

EUROPEAN RECOVERY PROGRAM

Interview With

LEONARD MIALL

London, England
June 17, 1964

By Philip C. Brooks, Director
Harry S. Truman Library

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EUROPEAN RECOVERY PROGRAM INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPTS

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DR. PHILIP BROOKS: Mr. Miall, as you know, I have been interviewing a number of people on the Continent and some in England regarding the European Recovery Program; particularly the origin of the Plan and the Marshall speech at Harvard on June 5, 1947, and its effect in Europe. I've been impressed by the unanimity of the opinion that this was an exceptionally important speech and that Bevin's leadership in moving extremely rapidly after the speech was given was in itself of extreme importance.

Now at a conference we had at our Library

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in March of this year one of the diplomatic historians who was present (I don't think he has done any particular study of this but he is a prominent person and well-informed generally) said in essence, "We are told that Marshall made his speech and that Bevin immediately moved on the basis of that speech and that from then on things started to move whereas nothing had been done and nothing had been said about this previously." He said he was suspicious, and wondered if Bevin had not been told beforehand that the speech was to be made. Well a number of people have convinced me that he was not so told, so the question of how he became aware of this statement of policy on the part of the American Government I think is of exceptional interest.

Now you were in Washington as BBC correspondent for what period did you tell me?

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MIALL: I was there from the fall of 1945 until the end of 1953. That is to say I covered virtually the whole of the Truman Administration. It was in '47 when I'd been there about a year and a half that I happened to get involved in this particular news story and played some small role in it.

BROOKS: Would you tell me again what you told me the other day about the effort of yourself and certain other British correspondents to develop better sources of information on International relations?

MIALL: Well as you know the custom was in Washington, and still is, no doubt, that many of the leading correspondents used to have off the record talks with leading members of the Administration, of Congress, etc. etc. This was always a rather difficult thing for the

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foreign correspondents and particularly for the British correspondents who weren't on the same kind of terms of intimacy as some of the leading American correspondents were, or as some of the American correspondents in London were with the members of the British Cabinet. One exception to this was Sir Wilmott Lewis of the London *Times* who was a great figure in Washington himself. But a number of the newer correspondents in Washington, of which I was one, thought it would be useful if we could make a personal contact with a number of leaders of the Administration, and particularly three of us: Rene MacColl, who was the Washington correspondent of the *Daily Express*, the Beaverbrook newspaper, at the time and later the chief foreign correspondent of the Beaverbrook newspapers; and the then correspondent of the London *Daily Telegraph*,

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Malcolm Muggeridge, who later became the editor of *Punch*.

MacColl, Muggeridge, and I decided that we would like to invite Dean Acheson, then the Under Secretary of State, to lunch with us in order to have a general talk, in order to get to know him and that he should get to know us. But particularly we wanted to ask him about the speech that he had recently made in Cleveland, Mississippi, in May of 1947 in which he had launched what

might be described as a trial balloon of the ideas which subsequently were incorporated in Secretary of State Marshall's speech at Harvard on June 5, 1947. We had a long talk with Acheson over lunch about the ideas behind his speech. We were anxious to find out because it was not easy for a new foreign correspondent to understand at that time how far speeches, for instance made by an

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Under Secretary of State or by another member of the Cabinet or the Administration, represented real Government policy. We had just had the experience of Wallace having made a major speech on foreign affairs and having been repudiated and having left the Cabinet; and, therefore, whether Acheson's speech represented a trial balloon on his part or whether it represented a major change of thinking on the part of the Administration was something we wanted to find out.

Acheson explained to us in some detail as to how it was he happened to make that speech. I won't go into the details of that now. But he had to substitute for President Truman but he went on to describe for us the importance of the ideas behind that speech and of the importance of the next step coming from the European side because, as he pointed out to us, the Administration had rather oversold its

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case in terms of asking for further money for a scheme to shore up the collapsing economy of some European country or another. He talked about the money that had been asked for UNRRA, for Bretton Woods, for the British loan, for loans to France and Italy, various other schemes which had been supported by Congress and for which either he or Under Secretary Clayton had been up to Congress to plead and he said that neither of them could go again.

This time there must be some kind of a cooperative and dramatic move from the European side in order to capture the imagination of Congress, which was in a very economy frame of mind. This was a Republican Congress which had been elected on an economy plea platform, and had taken control that January.

BROOKS: Do you know what particular Congressmen

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he had in mind, if any?

MIALL: I don't think that he in particular had any special Congressmen in mind. Representative Taber was an important figure at that time and, of course, Senator Taft was at that particular moment of history openly clashing with the President on the degree of economy that could be made.

Now we had this talk, and Acheson primed us really with the general importance of some reaction coming from Europe. This was Tuesday, June 3, 1947. The remarkable thing to us in retrospect was that he did not in any way draw our attention to a forthcoming speech by General Marshall, and it is my firm belief that at that particular time General Marshall had not arranged to make this speech at Harvard, the speech that he made on June 5.

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I happened to be due to do on June 5 a broadcast called "American Commentary," which was one of a weekly series of broadcasts which the British Broadcasting Corporation had been running for a number of years in which normally prominent American commentators talked about general developments in the United States. They were not newscasts but they were commentaries on what was going on at the time, as seen from the American shores. The people who were taking part in this series had originally been Raymond Gramscow, who had started before the war and had broadcast regularly weekly, and later, Elmer Davis, Ernest K. Lindley, Clif Utleigh in Chicago and Joseph C. Harsch. They were all distinguished American commentators.

For a variety of reasons, it was impossible on this particular Thursday, June 5, for any

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of these people to present to it and I, who was the British staff correspondent of the BBC in Washington, was asked as an exception to do this particular American Commentary. Because of the standard of the commentators that had been speaking from the United States to Britain over the years, there was regularly an audience to this program of people who were particularly interested in foreign affairs, particularly interested in developments in the United States. The people who regularly listened included people in the Foreign Office, etcetera. That is why it so happened that the British Foreign Secretary, Ernest Bevin, did come to hear what I happened to say that night.

Now I sat down and prepared my general talk for this spot in the "American Commentary" series, based entirely on what Dean Acheson had said to me at lunch that Tuesday. Of course, under the

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normal conventions of a journalist's work, I could not mention him at all. I merely had to say that these were ideas that were floating around in Washington, etcetera, but I gave the general gist of what he was saying, and I prepared that commentary on the Wednesday, June 4, 1947.

In the course of that afternoon I happened to telephone to the British Embassy to speak to the press officer at the time, Philip Jordan (who subsequently left to become the press adviser to Clement Attlee when he was in No. 10 Downing Street as Prime Minister). Philip Jordan had an arrangement by which any advanced texts or handouts from the State Department were picked up by his driver or somebody and taken to the British Embassy so that he was aware of what the State Department was handing out and in the course of conversation about

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something else, he casually said to me, "Have you seen by any chance this speech that Marshall is due to make at Harvard?" and I said, "No." He said, "Well, I think it is a very important speech. I'd advise you to have a look at it." So on my way home that night I called at the State Department where in fact, I normally called on my way home because I traveled in a car pool with, among others, Charles P. Kindleberger, who was a member of the State Department and

was concerned, in fact later, with the drafting of the Marshall Plan. Kindleberger was a friend of mine and I normally went to the State Department to pick him up and we drove outside Alexandria to our homes which were not far from each other. I picked up, at the State Department, the advanced text of Marshall's speech to be delivered at Harvard the next day. There was nothing to indicate that it

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was an important speech and above all there was no indication of when the release time of it was, which was difficult for me because I knew it must be about the time that I was due to deliver my "American Commentary." My "American Commentary" was due to be heard in Britain at 10:30, British time, that night. That is to say British summer time, which was 6 hours different from Washington time; and in other words it was important that it should have been delivered by 4:30 in the afternoon. I could only find out from the State Department that it was due to be delivered somewhere between 2:30 and 4:30, but there was no precise release time and there was no indication that any American networks were going to broadcast it, which would give some kind of a release time for it.

When I got home, having read Marshall's

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speech, I suddenly saw the authority for all the things that I had written rather vaguely in my commentary and so I sat up that night and completely rewrote what I was proposing to say. The next day I went along to my radio station, the CBS radio station in Washington from which I normally did my broadcast, and had a talk on the trans-Atlantic circuit with my foreign editor, Anthony Wigan. We discussed the significance of this speech and I explained to him the problems I was facing in relation to the release time because I didn't want to break a release time of the speech. There was nothing that caused more acrimony at that time between Britain and the United States than correspondents breaking release time. But at the same time it was not possible to find out from the State Department when it was going to be released. I therefore

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had to record for BBC two versions, one a short, general version for use in the news program in the hope that this would be heard in the 9 p.m. news which was the main news program of the day for BBC. In the second I had to incorporate the news of Marshall's speech in what was normally merely a commentary without hard news in it. Otherwise, what I was going to say about the speech was going to have no significance at all.

Hence my difficulties over this speech. But I did, in the course of writing my commentary about it, not only include the gist of what General Marshall was saying but I also explained a little bit of what I thought was the importance of it and what I thought, judging from what Acheson had told me at lunch, was the need for an urgent response to it. I described it as something which recalled the grandeur of the

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original conception of Lease-lend, and I said that, after quoting it at length from the important overture that General Marshall had made, it was a more important statement than the President's

formulation of the Truman Doctrine. And I ended up my talk by saying that whether Congress was going to get away in the summer and prepare for the next year's Presidential campaign or whether it was going to have to be recalled for a special session in the autumn would depend on the European response to the General's very direct overture that particular day.

Well now, I subsequently learned, and I subsequently heard from Mr. Bevin's lips, that he happened to hear that broadcast. He said in a speech made to the Foreign Press Association in London on January 25, 1949 -- and I should explain that he thought he had heard this in the

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morning, though he must have heard it at 10:30 p.m. in the evening -- he said in that speech to the Foreign Press Association in London: "Last year I came to you at a very critical moment in the world's history. I knew what was necessary to be done but what puzzled me was how to get the means to do it. And just before I came to your gathering there was one of the epoch-making speeches, which has affected the whole future of the plan, made by Mr. Marshall. I don't think even the International Press took this very seriously. There were no headlines in the press that morning, but if I may make a little confession to you I have a little wireless alongside my bed. I put it on at 7 o'clock in the morning. I'd been constantly, day after day, wondering, watching, seeking a way that we could devise not only to revive but to preserve the civilization which I

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still loved so much which is called European, the cradle of the races that we have here today largely represent. Then over the wireless, I'd better call it radio if this is international, came a simple, very simple speech by one, who I think, in the future of the United States will be regarded as one of the greatest American citizens. There didn't seem much in it, but when I heard it I thought it over and I said at once, 'This is manna from heaven.' We had no coal, we had no resources, the war had left us in a devastated condition and here was this great, wonderful American who, in the simplest language, said let Europe get together. Let them put up their plans, let them organize and we will see what aid America, or the United States, can give. I must confess, Mr. Chairman, that was a thrilling moment and I went to the office and said, 'This is our great opportunity,

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it's a milestone in the postwar development. I never imagined at that moment that ideological differences would cause a diversion or digression in European consideration. France has come out of a great trial. She had tremendous economic and political adjustments to make. But I felt at that moment that if we grasped it with both hands, as I said at the time, and if then the United States with all her power and with all her wealth and with all the changes that had gone on as the result of two world wars was going to be brought in to help in the readjustment of world affairs, this was the great opportunity of our lives."

Mr. Bevin said the same thing at the National Press Club in Washington, D.C., at a luncheon that was given to him there on the first of April 1949. Speaking on that occasion he said, "I remember that morning with a little

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wireless set alongside the bed just turning on the news and there came this report of the Harvard speech. I assure you gentlemen, it was like a lifeline to sinking men. It seemed to bring hope where there was none. The generosity of it was beyond my belief. It expressed a mutual thing. It said, "Try and help yourselves and we will try to see what we can do. Try and do the thing collectively, and we will see what we can put into the pool. "I think you can understand why, therefore, we responded with such alacrity and why we grabbed the lifeline with both hands, as it were. To you in the United States we shall ever be grateful. To us it meant the beginning of Europe's salvation. And Europe will go on until it has restored itself and reestablished its culture, its influence, and in turn that gift will become an investment. In the years

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to come we will return to the United States all the gifts you have made, the blessings that Europe can still give."

BROOKS: This is extremely helpful, and it helps to explain something I've been much concerned with. I have asked people in this country and on the Continent if they had any information in advance that Marshall was going to make this proposal and they all say no, but they expected something to happen. They looked to the United States to take this leadership and evidently Bevin was strongly of this same mind so that he was ready to move when the occasion arose.

MIALL: Well, I spoke subsequently to Philip Jordan at the British Embassy about this speech and he told me that he had gone in to see the Charge d' Affaires, Mr. Balfour (we happened to

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be without an ambassador at that particular time), to show him the speech and say how important it was, and he told me how annoyed he was when Balfour flipped through this speech and said, "It's just another university oration. We'll save the cable charges and send it by bat" -- by sea in other words, rather than cable.

And I was subsequently told by Christopher Mayhew, Member of Parliament who was Bevin's Under Secretary for Foreign Affairs at the time; that Bevin came into, the Foreign Office the next morning demanding to see the exact text of what Marshall had said. Of course, there was nothing from the British Embassy in it. There was nothing in the London *Times* because Sir Willmott Lewis had not been one of the correspondents who had the lunch with Acheson. There was very little in any of the British papers except the *Daily Telegraph* and the *Daily*

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Express. I remember the correspondent of the London *Daily Herald* ringing me up the next day and asking me what was this Marshall speech that apparently I'd been reporting, as obviously his editor was now being asked about it. This was a fellow correspondent in Washington who had not sent in the story.

The American press equally did not pay great attention to it at the time. When the text of it, when a version of it came out on the ticker, I remember there was none of the double spacing and ringing of bells of an important statement. It was all in a short little piece in single spacing. I sent

a dispatch the next day to the BBC in which I talked about the reactions to it and I had to explain that it had been rather crowded out by a number of other important news items that had taken place. I might recall to you that at this time that there had

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been a coup d'etat in Hungary; India had just been granted independent status; there had been an open row between President Truman and Senator Taft about economy; the President had held a news conference in which he requested a halt to the agitation in Palestine, which had been particularly provoked by an open letter by Ben Hecht in the New York newspapers; and the Senate had just approved four peace treaties. There was a lot of news going on and it wasn't surprising that not many of the newspapers did play it up strongly. I remember speaking that myself to James B. Reston of the New York *Times* and Ferdinand Kuhn, Junior, of the *Washington Post* and checking with them. My reaction was that this was an extremely important speech and they agreed with me, but I noticed that the next day the only newspapers that I saw that

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had any comment on Marshall's speech at Harvard were the New York *Herald Tribune* which described it as a well-reasoned, instructive, and adult policy towards the problems of Europe resting on solid foundations of practical economic and political fact; and the *Washington Post*, which said it's never too premature to try to gain the comprehension of the American people for the scope of the European problem and pointed out that the leaders of both parties hesitated to speak out in public because it would put a new light on tax reduction. But, the *Washington Post* went on to say, the skeleton cannot remain in the closet much longer. It will burst its confines when the Europeans begin to scrape the barrel of their dollar resources. The only relief then would be to set import restrictions on the American goods that can only be bought for dollars. There is only one thing I would

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really like to add to this and that was what General Marshall himself had to say subsequently on why he had not tipped off Bevin beforehand about the importance of the speech that he was making. As I say, I believed that the speech was put together in the State Department in a very great hurry between the Tuesday that I had lunch with Acheson and the Thursday that General Marshall decided to take his degree at Harvard, which has been writing as a sort of rain check for him, and the speech was put together and pushed out by the State Department on the evening before. But General Marshall said in an address at a dinner in which President Truman gave him in his honor on the night of June 5, exactly 2 years later, 1949, General Marshall said, "I think you will be interested in our expectations to what would be the response of the Harvard suggestion. You will

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recall that the suggestion was not limited to any particular part of Europe. We thought that it would be generally accepted in principle, though the acceptance in time might not be followed by the degree of International cooperation and necessary concessions by sovereign states which would be essential to the success of the program and its acceptance by the United States. Frankly, we anticipated that considerable immediate opposition would be developed against the

idea in this country, but that this opposition did not make itself apparent for some weeks was due in all probability to the dramatic rapidity with which the European powers concerned rallied toward formal consideration of ways and means. History will give credit to those European statesmen who responded with such energy and vision to the needs of the moment. It was a matter of serious regret to us in this country

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that certain nations refused to participate. But it was evident in some instances that their peoples desired very earnestly to do so. Plainly it was not a decision of peoples but of small groups of arbitrary rulers responding to Soviet direction. History will decide how wise or how deplorable was their decision. What is all well known to all of us, and some of us here present tonight have been leading actors, in the enormous accomplishment of the past year which, in effect, have reversed the trend of centuries and, in the words of Mr. Hoffman, have made more progress than since the days of Caesar."

BROOKS: That, I believe, is in the *New York Times* for June 6, 1949.

MIALL: The *New York Herald Tribune* for June 6.

BROOKS: Did you tell me that you understood that

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there was a conscious decision in the State Department not to give out any advance, special advance notice of this?

MIALL: Well, all I can say is this was reported to me by Joseph C. Harsch, whom I've mentioned already. There was an off-the-record lunch of senior radio commentators in New York with General Marshall sometime in October 1947. And Marshall then told them how he came to make the speech at Harvard. According to the notes that I made of the conversation that I had with Joe Harsch at the time, Marshall's problem was to find a suitable occasion at the right moment. He had a speaking date in Wisconsin sometime in May but that was too soon after Acheson's speech and his next appointment for a speech was not until early July and that was considered too late. Well then came the business of seeing

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that Harvard was having its commencement exercises, remembering that he had his degree offered during the war, and deciding to take it. General Marshall went on to tell Harsch and the other commentators that he worried beforehand about the public reception of his Harvard speech. He feared that Representative John Taber, who was at that time Chairman of the House Appropriations Committee, or some other person would come out with some unfavorable comment which would steal the headlines before the speech itself had time to sink in. You must remember that this was a Democratic Administration with a Republican Congress, and he was enormously grateful that Bevin had reacted to the speech as quickly as he did because Bevin's comments picked up the story almost immediately and drowned completely the comments that had been solicited by American

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correspondents calling upon Congressmen for reactions. Marshall went on to say that he had toyed with the idea of warning Bevin about the speech beforehand, but he had hesitated to do so for fear of causing friction between Bevin and Bidault, the French Foreign Secretary. He had also thought it unwise to warn both of them.

In that connection, I noted that the London *Times* carried a very short wire story in about column 5, which said nothing, nor were the implications generally realized in the United States. The Associated Press ticker version based on the advance text gave it a very short story without the usual double column headlines for the most important news. Only the New York *Times* and the Washington *Post* seemed particularly excited about it.

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BROOKS: Do you remember whether or not you knew anything about President Truman's personal involvement in this? Did you have any way of knowing whether he saw the speech in advance or not?

MIALL: I don't think he can have seen the Marshall speech in advance. I know that he saw the Acheson speech, the Cleveland, Mississippi, speech in advance. But I don't think that he can have had time to see Marshall's.

BROOKS: Do you remember whether in any of his press conferences, which I take it you attended, he said anything about when he indicated that this was his policy -- we can check the press conferences.

MIALL: Almost immediately after this speech was made the President himself went up on a trip

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to Canada which was not announced. It was announced on very short notice. Now in the course of that visit to Canada he did make a number of comments on the Marshall Plan. I remember at an informal press conference he did speak on the importance of the Marshall Plan, as it was then described, to a number of correspondents.

BROOKS: One of the photographs here in your scrapbook is of a Marshall press conference. Did you remember those occurring very often? Do you have any special impressions from those?

MIALL: Yes, I do have, certainly. I can remember General Marshall's original press conferences. They began much more like military briefings than press conferences.

BROOKS: You mean when he was Secretary of State?

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MIALL: When he was Secretary of State. It took the General some time to get used to the give and take of a Washington press conference. He was accustomed to making a statement and, as I recall it, he was slightly hard of hearing and it was not very easy for correspondents to ask questions. But as he got more accustomed to his civilian role, and as the State Department moved

over to what had originally been the War Department building and they held the press conferences in the auditorium there, where the acoustics were a good deal better than they were in the Indian Treaty Room of the State Department, he became much more relaxed at the press conferences.

BROOKS: I think the American press conference is a little different from what happens anywhere else. Is it fair to ask you off the cuff if you felt generally that the President, the

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the Secretary of State, and others were pretty free about giving information on foreign policy knowing that foreign correspondents were there? Is this a good way of giving out information on foreign affairs?

MIALL: Of course, they have to be very circumspect in what they say knowing that not all the correspondents who were present were ones they could totally trust. At the same time it was an important kind of dialogue between the Executive and the American people, because I'm sure that the President and the Secretary of State learned a very great deal from the questions they were asked and the points that were thrown at them, as well as the correspondents learning from the official answers that they were given.

BROOKS: One thing that interests us a good deal is the development of the character of the press

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conferences. One of our researchers, Professor Cornwell of Brown, is working on this specific topic. There are many quite interesting gradual changes that take place as you study this from Roosevelt to Kennedy or Johnson, for example.

MIALL: I saw a lot of this during the time that I was there. For instance, at the time that I first got to Washington, which was in 1945, there was a very strong convention that no foreigner should ever ask a question at a Presidential press conference.

BROOKS: Was this a stated rule or just an understanding?

MIALL: No, there were very few stated rules in this operation. It all worked on conventions. This is a convention which, as I understand it, dated from the period before the United

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States entered the war but after the outbreak of the war in Europe, when Roosevelt did not wish to be asked questions by German correspondents and he let it be known that he didn't want any questions from anybody except American correspondents. And when I got to Washington after the war was over this condition still lingered, and gradually we summoned our courage to ask questions from time to time on matters that had direct bearing on outside activities knowing that, for instance, in Britain Americans were always quite fearless about asking questions at press conferences.

BROOKS: Did you break this down just gradually by doing it? I mean was there no agreed lowering of the bar?

MIALL: I don't recall whether there was any agreement or whether it just happened.

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BROOKS: Then did you think, speaking specifically of President Truman, that he acted any differently answering questions of foreign correspondents or an American correspondent?

MIALL: He used to have a discussion with his press advisor, whether it was Charlie Ross or Roger Tubby or one of the other people who was working for him, before his public press conferences in which they discussed the most direct, difficult questions likely to be asked him so that he was prepared. Nevertheless there always were occasions when something would happen. And equally, something which sometimes used to worry me about press conferences was the speed in which particularly agency correspondents had to file their stories from the nearest telephone after their rush out of the room, after the "Thank you Mr. President," when they

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would perhaps get something slightly distorted or get the emphasis wrong. And this could have International repercussions.

An example was when President Truman said something which appeared to some members of the House of Commons in London to be that he was authorizing General MacArthur to use the atomic bomb in Korea. Before we knew where he was Mr. Attlee was in a plane on his way to see President Truman to stop him from this reckless course of behavior. Now it was quite clear to anybody who had been at the press conference that President Truman wasn't saying any such thing. He hadn't any such thing in mind. And later dispatches from correspondents and from the agency men made it clear that this was not so. But it happened that the first-flash of an agency message coming over the news ticker in the House of Commons, picked up there right

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out of context in the course of an acrimonious debate on foreign affairs in the British House of Commons, resulted in a petition being signed there and then demanding that the British Prime Minister dash over to the United States and pull back President Truman's coattails from this rash venture in which he was involved.

BROOKS: He was caught in time to head him off wasn't he?

MIALL: No he was not. Mr. Attlee did fly over, and there are many people in the Labour Party to this day who believe that Mr. Attlee stopped President Truman from actually using the atomic bomb. That's one of the myths of history.

BROOKS: Did you notice any particular development or change in Mr. Truman's handling of the press from the beginning until the end of your period there?

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MIALL: The press conferences were always fun. Whenever President Truman dropped a brick it was a loud brick that dropped. They weren't very often but they were loud when they did drop and it was usually at the press conferences that they happened. I think that he was sometimes a man who shot from the hip. But by and large I would say that his relations with the working press were very happy ones, though he had all sorts of rows with their editors and publishers. Most of the correspondents who were regularly attending his press conferences enjoyed it, because he was always a man of vitality and vigor, and had something to say whether they liked it or not.

BROOKS: He often says that he liked the working press though he didn't sometimes get along with the editors. And he always seemed particularly close with the press photographers. You didn't

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have any photographic business connected with your work there?

MIALL: No.

BROOKS: Did you go in the '48 campaign? Did you ride around on the train?

MIALL: Yes, the '48 campaign, and '52, and '56 as well; and I went with him when he went on a whistlestop trip across the United States to open the Grand Coulee Dam, which was not technically an election year campaign but it turned out to be something rather like it. I remember on that occasion there were only two British correspondents aboard the train, and I was one. The other was a man called Robert Waithman, who was a correspondent for the then *London News Chronicle*. Going on the train across to the state of Washington, after we had been about three days on the train, we

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were getting a little bored with life and there wasn't very much in the way of a story of great British interest. So we approached Charlie Ross, and asked if we might interview Margaret Truman who was on the train with the President, and a message came back saying, yes, it was agreed; would we go back to the President's car at the end of the train -- they had a special armored car that the President rode in, in those days -- at a certain time and have a talk with Margaret. When we got there, in the dining room where we were summoned, I was interested to see that the President was in fact sitting there, busily signing menus for each one of the train crew to have. We apologized for having disturbed him in what was his private dining room, and Ross explained that we had a date to see Margaret Truman, so he picked up all his papers and departed. I

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felt extremely embarrassed that we were pushing the President out of his own dining room to have this interview with Margaret. However, he was very happy about it, and subsequently, either later on that day or the next day, I remember the President sending word back that he would like to meet all the correspondents in the main train dining room, not for a press conference but just to have an informal chat with us. So we all five gathered and the President

came in, and somebody, I think it was Merriman Smith, said, Mr. President, what would you like to drink?"

And he said he would like a glass of bourbon. So the bourbon was produced, and the President looked up and said with a smile, "I wonder how many of you are going to put this on your expense accounts." After we had chatted with him, he wasn't giving us any news, he was just simply chatting privately and informally. None

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of us could hear him very well, with the noise of the train and with no amplification, only those within a few feet of him could really hear what he was saying. So Ross suggested that those of us who were within ear shot should have to move away and another group should move in and join the conversation, and I was one of those who was moving out. As I went away, the President said to me, "Did you get a good interview with Margaret?" I said, "Yes, Mr. President. It was a fine one. Would you like to hear it?" Because I had in fact been asking a great deal about the President's day and the President's life, and she had been discussing it. And the President said, "Yes, I'd like to hear it very much indeed. Don't tell Margaret." So on his way back to the Presidential car he stopped by in the press car and sat at my tape recorder with the earphones on, listening to the

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interview which I had made for the BBC with his daughter in which she had been describing what it was like having a father who is President of the United States.

BROOKS: When you were on the '48 campaign train, did you develop any special impressions yourself as to whether Mr. Truman was going to make it or not?

MIALL: I thought he was. I know when I thought it was, too. I remember he kicked off his campaign by a speech in Illinois at a plowing convention...

BROOKS: There was a plowing contest in Des Moines.

MIALL: Yes, it was in Des Moines, Iowa. I went there to see this and we arrived by car or bus or something and when we parked in this car park, I noticed a huge stack of

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private aircraft. I had never seen such a whole car park full of private aircraft on a field before, and I said what are they doing there? And someone complained, "They parked in the wrong place. They should have been around the corner. There's a proper park for aircraft." And I went around the corner and I saw one six or seven times the size, full of private aircraft. These were all the things the farmers had flown over to watch the plowing matches. You know the farmers tend to vote their pocketbooks, I believe. The moment that I saw the number of private aircraft illegally parked in the wrong parking place for the plowing match I began to wonder whether the farmer's vote was going to be so solidly as Republican in the '48 election as it was expected to be. I was reporting the results of the voting to the British audience in November '48 when they came

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through. It was the first time I had reported an American Presidential election, and I didn't really understand fully the system by which the Democratic votes in the big cities get counted first, and the Republican votes came in slower from the rural districts and offset them. So in my ignorant way I had the President winning early in the evening. When I saw that he had a lead of a million I stuck my neck out and said that he had won. It turned out that I was one of the few people who was right.

BROOKS: Did you get advance checks of speeches when you were on the campaign train?

MIALL: Yes we did, very often we got the advance text of major speeches that were being made that night. But the great number of speeches that were being made off the cuff at whistlestops, they were never the subject of an

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advance text, and you never quite knew, when they were going to be important.

BROOKS: You never quite knew when they were going to be made either, did you?

MIALL: No, you vaguely knew that the train was due to stop fifteen miles along the line at the next town but you didn't know whether it was just going to be a glad hand occasion, or a feast.

BROOKS: We have been told that Romagna, the short-hand man, didn't get them all because some were way early in the morning, or some of them would catch him unaware.

MIALL: Yes. I remember on one occasion I was standing in the crowd, as I usually did on these occasions just to try and pick up comments and reactions of people at these whistlestops,

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and I heard a man in front of me say to the man next to him, "I had no idea the President was such a handsome man." And the other man said, "Neither had I." I inched my way around to the front and I found each of these chaps looked exactly like President Truman.

BROOKS: Of course you were over there, not in England, but I'm interested in the development of what we now call Mr. Truman's "image" abroad, and what particular event in the Truman Administration most affected or colored the impression that people abroad had of him?

MIALL: Well I think with regard to almost any statesman it is his foreign policy that interests another country. They are not really interested in his domestic affairs. Truman made, as far as Britain was concerned, what was

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a bad start -- the very sudden cancellation of Lend-lease was a disaster as far as Britain was concerned, on which I am sure the President was wrongly advised, as he subsequently said. There was a slight suspicion in the fall of 1945 when Byrnes was having a number of dealings

with Molotov, that the United States and the Soviet Union were going to sort of carve the world into spheres of influence to suit each other, leaving Britain out in the cold. Now at those particular times I would have thought the reaction in Britain towards Truman was a rather suspicious one. Then came the time when we were going to have to pull out our help from Greece and Turkey. It was quite clear that Greece might easily topple into the Communist camp in very short order, and the President had to make a decision. He made a decision very, very quickly to start

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what subsequently became known as the Truman Doctrine. The courage of that decision followed by the Marshall Plan -- in this sense, that I don't regard the President as the father of the Marshall Plan except insofar as the President is, in the last analysis, the author of all foreign policy -- I think that the authors of the Marshall Plan were people in the State Department, Acheson and Marshall himself -- but it was open to the President to repudiate if he had wanted to, as he had repudiated other things. In view of the fact that he did accept it, and backed it, to him must be given the credit for it.

BROOKS: One thing that interests me is the extent to which some of these things are regarded as being associated with him.

MIALL: I would have said that the Greek-Turkish

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decision was a Truman decision. I would have said that the Marshall Plan was an Acheson-Marshall decision which Truman supported, but he wasn't the originator. Above all there would be the decision on Korea. Now these were all very important decisions in the field of foreign affairs, all which had a beneficial effect so far as Great Britain was concerned. Therefore, the reaction in Britain was, I think a very favorable one; combined with the fact there is a traditional sympathy in Britain for the underdog. His cocky fight in 1948, and then his victory was something which appeals to the British instincts.

BROOKS: People told me this on the Continent too. I was a little surprised to have them bring this up voluntarily, something that definitely contributed to his "image" abroad.

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Notes by Dr. Brooks:

At the time of my interview, Mr. Miall gave me for the Library a copy of the BBC publication, *The Listener*, with an article that he wrote about the origin of the Marshall Plan; a typescript of an article that he wrote for *Contact Books*, entitled "birth of an American Policy;" and typescripts of two broadcasts he made over the BBC on the night of June 5, 1947. These items are available in the General Historical Documents Collection of the Harry S. Truman Library. He later sent tapes of his "American Commentary" broadcasts of that date, and his preliminary conversation with his editor in London, Anthony Wigan, calling attention to the importance of the Marshall speech, at a time when very few other people realized its significance.

Mr. Miall also let me see a letter that he received from Dean Acheson, June 7, 1961,

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commenting upon the article in *The Listener* of that April. Mr. Acheson began his letter as follows:

Dear Leonard: Many thanks for your note and for your broadcast which was quite accurate and very good, I enjoyed the experience all over again, it seems like yesterday that it occurred...

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