, the Policy Planning Staff had been set up so that in a sense it sliced horizontally through the whole chain of command, and its proposals would go directly into the Secretary, so that you didn't have to worry about somebody's interest on country desks and this kind of thing.

JOHNSON: Very definitely that was the case, and that is why we worked as a collegium, as it were. We were a group working together as a group, hammering things out together, bringing whatever we had in our background.

I can remember three people who came in. Bohlen was there a good part of the time. Bohlen had been told by the Secretary in the plane on the way back from Moscow, "Bohlen, I want you to join the Policy Planning Staff." And Chip had said, in effect, "Mr. Secretary, with all due respect, I think that should not be done because

[112]

George and I have the same kind of expertise and on most issues we would see eye to eye. I'll be glad to spend as much time as I can with the Policy Planning Staff, but I do not think you would make the best use of me by having me also on the Policy Planning Staff." Well I remember this "see eye to eye on most things," -- whether that's the phrase he used I don't know because at some stage we had a discussion of Saragat (Republican leader) as the man we ought to be

backing in Italy. Chip had spent his wartime years among politicians, because you know, he'd been the one man in the State Department Roosevelt trusted other than Sumner Welles, and had been to every damn conference; he thought politically. He was very different from George in the sense that George was really kind of an authoritarian who had spent a good part of his career in Fascist and dictatorial countries and he was a Germanic philosopher in many respects. Chip thought in terms of the public -- Chip was an

[113]

operator; he thought in political terms; and he was one of the leaders in those days in the State Department in searching for ways to support what he called the NCL -- the Non-Communist Left -- in postwar Europe. I don't know whether this comes out in his book. I've got to read his book.

MCKINZIE: He doesn't address himself to exactly that problem.

JOHNSON: Chip and George were going at each other on the subject of Saragat. George said, in effect, "I don't care who's in charge, we just have got to have a government there." And Chip said, "No, we cannot have a government that doesn't have a non-Communist left approach to it." This was the gist of it. It was that kind of thing, and I remembered this because Chip had said, "On most issues George and I would agree."

MCKINZIE: And they didn't.

JOHNSON: And they didn't. But we did have this kind

[114]

of very serious debate.

MCKINZIE: Obviously there was a great deal of general agreement, too, about the approach.

JOHNSON: Oh, yes, there was.

MCKINZIE: Namely that in order to take care of Europe's political problem it could be done through an economic device.

JOHNSON: Yes, there was that. But the problems were also economic.

MCKINZIE: A domestic economic problem?

JOHNSON: European economic -- as I say the British loan was -- and the loans to all the others.

MCKINZIE: Yes, of course, the balance of payments of every country was terribly out of whack.

JOHNSON: Yes, that's right.

The two people who came in other than Bohlen were Will Clayton and Jack [Jacob] Viner. George said,

[115]

"Jacob Viner is in Washington; let's get him in," so Jack came in. I didn't know him very well then, but I knew him very well before he died.

MCKINZIE: I don't want to prolong this, of course, but I would like to add that almost every story that deals with this period gets into the question of how much of the State Department motivation was based upon genuine fear of Soviet advances in Europe? How much of it was based upon a real awareness of European economic crisis? How much of it is based upon the assumption that there was going to be a recession in the U.S. economy in the third quarter of 1947, if some new outlet for American manufacturing products -- the output of American farms and factories was not found? This gets into all those questions of economic determinism, etc.

JOHNSON: Well, all I can say is that I have absolutely no recollection of the third issue ever being considered in the Policy Planning Staff. Reinstein would be more likely to remember that than I would.

[116]

It certainly didn't cross my mind, and I doubt if it crossed any of the others. Now Dean Acheson may have been thinking different things and some of the others may have been. I think there was a real sense that we had to do something for Western Europe. We had to find some way of saving Western Europe, and clearly we knew that economic trouble in Western Europe meant strength for the Communist elements. I've forgotten whether the Communists were still in the French Government at that time or not. They certainly were in the Italian Government. The British were having a pretty tough time. On stop communism -- George must have had it very much in mind, because he had already given the speech which became the "Mr. X" article.

MCKINZIE: The telegram you mean that started it.

JOHNSON: No. Well, the telegram was earlier, but I think that article originally appeared as a speech at the National War College. It may have had three stages, I don't know. I'd never heard of it

[117]

until a journalist friend of mine said, "Joe, what do you know about this 'Mr. X'; is he really George Kennan?"

I said, "What are you talking about?" Fortunately I didn't know; I could play ignorant because I was. George must have had that in mind. We all had some fear of Communist takeover in mind. I was concerned then, as I had been earlier and was to be later, about what to me seemed to be an unnecessary anti-communism in a lot of things, an unwillingness to see whether the concepts of cooperation could still be followed out. That is why I was prepared to try the ECE, until finally I had had enough experience with the Russians doing that kind of thing. So, when Clayton reported as he did I knew there was no point in trying to pursue it, and I could see that maybe the

Russians just wouldn't let it happen. There were different attitudes on this, and I can only state that the Policy Planning Staff really didn't talk very much to people who were outside (at least I

[118]

didn't) the Policy Planning Staff at that time.

MCKINZIE: I guess one of the ideas was that you were supposed to be freed of outside influences.

JOHNSON: Yes, we were. I've forgotten now how much contact I had with Rusk, for example.

MCKINZIE: The only other really burning question that surrounds the first month of the Policy Planning Staff is to what extent the members of the Planning Staff were aware that any program of economic aid to Western Europe would probably be cast in terms that the Soviets would never accept, and, therefore, would result in the division of Europe; and whether or not that was an acceptable or not acceptable phenomenon?

JOHNSON: Let me go backwards about that, because that was something that I can't forget. Not long after Marshall's speech at Harvard -- I would say within the next three or four days -- I was taking the train from New York to Washington. In those

[119]

days trains had things called diners, and I went into the diner and there sitting at a table was Harold Stassen. I said, "Do you mind if I join you, Governor?" (You see, I'd worked with him in San Francisco, so I knew him fairly well.)

He said, "Not at all." And we talked, and needless to say we talked about Marshall's speech. Stassen said, "I think Marshall made a dreadful mistake. I think he has brought about the division of Europe."

I was kind of taken aback and I said, "Not at all, it seems to me this whole offer is rather open." I may have said if there was going to be any division the Soviets were going to have to do it. But I'm sure I also said this, and this is certain. "When Marshall left Moscow he was convinced that the possibilities of cooperation with the Soviet Union were gone. I am convinced that Marshall's experience in dealing with the Russians in Moscow convinced him that in fact Europe was divided." Now when I got this conviction I don't

[120]

know, but it must have been about that time. I think that had a great impact on him, perhaps had an impact on Bohlen; may have had an impact on Kennan. I think that I sensed this myself at the time.

I must add a footnote. A week after this encounter with Stassen I heard that he was holding a press conference, and I managed to sneak into the back of the room in the Statler or the Mayflower. I listened with sheer astonishment to Harold Stassen say, "I think the Marshall proposal is a most wonderful idea." Literally, you know, he had switched to Marshall. But one of

the things that was smoldering -- I wish I could recall the history of this better, and I think it's very important. One, I've always wanted to know how much Mr. Truman knew about Marshall's speech before he made it.

MCKINZIE: It just stated a general principle. I mean it didn't promise anything, did it?

JOHNSON: No. But you know, we on the Staff never

[121]

knew a thing about the speech beforehand; and I gathered from George later that he didn't either. We had sent a paper up.

MCKINZIE: Will Clayton sent a paper up.

JOHNSON: I didn't know that.

MCKINZIE: And these two papers were given to Joseph Jones who dovetailed the PPS paper and the Clayton paper and, in fact, verbatim segments come from each of the papers.

JOHNSON: Does Jones tell this in his book?

MCKINZIE: Yes.

JOHNSON: Well, at any rate I heard nothing more until I read the headlines in the papers. There are several things I'd like to know; for example, whether there had been any tip-off of Bevin.

MCKINZIE: There was none.

JOHNSON: I assumed not, but I wasn't sure. George

[122]

swore to me that he didn't know Marshall was going to say that. I believe that Bohlen did; I think Bohlen may have helped draft the speech.

MCKINZIE: He did.

JOHNSON: And this may come out in his book. But the idea of the offer if the Europeans were interested, that's one question, how Truman felt about this -- whether he was miffed at first at Marshall's capturing the attention or not, I don't know. I suspect not.

The next thing is that one of the most important elements of the Marshall plan -- and I wish I could remember the timing on this -- was the decision to establish the Harriman Committee and the [Julius] Krug Committee.

MCKINZIE: And the [Edwin G.] Nourse Committee.

JOHNSON: And the Nourse Committee. George called us into meeting not long after the speech and said, "The President wants to be sure that we keep the

[123]

lead." Senator Vandenberg's response had been, "We have got to look into this." And the President had spotted this and said, "We don't want a congressional committee to take the lead away." So George suggested we consider what kind of committees might be needed, and draft proposals for the President. I am rusty on the details. My recollection is we said there ought to be at least two committees: One committee that would tell the American people with authority and knowledge that the U.S. could afford such an enterprise in terms of our natural resources and all the rest of it; and the other a committee which would say that this was not only affordable but was worth doing; it should be composed of people who would be believed around the country. I think this was one of the important elements in the whole picture. I think historically...

MCKINZIE: I know that what you say is exactly the way it happened.

JOHNSON: That's right.

[124]

MCKINZIE: I think Mr. Acheson takes a little credit for that, I'm not sure.

JOHNSON: Yes, that's right.

MCKINZIE: But the principle that you have just laid out is a fact, President Truman thought that there would be a congressional committee if he didn't get one going first. And they did bring Vandenberg in and told Vandenberg, "It's a fine idea. We've just done it."

JOHNSON: They did? I didn't know that story. Of course Herter did have a committee which was also important.

MCKINZIE: Yes. But again that was an after-the-fact.

JOHNSON: That's right.

MCKINZIE: The toughest work of that summer was up to the paper leading to Marshall's speech.

JOHNSON: We worked quite hard certainly on that thing. I would say I don't really recall what we were

[125]

doing through mid-June to mid-August. I'm sure we worked.

MCKINZIE: At which time you returned to the quieter halls of academe.

JOHNSON: That's right.

MCKINZIE: Thank you very much.

[126]

INDEX

Acheson, Dean, 61-62, 84-85, 88-89, 101, 107, 116, 124
Adams, Ware, 103-104, 110
Allen, Ward, 6
Anderson, Samuel W., 27
Argentina, 21-22, 28, 29, 34, 46-47
Armour, Norman, 12, 14
Army-Navy Latin American Coordination Committee, 11
Arneson, Gordon, 77
Atomic energy, international control of, 73-80
Austin, Warren R., 35-36, 38, 88-89, 90, 91, 93

Ball, M. Margaret, 13-14
Baruch, Bernard, 82-86, 88, 90-91, 97
Baxter, James P., 2, 98, 100
Berendsen, Sir Carl, 41
Berle, Adolph A., 5, 23, 55
Blaisdell, Donald, 72
Bloom, Sol, 56
Bohlen, Charles E., 104, 111-113, 114, 122
Bonesteel, C.H., 75, 78, 91, 96, 103, 107, 109-110
Bonsal, Dudley, 46
Bonsal, Philip, 5, 7
Bunche, Ralph J., 55
Bundy, Harvey, 11-12
Bush, Vannevar, 76
Byrnes, James F., 33, 53, 61, 65, 73, 78-79, 85, 88-89, 91, 93-94, 95, 97

Cabot Committee, 17-19
Cabot, John M., 13, 14
Camargo, Alberto L., 21
Carter, Patrick, 37
Chapin, Selden, 5
Chapultepec Conference, 1945, 18-28, 34, 35-38
Churchill, Winston, 7
Clayton, William L., 23, 26-28, 108-109, 114, 117, 121
Cohen, Benjamin V., 53, 74, 75-76, 78-79, 91, 95-96
Collado, Emilio G., 27
Conant, James, 76, 78
Connally, Tom, 36, 38, 40, 56, 73
Cordier, Andrew, 39

Dean, John R., 73
Dickey, John, 23
Dreier, John, 16
Dulles, John F., 43-44, 55
Dumbarton Oaks Conference, 1944, 14-15, 25, 26
Dunn, Frederick S., 76
Dunn, James, 53
Duparc, Fouques, 41-42

Eberstadt, Ferdinand, 83, 84-85
Economic Commission for Europe, 108-109, 117
Ecuador, 28
Evatt, Herbert, 41, 43

Fenwick, Charles, 6
Finletter, Thomas K., 45
Foote, Wilder, 57-58, 92
Fosdick, Dorothy, 101
Free French, World War II, 4

Galapagos Islands, U.S. military base, World War II, 28
Gerig, Benjamin, 42, 72
Goodpasture, Andrew J., 75
Gordon, Lincoln, 27, 83-84, 86, 87
Griffin, Charles, 13
Groves, Leslie R., 74

Hackworth, Green H., 32
Halifax, Lord, 7
Hancock, John, 83
Harley, Virginia, 65
Harriman Committee, (President's Committee on Foreign Aid), 22
Haskins, Caryl P., 76
Herring, Pendleton, 84
Hickerson, John D., 30, 40, 48
Hiss, Alger, 16-17, 19, 26, 30, 72, 90
Hopkins, Harry, 57
Hull, Cordell, 7, 22, 55, 56-57, 65, 69

Inter-American Committee for Political Defense, 6
Inter-American Defense Board, 6
Inter-American Legal Committee, 6
Inter-American system, 4-29, 34-38
Italy, Badoglio government, World War II, 7-8

Jebb, Gladwyn, 41, 62
Johnson, Herschel V., 90, 96
Johnson, Hiram, 61
Johnson, Joseph E., background, 1-3
Johnston, Eric A., 23, 25
Jones, Joseph, 21

Kennan, George F., 99, 101, 102, 104, 109-110, 112-113, 114, 116-117, 121-123
Krug Committee (Committee on Natural Resources and Foreign Aid), 22

Lafore, Lawrence, 4
Lambson, Edward, 4
Lincoln, George A., 74-75, 107
Llang Yuen-li, 41
Lockwood, John, 46

McCormack, James, 74-76
McGurk, Joseph, 11
McRae, William, 77
Marine Aviation Mission (U.S.) Peru, World War 11, 9-10
Marshall, George C., 37, 104-107, 111, 119-120, 122
Marshall Plan, 118-124
Matthews, H. Freeman, 30, 78
Miller, Edward G., Jr., 45
Montevideo, Uruguay, 6

Nolte, Frederick, 69
Notter, Harley, 13, 72
Nourse Committee, 122
Noyes, Charles, 58

Office of Special Political Affairs, U.S. State Department, 17
Oppenheimer, J. Robert, 74, 83, 87

Pan American Union, 6, 7
Pasvolsky, Leo, 2-3, 15, 17, 19-20, 24, 31-32, 34, 41, 42, 47, 49, 53, 55, 62-72, 93
Patton, James G., 23
Pearson, Lester B., 50
Peru, World War 11, 9-11
Policy Planning Staff, U.S. State Department, 98-124
Proskauer, Joseph, 69

Rasminsky, Mike, 50
Reber, Samuel, 78-91
Reinstein, Jacques, 103, 109-110
Reston, Scotty (James G. Reston), 45

Rio Conference, 1942, 5, 7, 12

Robertson, Norman, 50

Rockefeller, Nelson A., 18, 19, 21, 22-23, 24, 25, 29, 46

Roosevelt, Franklin D., 7, 29, 52, 70-71, 112

Rosos, Jack, 92, 105

Ruebhausen, Oscar, 76

Rusk, Dean, 75, 100-101

Russell, Ruth, 52-53

Sanders, William, 39

Sandifer, Durward, 42, 72

San Francisco Conference, 1945 (UN Conference on International organization), 25, 29, 31-35, 39-59

Savage, Carleton, 102-103

Searls, Frederick, 83

Shotwell, James, 69, 80

Smyth, Harry, 76

Sobolev, Arkadya, 42

Spaeth, Carl, 6

Stassen, Harold E., 40, 119-120

State Department, U.S., reorganization of by Secretary Stettinius, 16-18

Stettinius, Edward R., 16, 19, 22, 25, 26, 33, 44-45, 56-62

Stevenson, Adlai E., 45, 46, 73

Stimson, Henry L., 11

Stokes, Isaac, 101

Swope, Herbert B., 83, 84-85, 86

Thompson, Jack, 72

Toleman, Richard C., 83, 87

Treaty of Rio de Janeiro, 1947, 36-37

Truman, Harry S.:

Byrnes, James F., appoints Secretary of State, 33

discussion vetoes in UN, and, 56-57

Marshall Plan, support for, 122-124

San Francisco Conference, 1945, attends, 53-54, 58-59

United Nations: Atomic Energy Commission, 82-88

Charter, 15, 60-63, 68, 71-72

Declaration of the Four Sponsoring Powers, 41-43

disarmament plans before, 91-96

discussion vetoes, 56-57

establishment of, 22, 25, 29, 31-35, 39-72, 81-82

Security Council unanimity rule, 51-52

veto provision in Charter, 40-41

Vandenberg, Arthur H., 25, 43, 44, 55, 73, 123, 124

Vichy French, World War II, 4
Viner, Jacob, 114-115

Wilcox, Francis O., 38
Wilson, Carroll L., 76
Wilson, Woodrow, 52, 54
Wrong, Hume, 50

Yost, Charles, 48