Interview with Harold Stassen

Interviewed by Alec Kirby on
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at the James J. Hill House

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Kirby: Governor, during your tenure, you established a new relationship between the State of Minnesota and Minnesota's mining industry. Could you tell us about the relationship you established with labor?

Stassen: A similar thing happened on the matter of labor legislation. There was the extreme of, I think it was called the Vance-Myrie [phonetic] Bill, which was going to clamp down hard on labor unions, put in anti-injunction and criminal procedures and so forth. Then there was the other side, where they didn't want any legislation.

What I advocated in the campaign, and what we finally got enacted, and is still on the law, still a part of Minnesota law, and that is what was called the Minnesota Labor Peace Act, and then it became known at the Count Ten Law, because we had in there that before there could be strike or a lock-out, the state labor conciliator had to be notified and then they had to wait ten days—in other words, count ten, and one day for each count—and we had a provision under which if there was a real public interest involved, there could be another thirty-day provision. You could have public hearings and so forth and so on, and recommendations. We got that law passed after another one of these real tight battles, in effect saying that if it went off on either extreme, I'd veto it, but we advocated this in-between action.

Then, when the law passed, there was a very able young president of the state typographical union, Lloyd Haney [phonetic]. I recognized that he was sensible, level headed, intelligent, so that even though he had been a member of the former labor party, I appointed him as the state labor conciliator, the first one. He, of course, developed a great reputation for fair and even minded...and, of course, it assured labor right away that we were not out to break up the labor unions, that we wanted them to fit into a program of labor peace.

I might interject here that in this issue, in that first campaign—and one of the things that led to our big victory—was that we found, quite quickly, that the wives of the union members were swinging in order to vote for us, even though the union members, the official organizations, had
all endorsed Benson for re-election, and that they constantly emphasized in their union meetings to get out the vote for their candidates who were endorsed. The wives began to listen to this matter of reducing the strikes and so on, so we definitely tracked the public opinion shifts in the real organized labor precincts. We'd hold them practically even, or even overcome it, by the fact that the wives and family members, and even some of the union members, were just quietly going in and voting for me.

An interesting chapter of that, too, is when I came up for the third re-election. By this time, organized labor endorsed me, because they found that I'd been fair, and that the law had worked to their advantage. So while there were other issues also up at that time, for my third election, I was endorsed by the labor organizations of the state. [Break in taping]

Kirby: We were discussing your labor accomplishments.

Stassen: Yes. As I indicated, this law is still basically on the books. They've made a few changes, but it also became the center of national consideration when the Congress was taking up what later became the Taft-Hartley law, which I testified on the basis of the way this law was working out. This preceded those national laws. In the national discussion, I recommended highly the sort of conciliation approach and recommended against the power of injunction.

Likewise, the civil service law that we enacted they just...it was last year they had it, or the year before, they celebrated its fiftieth anniversary, and they found my name was on the original law, so they asked me to come over. So that law is still in effect, with a few little changes. So that matter of those different laws.

Now, through this process, the 38th legislature and the...really, you have to sort of separate these out. In responding to speaking invitations, each of these sort of major legislative things, and major developments created considerable interest around the country, and so I was asked to speak in various places.

One of those speeches I was asked to deliver was to what they call their Gridiron [Club] dinner in Washington. This was a dinner put on by the leaders of the media in Washington, in which they ask one Republican and one Democrat to speak. They asked me to speak, because I was a new, young governor, and attracting some of this attention, and then they asked Paul McNutt to speak as one of the leading Democrats of that time.

Out of that speech--which had quite a generally favorable acceptance, I won't go into it in any detail--but out of that came the invitation, then, to deliver the keynote at the Republican National Convention. Of course, there was the further fact that at that time, 1940, I was then just thirty-three years old, so I could not be a nominee for either president or vice president, so that, in a way, put me in, you might say, an ideal eligibility standpoint to be a keynoter, because I couldn't try to stampede the convention to give me a nomination. That tends to be one of the considerations of those decisions. So that then did lead to the invitation to be the keynoter, which I did.
Of course, I was also a delegate to the convention, a regular elected delegate, and I was the chairman of the delegation. The delegation had divided views. I had not declared for anyone in that period leading up to the convention. In other words, as governor, I said early that we would give a good opportunity for all of them to be heard, and to be heard in the manner in which they selected.

Tom Dewey asked for a Minneapolis auditorium rally, and so we put on a very good auditorium rally for him, at which he spoke. Bob Taft asked to come in and speak at the Lincoln Day dinners, so we invited him in to speak at those. Arthur Vandenberg asked to have sort of a special kind of a rally in Minneapolis, and we arranged that. Wendell Willkie was sort of the last on this scene, and he asked to have a luncheon in Minnesota, so we put on a luncheon for him. In fact, it was on the anniversary of Minnesota's admission to the union, which is the 31st of May.* We had given each one of them full opportunities to meet our people and to speak to them and so forth, in the pre-convention period, and I had not taken a position for any one of them.

After I made the keynote, and we had the delegation meeting, then I announced that my individual ballot, I had decided in the delegation, would be cast for Wendell Willkie because his position on foreign policy was the main factor in my view at that time.

That, at that time, then, created quite a stir that took two facets. Some claimed that as the keynoter, I should not have declared for anybody. There is no such tradition, but that charge was made. Furthermore, I had not declared for anybody until after the keynote was over, and then I had, in fact, a responsibility as a delegate to either abstain or to vote for one them, and the first ballot was coming up. But when I announced to our delegation that I was going to vote for Willkie, there were already some Willkie supporters on the delegation, some further ones decided that they'd go with me on it.

But Wendell Willkie called me over to his hotel, thanked me for my declaration, and said he'd like me to be the floor manager of his campaign.

I said, "You shouldn't change floor managers at this late hour."
He said, "I don't have a floor manager."
I said, "You're kidding."
"No," he said, "so far we don't have a floor manager." He said, "We have a number of supporters, you know most of them, but we don't have any manager."
I said, "Well, I have to think it over, talk to my delegation."

I thought it over, and, of course, in my view, the position on foreign policy at that time was so

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crucial. With the whole thrust of Hitler in Europe and so forth, if the United States took a sort of a semi-isolationist position—in other words, sort of followed the Taft position, or halfway the Taft position back at that time—that would be a tragedy.

So I decided as long as I had laid it on the line that I would be voting for him, that I'd go ahead and manage the floor, and we worked all that night to get together sort of a core organization. Ray Baldwin of Connecticut, governor of Connecticut, was one of his early supporters, also Governor Carr of Colorado and Congressman Halleck of Indiana. He had a number of very able people, but he didn't have many delegates.

But the upshot of that was, that's how I happened to be his floor manager and how we finally, in a long night of balloting, brought through his nomination, in 1940. Then, after that, as I recall, it was in the national governors' meeting of '41, after then I was re-elected to my second term in the November of '40 term, there was a tradition—still is—the National Governors Conference alternates. One year is a Democratic governor as chairman, and the next year a Republican governor. In '41 it was time for a Republican governor and they unanimously decided that they wanted me to be chairman of the governors. So that's how it happened that I became chairman of the National Governors Conference and Chairman of the Council of State Governments and served in that capacity during that period.

Then, of course, probably I should comment a bit here, too, on...our administration was very successful, and it was successful because so many very able people took hold of it and served. Part of that, in turn, was not only did we invite exceptionally able people to serve, but we looked for a certain type, and that type, which I have often expressed, you look for men or women who have the combination of integrity and intelligence. As I've said, if you have somebody that's very intelligent but doesn't have integrity, they can get you into an awful lot of trouble in public administration. Or if you have somebody that has integrity, but is a dumb-bunny, they could also get you into a lot of trouble. So we made a very strong search constantly for that combination of clear indications of good character, good integrity, and good basic intelligence, and those twin requirements were always there.

I can give you a couple of dramatic examples of it, because it will tie in with understanding this whole period. One of the areas of this extreme corruption before we were elected was in the matter of the State Highway Department. In fact, there were people convicted in court later on in what were called the Blacktop Scandals—the matter of payoffs on selling the state this blacktop for highways and other kinds of corruption.

As a county attorney, and in my contacts, I'd always heard that the Bridge Division of the Highway [Department] was clean, that there never were any payoffs on bridge construction, or never any fraudulent inspectors on bridges. So when I was elected, in that surprise election in 1938, I sent for the bridge engineer. His name was Mike Huffman [phonetic]. He was a professional civil engineer, he'd been in the Highway Department for a number of years. He came over to see me in December, after the election. I said, "Mike, I'd like to appoint you commissioner of highways."
He practically jumped out of his seat and then he said, "Governor, you don't know me."

I said, "No, but I know about you." I said, "The information I've had is that you resisted all this corrupt stuff in your bridge department." I said, "That's what I want, and I have every indication that you are a competent engineer, and I want a competent Highway Department."

Well, of course, he said he'd have to talk it over with his wife, and he'd let me know. And he accepted. The further indication there was that he did a terrific job in putting integrity back in the Highway Department, and, in fact, within a few years, he was named national chairman of the Highway Commissioners Association of the country.

As I remember, seven of the different department heads that I appointed, within a period of a few years, in the various fields they were in, became national chairmen of their groups, different fields, because they had those principles that I had been enunciating and insisting on, gradually built credibility and strength. If I appointed somebody to something, they had to have both integrity and intelligence, and that's the way we got an awful lot of good results by any objective analysis through those years.

So I've given you the highlights there of becoming national chairman of the governors, which I carried on, and state council, and my participation in the national convention, and in the Willkie nomination.

You wanted me to talk about my decision to resign as governor. Obviously, this was a very major decision, and it's still a decision that's debated quite a bit. But here was the situation. As a student at the university, I had taken the reserve officer's training, and I had been commissioned as a reserve officer. That reserve officers' program, at that time, helped a great deal in the expense of going through the university. In fact, I had become, as I recall it, the ranking student officer for the infantry, lieutenant colonel of the corps, so forth. And then, of course, I had also taken the strong position that we should not be isolationist in the whole matter of that part of the situation.

When Pearl Harbor hit, the Japanese attack on December 7, 1941, and with that further background of the developments of Hitler in Europe and so on, I considered this to be a very basic challenge to the United States and to the entire free world, so to speak, and a very major event. To understand the circumstances of that time, you really have to read up about circumstances in the world leading up to the Japanese attack at Pearl Harbor, and the circumstances of that time. But when that happened, to me, as a young reserve officer, I should go on duty, even though I was, at the time, governor.

So I made that decision, and at the same time, you see, as chairman of the governors, I'd been working with the Joint Chiefs of Staff and the secretaries of War [Department] and Navy [Department], and the President, on all these issues. I also told them at the time that in going on duty, because of the family tradition and the Norwegian tradition and so forth, I'd rather go on
duty in the navy instead of the army. We happened to have a navy ROTC when I was a student. That led to that decision to commission me in the navy.

So then I told people that that was going to be my decision, to resign and serve in the war, so that if they re-elected me in November of ‘42, they should have in mind that I would just be carrying through the legislative session of ‘42, and organizing the state for the support of the war, and I would be resigning the governorship and going on duty, and they should also have in mind, therefore, that fact in the election of a lieutenant governor.

At the same time, I felt that in leaving the state in the best shape that I could, that I should have a lieutenant governor who was a veteran of World War I, and therefore had that kind of experience, and, of course, had those qualities--integrity and intelligence.

So I recommended, after consulting with our whole cabinet group and group of administrators and party leaders, listening for their various views. . .of course, there were quite a few who, first of all, didn't want me to resign, and then there were quite a few who said that if I intended to resign, I shouldn't say anything about it until after the election. I said I couldn't do that, that since I had the view I was going to resign, I had to tell the people about it ahead of time. So I did tell the people, well before the primary filings. And then I also recommended that Edward Thye, a veteran of World War I and a very solid individual from our administration, should be the lieutenant governor.

The people then renominated me and nominated Ed Thye, and then elected us both, electing me for the third term, electing him as lieutenant governor. Later on, they elected him as governor in his own right, and they elected him a United States senator, so that it would be confirmation of the quality of the man.

That's all a part of that decision to resign. It, of course, was a very basic change and everything at that time, but it was also. . .the Pearl Harbor attack and that war made a basic change in the lives of millions and millions of people, millions and millions of American men, and of course, also led to many actually getting killed, or actually getting wounded and so forth that's gone on. So that it was a very major change in the circumstances of that time, but to me, it was a decision that was the right decision, and the decision that I made at that time.

Maybe with the half hour we have left in this session, you might want to direct my questions to certain aspects of this first section about the governorship and national politics that we've been discussing.

Kirby: This is a question that may be comfortable for tomorrow, as well as for today. Before you came on the scene, Minnesota, in its philosophy of course, was very isolationist in orientation. You were never part of that orientation. What led you to such a different internationalist perspective apparently from an early age?

Stassen: First of all, it was not correct that Minnesota was isolationist. It is correct that a
number of political leaders here, particularly some in the Republican party, were rather isolationist. But let me describe that situation more fully.

For example, when I had come out strongly for the United States participating in lend-lease and so forth, and when I had taken the stand that we should not be isolationist, there were Republican leaders who told me that that was sort of a party, and that I was committing political suicide by coming out against isolationism so strongly, which I had done. My response to them was—including particularly one of the very senior leaders in that respect, Congressman, Harold Knutson of St. Cloud, Sixth District—I said, "Well, Congressman, if you're right that by taking the stand I've taken that I've committed political suicide in Minnesota, why, then it means that we're just going to let Hitler have his way, and that isn't any kind of a possible future that is attractive to me in the world."

I also told them all that isolationism was a wrong policy, that they should think in terms of the modern world and what it would mean, and so forth and so on. So there were many internal discussions.

But, coming back around that, when they had said that in that 1942 election—no, in the '40 election, after the Willkie convention, and, of course, in connection with the Willkie nomination—I had taken the position that isolationism should not be our policy. In that election, Hjalmer Peterson by this time was my opponent, in that second election for governor, and he was speaking sort of the America First doctrine—in other words, the isolationist doctrine of that time.

But at the same time, I noted that in Minnesota, the enlistments in the navy were at a higher relative number than any other state in the union. Then, of course, when I went out and directly met him in public debate, in great community sessions and so forth, and picnics, one of the most dramatic was a thing they used to call the Sauerkraut Festival, down in Henderson, Minnesota. Hjalmer Peterson made an America First speech there, and it was generally considered that if there was anywhere that isolationism would reign supreme, it would be at a Sauerkraut Festival. I took up the arguments and talked it through the people thoroughly, and got really a tremendous reception from the people.

So what I'm coming up to is that it's not correct that the people of Minnesota have really ever been isolationist. Some of their leaders were mistakenly thinking that they should be, or were, isolationist. To put it another way, you see, Frank B. Kellogg was the secretary of State of the United States, and he was the senator from Minnesota way, way back, and he was a leader in St. Paul and in the Republican party, and he was the author of the Kellogg-Briand Pact after World War I. He was anything but an isolationist.

So that my contention always has been that while some of the leaders went off in an isolationist direction—and they did it in many states, like Senator Nye of North Dakota and different individuals like that—that the people of Minnesota really have never been an isolationist people, and I think that I helped a little bit from keeping them from being one, too, but that is the fact of it as I see it.
Kirby: And you certainly did bring into the government people who had that international experience.

Stassen: When I first ran for county attorney, I got to know him [Ed Thye] way back there, and so I had a certain amount of contact with him, and in that period of time when there were these very crucial issues about farmers and Farm Holiday, and all of those kind of issues, he was to some extent involved. In other words, he was a local leader. He was a part of that Twin Cities Milk Cooperative. So that when I was elected governor, I appointed him as commissioner of agriculture. In other words, one of my administration. So in those first two terms, I had the opportunity to observe him in his functioning and in the participation in the cabinet meetings.

There were a number of able people, but when it came then to looking at the totality of--let's say looking for a veteran of World War I, which I thought was important when, as I say, I was leaving to go on duty in World War II, and when I was looking for somebody that had these qualities, he had a sort of what I'd call a native intelligence. He was not a college graduate, but he was intelligent. Had a lot of that so-called common sense, and he had great integrity which I'd observed under various circumstances.

So there were others that time that got very serious consideration to being recommended for lieutenant governor. And of course, a part of that--a very difficult part--in my first election, a very young man, C. Elmer Anderson of Brainard, was elected lieutenant governor. So that in order to nominate Ed Thye, I had to ask him to step aside, and sort of the old guard urged him not to do it. That is, they said that he shouldn't do that, that he should just insist on holding his office. They were, in effect, anticipating, I think, that they'd really run the state if he became governor, because he didn't have that maturity and strength that a governor needs.

So that when he refused, then I had to back Ed Thye versus him in the primary, and I was reluctant to do that. I tried to make amends later on after I defeated him, and we have a good relationship now, because much later on, he did get to serve a term as governor and then was defeated. We have a good relationship today, but one of the difficult things was that in order to have a man that I was confident would carry on the state while I was out in military service, and who I believed would be able to not only carry on, but be then re-elected, I felt I had to make a choice of a man like Ed Thye, and that's why I chose him. It was a tough choice and a tough thing to do.

Kirby: This was a period of very interesting characters in Minnesota history. Serving in the legislature while you were governor were individuals. I wondered if you could tell us your recollections of them. George MacKinnon was in the legislature.

Stassen: Yes. George MacKinnon was a classmate in law school, and he was in the legislature before I was elected. He was a very young legislator. In fact, he was elected in the district where the University was located. So as a young graduate of the law school, in that more or less ten-year period from our graduation--or less than ten-year period, we graduated in '29 and the election as governor was '38. So in that nine years, or eight years in between there, there were a
number of young classmates or schoolmates got into the legislature in advance of my election, and George MacKinnon was one of them.

He became a very crucial man in the drafting of legislation and in doing things in the legislative administrative field while I was governor. As you know, he later became, and is still now, a circuit court of appeals judge in Washington, D.C., retired. But he was another one of these very able men with great integrity and strong opinions. Sometimes we disagreed on things, but I had a great affection for him.

I can give you a little anecdote on him, if you want it. When he retired as circuit judge of appeals in Washington, and they were unveiling his portrait, they asked me to say a few words. I told them the fact that a classmate that I knew very well--Fred Houtdie [phonetic], who was in the chemical school, who later became president of Purdue University--one time, high on the Mississippi banks overlooking the river near the law school, said to me one day, "I want you to meet a new student from Colorado." And he said, "He's an iron man with brains." It was George MacKinnon. And, of course, he became a sixty-minute football center on those great football teams, and he became a member of the law review and the law school, so he was an unusual combination. But I recalled that incident of what Fred Houtdie told me, at that event, when they were unveiling his painting, and I think that "iron man with brains" kind of stuck to George ever since.

Kirby: To some degree, maybe this question gets ahead. Another legislator during this time period was Roy Dunn. Roy Dunn did not always see eye-to-eye with you.

Stassen: No, he was much more conservative. He was established as a leader of the conservatives in the House of Representatives before I was elected governor. He had great standing. He was chairman of the Rules [Committee], and he was for Martin Nelson in the primary. He was part of the establishment. He did work alone a great deal. Now, he was for Taft for nomination for President. I respected him and recognized that he was one of the men who had political standing. Had a different viewpoint of many issues than I had, and came out on the side of, for example, Taft in the national scene. But I had, really, a basic affection for him and respect for him, but we had a very different philosophy of government.

Kirby: Could I ask you about your decision to appoint Joe Ball to the U.S. Senate?

Stassen: Yes. Ernest Lundeen, the incumbent United States senator, died in an airplane crash while I was governor. The question then was the appointment of a successor. It was at a time that the attitude of the senator on foreign policy, I thought, was the most important of all, and I knew that Joseph Ball, a leading writer for the St. Paul papers, a young man who I knew quite well, I knew his general view of world policy and his view against isolationism was very solid, so that I decided that on the total circumstance of that time, appointing him a United States senator was the most important thing to do.

It was part, really, of the same kind of circumstance of analyzing that I should vote for Wendell
Willkie in the convention after I had completed the keynote, and part of the same circumstance that I decided that I should go on duty in the military after Pearl Harbor. It was a part of that whole same feeling as to what was important in the world.

Of course, from that initial emphasis, he sustained my belief in him, in that he became one of the four senators who introduced what's called the B2-H2 resolution, that said it was the sense of the Senate that there ought to be a United Nations. He did that, of course, at a time when I was off serving in the war, and he was carrying on his convictions. But Senator Ball and Senator Burton, Republican of Ohio, Senator Hill of Alabama, and Senator Hatch of Arizona, were the four senators who did that pioneering thing very early, introducing what became known as the B2-H2, and that later finally emerged as a sense of the Senate resolution, strongly supporting the concept of a United Nations organization that was a part of leading up to that area, along with the Atlantic Charter that Roosevelt and Churchill had made, but it was also a part of that whole period.

Would the United States go like they did after World War I? Would the Senate, and so forth, prevent the United States from taking affirmative world leadership? You see, at that time, I felt, and there were others of us, that after World War I, the failure to get the League of Nations really going with solid United States backing and with a sensible structure was one of the causes of World War II. So our feelings on that were pretty deep.

So that Senator Ball, in his B2-H2 period, and in other issues, was not against organized labor. He believed in opposition to the injunction and so forth. From my viewpoint, while I was away in the war, he got off the track. He came out for Roosevelt, in the third-term issue, while I was out in the war, and that led to quite a problem in the Minnesota Republican party, because he actually flipped parties on it. Then out of that and a whole series of developments, he himself got defeated. He tried to recover his status in the party by getting very close to the conservatives in the party, sort of got out of character, and it is, in effect, a sad chapter. But I allow everyone freedom of their own conscience, and I can't possibly recreate the total circumstance back here at home during the war that caused him to come out directly for Roosevelt in the third term.

From my viewpoint and what I was trying to do of moving the Republican party not to be isolationists, he lost his influence at that stage, and then later lost his own re-election. That, to me, was a very sad development.

Kirby: I was going to ask you this question tomorrow, but we're on the topic, and it just seems logical. It was before, I believe, Ball's resolution in the Senate, it was during your tenure as governor, that you did begin to speak out and advocate a forum on the United Nations.

Stassen: Yes.

Kirby: Did you have any kind of cooperation with Ball on that Senate resolution? Did you work with him on it?

Stassen: No, I don't believe so. No, I think they definitely developed that between themselves in
the Senate. We had discussed this, of course, like I had discussed foreign policy in these basic views. Many times Senator Arthur Vandenberg—at a time when he was rather on the isolationist side originally and he made a switch over, you know—I used to, when I'd get to Washington, go up and have a talk with him up at the Wardman Park Hotel, and we had quite a few discussions.

Kirby: While you were governor?

Stassen: Yes.

Kirby: I'm curious what your early reaction to him was, before he came out for internationalism.

Stassen: I considered him to be a very able senator, and I felt that he was one of those that I wanted to win over to what I called, in effect, participating in the world view. In other words, in all those years, I would spend time where I thought there was some chance of convincing someone of significance, to swing them over, and at the same time, I had respect for those with a different conscience about it.

Another one of the very strong personalities of those years was Congressman Walter Judd—a very brilliant man, a man of great integrity, and he had been elected to Congress and served in Congress. He earlier had been a missionary to China. We had many discussions, and I admired him very much, and he fits into this whole matter that you shouldn't cross Minnesota off as having been isolationist, because he certainly was not isolationist. He was a very affirmative influence in a very wide scale.

And, of course, there were many other leaders. Dr. [Donald] Cowling was the president of Carleton College those years of my governorship, and we had a lot of contacts together. He was very much on, you might say, the international or world view side. I had great respect for him. One of the interesting little things—I just noted in one of the books on his biography the confirmation that really he and I were working together when the two Mayo doctors died. I put him chairman of a commission for the Mayo Memorial, and out of that, really, the great Mayo Memorial Hospital at the University of Minnesota was developed. But he and I worked together on that concept, and that came into fruition, literally fourteen years after the day that I appointed him chairman of the Mayo Memorial Commission.

I do emphasize that at each stage, there were so many very outstanding men and women who did such tremendous things toward the objectives that we had on basic policy. That's how we could have this impact.

Kirby: Dr. Cowling, I believe, had a rather more conservative view of domestic politics.

Stassen: Yes. He would disagree with me on some domestic policies.
**Kirby:** About party leadership at the time, I believe you came to know Bernhard LeVander.

**Stassen:** Yes.

**Kirby:** He became chairman a little later. Did you have a good relationship in the early days of your governorship?

**Stassen:** Yes. Yes. Harold Levander—his brother—I invited to come down to the law firm when I met him at one of our fraternity Founder's Day dinners when he was graduating. So he came down to our Stassen & Ryan law firm, began to work there, and played a big part in building the firm up after I left the firm to become governor, and later became Governor himself. Bernhard Levander was his younger brother, and did a very great job as chairman of the party and so forth.

**Kirby:** Regarding national leaders at the time, we've discussed Wendell Willkie. The other candidate at the time, in 1940, was Thomas Dewey, and Thomas Dewey did come to Minnesota, as he indicated. Can you tell us what your early impression of Thomas Dewey was—in 1940?

**Stassen:** A very able person, very hard-driving person, and I did not feel that he had many strong policy convictions. I felt that he was analyzing the political aspects of it, following the public opinion side. Specifically, of course, when I made the decision in 1940 to cast my vote for Wendell Willkie rather than for Tom Dewey, I did not feel that Tom Dewey would definitely lead the Republican party and the country in the direction I felt was so important for it to go.

**Kirby:** The congressional delegation to the United States House of Representatives. My sense of that delegation is that it remains somewhat isolationist in its perspective, for some time.

**Stassen:** No, I don't think that's right. Let's just think of them. Mel Moss was a congressman from St. Paul—Ramsey County. He was a veteran of World War I, and I don't classify him in any way as an isolationist. I classify him as an incredibly courageous man. He's the man, you know, that walked down the aisle in the session of Congress and talked the fellow in the gallery into giving him his gun, or dropping his gun down. He had great courage, individual courage, and he was a marvelous individual. But I don't remember him at all being in the isolationist range. And to take the others of those early days—

**Kirby:** Ed Devitt.

**Stassen:** He's now the senior judge. He's trying this judge case right now, you know, the murder case.

**Kirby:** I didn't know that.

**Stassen:** The fellow that is charged with bombing and killing the judge down South? Because no judge down there wanted to try him. They sent him up to Ed Devitt. Judge Devitt, a retired...
judge, is trying the case right now. That's the same Ed Devitt who was in Congress. He was not isolationist. Pittenger of Eighth District was not. I think that Harold Knutson was very much isolationist, and there was some of that sort of thing. Of course, Senator Shipstead out of the old DFL side was very isolationist, just like Senator Nye, and that kind of influence. But I think the general perception, as I said earlier, of Minnesota being an isolationist state is wrong. It had an element of that.

**Kirby:** The reason I mentioned it, I was trying to get some sense of how the people at home thought what they thought of your decision to support Willkie in Minnesota.

**Stassen:** I think half of the Minnesota delegation—or more, a little over half—joined me in voting for Willkie on the first ballot. Or if they didn't vote on the first ballot, some of them we held back psychologically, because we had, of course, the tactics at that point that we wanted to get more than 100 on the first vote. We wanted to be sure to gain on each ballot, so to some extent, we were always holding a few back, and swinging them in, so we wouldn't slip back.

See, the psychology of a convention is so important. If you had 101 on the first vote, then you had 97 on the second vote, you practically have no chance of the thing built. In that Willkie convention, that night was a very dramatic thing, a tremendous thing.
June 25, 1991

**Kirby:** Beginning with Admiral [William F. "Bull"] Halsey, when did you first discover that you were going to serve with Admiral Halsey?*

**Stassen:** When I resigned the governorship and turned it over to Lieutenant Governor Edward Thye, and he was sworn in, of course, I had in writing, and verbally, told the navy I'd serve wherever they wanted to assign me to serve. The very first thing, then, was to join a lot of other reserve officers at Fort Skylar in Long Island, New York, for a few weeks of intensive indoctrination and preparation for active duty in the war.

At the end of that intensive few weeks at Fort Skylar, I received orders to proceed to the South Pacific and report to Admiral William Halsey for duty, which I did.

Under those orders, I flew to San Francisco, and flew out of San Francisco on the regular military air service--they called it MAT, Military Air Transport--which were the same planes that carried the mail and special spare parts and things like that. Flew from San Francisco to Pearl Harbor and transferred there and flew down to the South Pacific. Landed in Noumea, New Caledonia at that time, and landed at night. Took the jeep into Noumea, to an officers' quarters bunk, and first thing in the morning went in to report, in accordance to my orders, for duty.

The admiral at that time was based on the ground in a small building in Noumea, which was a little city in what had been the French area. Then the aide said I could go in and report. The admiral was seated at his desk, looking at his dispatches, and I made the regular formal report, "Lieutenant Commander Harold Stassen reporting for duty, Admiral, in accordance with orders."  He looked up from his dispatches. He said, "Are you here to work?"

I said, "Yes, Admiral."

He says, "That's all." So that was my first session with Admiral Halsey.

When I went back out from his office, the aide said that Lieutenant Commander Molton [phonetic] would like to talk to me. Lieutenant Commander Molton was then the flag secretary to Admiral Halsey. Flag secretary, navy, to an admiral is sort of an administrative aide with a lot of specific duties under navy procedures. Lieutenant Commander Molton told me that he was

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flag secretary, but that the admiral would like him to become a staff member for air operations--
air operations officer. So he asked me if I was willing to take over the flag secretary duties so he
could take over the air operations, and I said, "If that's what the admiral wants me to do, it's okay.
I'll tackle it."

So then he took me into the chief of staff's office--that was Admiral [Robert B.] "Mick" Carney,
Rear Admiral "Mick" Carney--Robert Carney--who at that time was serving, and in fact on into
the rest of the war, was serving as the chief of staff to Admiral Halsey. Lieutenant Commander
Molton introduced me to the admiral, told him that he'd like to have me take over the flag
secretary office. He'd like to assign me the duty so that he could become the air operations
officer, which I guess at that moment had not yet been filled, or was vacant for some reason. I
don't know the exact circumstances. Admiral Carney talked to me a little bit and said he'd
approve of it.

So then Lieutenant Commander Molton took me back out to what had been his office in the
headquarters there in Noumea, introduced me to a chief petty officer, Herbert Carroll [phonetic],
who was assisting him, and told Carroll that I'd be taking over, and to draw up the assignment
orders. So that was the beginning of my duty with Admiral Halsey.

Then I received information that I was to move from the officers' quarters, where I had bunked
overnight, up to the house on the hill where Admiral Halsey and about ten officers lived, so I
moved up there that night. That was the beginning of my assignment with Admiral Halsey.

Of course, I needed to become familiar very promptly with the various responsibilities of the flag
secretary, information about the command, and so forth. One of the responsibilities of the flag
secretary is the responsibility for the flow of mail to the ships of the command. There had been
quite a bit of problem about it and other supplies to what we called the "forces in the forward
area."

The action was up around Guadalcanal at that time, and the marines had landed in Guadalcanal
and gotten the first foothold there. As I looked it over and saw the complaints and the traffic, I
decided that in order to get a hold of the assignment and to get a realization of it, I ought to go up
to the forward forces and talk to the commanding officers up around there.

Admiral Carney and Halsey approved of it, so I flew up and joined Admiral "Tip" Merrill's light
cruiser force for the operation that was then proceeding to land up at Bougainville, north of
Guadalcanal. This light cruiser force was to protect the landing.

We then had intelligence reports that a heavy cruiser force was coming down toward that
landing, of the Japanese, so Admiral Merrill steamed out to meet this heavy cruiser force,
because the marines were landing and battling for their beachhead. I stayed in the admiral's
command center on his commanding cruiser.

An unusual thing happened in a night engagement. The Japanese cruisers were coming down,
and, of course, in navy operations, one of the key maneuvers always is to try to "cross the T." That means that to get your force going across at, in effect, ninety degrees to the column of attacking ships. The obvious reason is, when you understand it, that your ships can deliver the greatest firepower when they fire off to the right or the left—in other words, from their broadside. If you can get your ships across the T, so to speak, of an oncoming force, they relatively cannot get as much good firing power off the front, with other ships in front of them and so on, as you can get off your broadside, so that Admiral Merrill maneuvered his light cruisers, and they, of course, have smaller guns than the heavy cruisers of the Japanese.

As the Japanese force came down, Admiral Merrill crossed in front of them and began a night engagement. Of course, in those days, the radar would show the little blips of the location of different ships and the relative position in relation to the ship you were on. But in those days, they did not yet have what they later have, and is well publicized—a kind of a little signal that goes along with a blip to show whether it's a friendly ship or not. Same thing is true in the air now. But at that time, those kind of refinements of radar were not there.

In a night battle, then, there's a lot of changing of course and shifting around. Admiral Merrill had a destroyer squadron with him, which was known as Arleigh Burke's destroyer, DESRON 23, and he sent him to try to make a torpedo attack on some of the Japanese ships. There was a lot of shifting of directions and whirling around, and this was showing up on the radar screen.

I was standing in the corner of flag plot, command center, watching this, listening—learning, of course, a lot about navy operations and about the battles. In the middle of that battle, there suddenly was a report to the admiral's command, and there was on his radar, a group of ships, the little blips, proceeding toward his force at a certain direction, having in mind they'd been changing the directions and so forth.

The admiral's cruisers started to prepare their guns to fire on this approaching force, and as I looked and listened, and having been blessed always with a good memory, a good sort of photographic memory, I spoke up and I said, "Admiral, those are Burke's destroyers coming back." And, of course, there was a sudden stop in the command center.

The admiral turned to his communications officer and said, "Put out a message to Burke. Ask where he is and what's his direction from us." So with what they then called the TVS, the voice radar, they called Burke in the name of the command and said, "Give your location in relation to us." And Burke's voice came right back and gave exactly the direction and the course he was on, which confirmed that those six destroyers were coming back to the main cruiser force.

Admiral Merrill was, of course, in effect, appreciative of the warning I had given, and asked how I knew it, and things like that. It became one of my first decorations for alert service, or something like that. But it turned out to be a very crucial thing, in the sense that as that word got out, I was no longer the strange young reserve officer who had reported, who had formerly been in politics, but I was accepted throughout the Halsey command and so forth as a real naval officer. I recite it, because it was a very fortuitous kind of an instance, right at the beginning, that caused all the other officers to not feel the normal kind of aloof to a stranger and so forth, which
is always natural in a tense situation like a war situation. But, in effect, not in words, but just in
the whole atmosphere, I was accepted as a real member of Admiral Halsey's staff. I never lost
that all the way through the rest of the war.

The next significant thing in the Halsey command came when he called me in one morning and
he said, "Well, as you know, I'm going over to meet General [Douglas] MacArthur in Brisbane."*
Of course, as flag secretary, you see all the radio traffic, all the dispatches. In fact, you're
responsible to see that the correct officers get to see it all. That's one of your responsibilities,
which you, in turn, of course, also assign to others within your part of the staff.
  And I said, "Yes, Admiral."
  He said, "I want you to go along."
  He said, "I want you to sit in. I don't want you to say a thing. But when we come back
here, I want you to tell me what you think."

It was a very sort of blunt, direct, short...he had never met General MacArthur personally.

Of course, as I discovered long after the end of the war, in reading some of the history books,
what had happened when I had told them I wanted to go on active duty as the top command, the
Joints Chiefs, and the Secretary of Navy himself, they apparently had made some comments
along the line that I obviously didn't know very much about the navy, and that's what led to those
first orders to report to Fort Skylar for indoctrination, but that I must know something about
administration, because I was in my third term as governor, and they'd had, of course, contact
with me as chairman of the governors.

In the navy command, one of the most difficult administrative situations was in Halsey's
command, because he had taken over in the South Pacific after a lot of the disasters. Not only
had he been sent down there to take over after some disastrous losses in the early stages of
Guadalcanal, and the navy off of Guadalcanal, but also, in his command, he was under Admiral
[Chester W.] Nimitz, but close by his command was the line that was drawn to what was called
the Southwest Pacific, which was General MacArthur's command.* It was clear that as the war

Division, World War I; army chief of staff and military advisor to Philippines prior to World War
II; resigned 1937; recalled, 1941; withdrawn from Corregidor, fled 3,000 miles to Australia,
saying, "I have come through, I shall return," 1941; made supreme allied commander in
Southwest Pacific in 1941; launched counterattack; liberated Philippines, 1944-45; accepted
Japanese surrender, 1945; commander of occupation forces in Japan, 1945-50; commander in
chief of U.N. forces in Korea, 1950-51; dismissed when he publicly challenged President
Truman's conduct of the war.

during World War II; directed the Battles of Coral Sea and Midway, 1942; directed landings on
the Solomons, Gilberts, Marshalls, Marianas, Philippines, Iwo Jima, and Okinawa, 1942-45;
chief of naval operations, 1945-47.
progressed, and in our operations, there was reporting under command of Admiral Nimitz in one direction, Pearl Harbor, and General MacArthur in the other direction, and the complication of the forces of Australia and New Zealand, which were serving, some under Halsey and some under MacArthur. That was that kind of an administrative...some of them called it a nightmare, but there it was.

So there were seven officers with Admiral Halsey that flew over to this first conference in Brisbane with General MacArthur. Of course, I was there as they greeted each other, and all the officers greeted each other. I sat down in the corner for the two days while the different officers did their exchange of intelligence briefing and discussion. In fact, I've often wished that if you had a sound motion picture of those two days, it would be an incredible document, in the sense that MacArthur showed that brilliance of language and keen memory. After an intelligence briefing, he'd stalk up and down in front of the big maps, and with the stem of his pipe, he'd indicate something that had been overlooked, and he'd speak of enveloping an enemy, or this kind of an operation as a potential for a future operation.

Halsey would sit there in his chair, listening, all through it, kind of hunched down. I use his exact language. Suddenly, he would say, "Well, but goddamn it, Mac, why don't we hit the bastards over here?" That was the kind of blunt talk that he would engage in to MacArthur when he'd disagree with what he was proposing as a future step in the joint war effort--and, of course, this was the early stage of the war, and the basic plans and the joint operations were being debated and so forth.

Well then, when we got back to Noumea, to Admiral Halsey's command, he called me in the next morning and said, "Well, what did you think?" Well, at that time of course, I knew--as I say, as flag secretary, you know all the traffic of radio, all the cables--and I knew and I'd known for some time, that that was the stage at which there was still a great division of opinion and analysis going on of the Joint Chiefs [of Staff] in Washington--about how to proceed in the war in the Pacific.

There was agreement that ultimately to defeat Japan, they'd have to invade Japan. Then there was a disagreement as to what was the best way to get into a position to invade Japan. There was some proposal that they'd go up along the China coast and get a strong position in China, because the Japanese didn't have very heavy forces over in China. They'd been thrusting southward into the South Pacific, toward Australia and New Zealand, where we had stopped them to some degree. And then there were some who said that they ought to come up along the Western Pacific little islands and approach Japan that way. And then there was the matter of going up through the Philippines.

Well, after listening to these discussions for these two days, and with MacArthur, when Admiral Halsey asked me the next day what I thought I said, "Well, I do not think that the future decisions will in any way order a bypassing of the Philippines, because I don't think MacArthur, as I listened and watched, will ever go for anything bypassing the Philippines. He'll want to go through the Philippines, and he has his ideas there of how to land in the Philippines and how to advance step by step through the Philippines."
And he said, "How do you reach that conclusion?"

I said, "Well, first of all, it's my view that General MacArthur is never going to change his view that you've got to go up through the Philippines. Secondly, I don't think President [Franklin D.] Roosevelt will ever overrule MacArthur in the realities of the psychological picture. So, regardless of different views in the Joint Chiefs, I think the ultimate decision is going to be go up through the Philippines."

And the admiral said, "That's interesting," and that was about the end of that observation.

But then that kind of analysis of it, of course, began to influence Admiral Halsey's decisions of where to strike, where to land on an island. At that stage, he developed what became known as the bypassing operations, or the island-hopping. The nut of that was in the early part, and almost, you might say, there's sort of a traditional war thing, military. You try to locate where the enemy armed forces are, and then figure out how you're going to destroy them.

Admiral Halsey developed the concept, you find out where they are, and where they're not, and then with a combination of our air power, of the carriers, and the potential for our Seabees to very rapidly build air strips, find out islands they were not on, take those islands and quickly put in air strips and land there. And in the meantime, give them carrier protection so that you'd advance without tangling with the deeply entrenched and deeply, heavily armed places where the Japanese armed forces had established themselves. And that concept, he constantly carried out the best that he could.

At the same time, there was always, and I find there is, in professional persons who served in the military throughout, a reluctance to question an order that comes out from the Joint Chiefs. This question took a very intense form.

Quite early, he promoted me to assistant chief of staff for administration, which broadened my duties, and he brought me in to be one of the seven officers who he called his tactical and strategic group. I was brought into that group. Then he also made me officer in charge of the Combat Information Center (CIC) when we were at sea. In other words, on the flagship, it's a very key thing to have the Combat Information Center and have that organized to keep the information up to date and flowing and available.

Out of these early steps and early work, I got those assignments, and those carried through toward the end of the war. He also then promoted me to commander, which is the next step up, obviously, from a lieutenant commander.

Then, with this effect, we reached a stage in the summer of '44 where we had completely taken hold of the Bougainville operation and some other smaller islands, and put in air fields, advanced the fleet, and took pretty well complete control of the Guadalcanal islands and so forth. We were advancing in the South Pacific--various battles going on.

Then we reached a point where there was to be a major amphibious landing on some island off
the east of the Philippines called the Peleliu Islands, and Yap, and then following that, there was to be a landing by MacArthur on the southern end of the Philippines. We were then carrying on intensive air attacks on Japanese air bases in the Philippines and on various islands. We'd go out with the carriers and try to get an early dawn attack on an air field and destroy a lot of Japanese aircraft and protect our own ships as well as we could, and then pull back and refuel, and go reach out and hit them again, and so forth.

In the middle of 1944, there was this situation that I've described, as to what was supposed to come next. Some of our pilots who had been shot down in the Philippines were, in effect, rescued by Filipino scouts, and they would then help get them out to the shore of the ocean in the Philippines. They had signals built up, and they'd signal from these Filipino scouts to our submarines, and the submarines would go in and rescue the fliers off the beaches. From that process, it became clear that down in the southern tip of the Philippines, the Japanese were very heavily armed and dug in.

**Stassen:** We had information from photographs. There was an awful lot of air photography. Every time we would attack air fields, those photographs would be analyzed. There was a regular fleet analytical service to analyze those photographs.

The indication came so strong from those photos, that there was quite a discussion with Admiral Halsey that to land and to take over Peleliu and Yap, both of which were strongly defended, two islands, and for MacArthur, after that, to land at the very southern end of the Philippines, would be very much of a mistaken tactic.

So after quite a bit of back and forth in the command, Admiral Halsey agreed, and Admiral Carney and I drafted a message to the chairman of the Joint Chiefs, and with information to MacArthur and to Nimitz, in which we reported what we were finding as to this location of the enemy and as to the terrain and so forth, and we recommended that instead of us proceeding with our amphibious operation to land on these islands--Peleliu and others to the east of the Philippines--and with the plan of MacArthur subsequently to land in the southern end of the Philippines, that the landing ought to be right in the Leyte Gulf of the Philippines, that landing in the Philippines should be moved ahead but moved to a different location, and that the other islands should be bypassed--go right in and get a stronghold on the Philippines with our combined forces under MacArthur's command, at Leyte. Leyte was a sort of a gulf. If you look on the map, it's almost halfway up the Philippines from the southern edge. It's a big bay in a gulf in the eastern side of the Philippines.

This message happened to reach the Joint Chiefs at the time that they were up at Ottawa in a summit conference of Roosevelt and [Winston] Churchill, being held in Ottawa, Canada. The message, which of course was all top secret aspects and urgency from Halsey, arrived up there. Then from later reports, the Joint Chiefs, Admiral [Ernest J.] King, and General [George C.] Marshall, and so forth, stepped out of the dinner for this message, and reviewed it and began to confer on it, and then conferred with Roosevelt and Churchill, and in the meantime, asked Nimitz and MacArthur for comment on it. It was an intense period of hours, because these
landings and these operations were sort of in the orders and in the preparations.

Then the order came out that this revision was approved, except they did not want us to bypass Peleliu. The island of Peleliu they thought was important. So when that revision came—obviously all the preparations were made of where the amphibious forces were to land and how they should go—then there was intensive readjustment of the planning and the preparations.

History will further show that the taking of Peleliu was one of the most costly in terms of loss of life, tragic things as you can imagine. And to continue with that part of the program of taking Peleliu, it was understandable if you were going to go up to the east of the Philippines and bypass the Philippines. So there was still some of that in the Joint Chiefs, but yet, at the same time, they, of course, moved to go with MacArthur and landing at Leyte. It was not a complete reversal of their orders, but a substantial reversal. All the other forces that were to do other things, like land in the southern tip of the Philippines and land on other islands, were all reshaped to land at Leyte.

I might say that in our official navy history reports that pick up the matter of this cable coming into Ottawa, there are reports that Carney and Stassen drafted the message, things of that kind, these things can be confirmed through navy history books now. At the time, of course, all of those operations were top secret.

But the Leyte Gulf landing was very successful, very little opposition. And, of course, MacArthur personally waded ashore. Tremendous attention on landing in the Philippines and getting a good strong foothold there.

We also knew that before we attacked the mainland of Japan, which was in the future of the war, we had to contend with a substantial remainder of the Japanese Navy, which had some new battleships and had four carriers left after the other operations. We also knew that General MacArthur’s command decision, with the revision of landing in Leyte instead of landing in the southern end of the Philippines, nevertheless was to go up the western side of the Philippines to an island off of Manila called Mindoro, capture Mindoro, and there get a strong base from which he’d then go on to capture Manila and the rest of the Philippines from the Japanese. At the same time, we had observed the beginnings of what became to be known as the "kamikaze" moves of the Japanese. In other words, it was a method by which they would send out one of their fliers, or more than one flier, with a plane and bombs, with the mission of just going in and crashing on the decks of one of our ships. In other words, not to drop a bomb on them, but crash the bomb and the plane right on the ship. It was, in effect, a suicide dive. They called it, I believe, "Ill Wind" or something like that. In other words, it was a special development of the Japanese forces.

We had detected the early operation of this kind, and we had also analyzed that just like on an island--where they would never surrender--they'd come out of a cave and make a desperate driving attack, and our landing forces would literally have to shoot them all down. They would not just surrender at any stage. So this thing, stemmed deeply out of the psyche of the Japanese
and their methods of fighting and so forth, did transfer to the air fields.

We were not able to figure out if the Japanese carriers were located halfway between Mindoro and the China coast, and they had a whole string of Japanese air fields along the China coast so they could shuttle up and down from Japan all the way down to Singapore with overnight flights, the hopping along of fighter planes and attack planes, so they could move their air force up and down in China, on the China coast.

Then, if they could do that, and if they had their carriers halfway between China and the Philippines, how could we give protection for the troop ships going up to Mindoro, and for MacArthur's forces to land at Mindoro? Of course, we could fly across the Philippines, putting our carriers on the eastern side of the Philippines; they could fly over and get over those forces, but by that time our planes couldn't stay over them long without having to come back to land again on the carriers. And to put the carriers over between the Philippines and China would put them in a very precarious spot. There was a lot of analysis in the Halsey command as what to do for the next operations.

Well, the reason this is so very important is that we were also trying constantly to keep track of where the Japanese remaining carriers were, and where they were using them. They hadn't been sighted for quite a while.

I should also flip over to say that in between this, when Admiral Halsey received orders that his next command from the South Pacific was going to be to take over command of the combat fleet off the Philippines for the movement up toward the Japanese home islands, and of course he had the continuing orders to seek out and destroy the Japanese Navy and then also to protect amphibious landings when they were made, there was constant study and analysis of how to best carry out those orders under the tactics that we saw developing.

For one thing, on the kamikaze ship attacks, they started to come in just at dusk. Just when what we called our CAP [Carrier Air Patrol] over the fleet would be landing, and just before the night fighters got up, just at dusk. These one-way kamikazes would come over and dive at our ships. Of course, you get a very short time to try to shoot them down as they're coming in like that, and there was some heavy damage to some of our ships.

So we then developed a revision of the night fighters and the CAPs, and that was to put the night fighters up before dusk, and put them out at the very edge of the horizon before you pull the day CAP back, so they would be out there where they could intercept these kamikaze divers way out at the horizon. That was a revision—that's the kind of thing, the reanalysis and thinking we were doing in a very active...these seven officers with the admiral were constantly analyzing and, of course, with their own staffs bringing up ideas, and other ideas coming in from the command, constantly figuring what to do to best carry on our missions.

One of the important things about Halsey was, he was always thinking how do you finally defeat the Japanese. He never had a short-sighted view in the war, but he was always thinking way
ahead. That, of course, led to that kind of humorous thing where he said very early in the war that he was going to ride the emperor's white horse on the streets of Tokyo. It was a kind of a morale-building, humorous, ridiculous claim, very early in the war, but it was a typical kind of a Halsey remark. And it also reflected that that's where his mind was running, was always how were you going to finally win the war, even when we were in the darkest days in the South Pacific.

So what I'm leading up to is a little bit of description of one of the most controversial decisions of navy history, because as the Leyte landing occurred, and obviously right away that MacArthur was coming ashore on Leyte with strength, and the Japanese didn't have the forces on the ground there to stop him, the sighting began to indicate, from our submarines and our air reconnaissance, that the Japanese Navy was beginning to move toward this battle. So then we moved our fleet in, and the whole Japanese Navy began to move from Singapore and from various locations toward the Philippines. The submarines attacked them as they could, but it was the beginning of tremendous naval engagements.

One part of it came up through the straits to the south of Leyte Gulf, and there were what we called the old battleships of the United States assigned to protect the landing--old battleships and other forces. So he met that southern force as it came through and just decimated it.

The biggest force started to come through what's called the Surigao Straits farther north of Leyte. They were sighted, and our carrier planes started to go in and attack them. One of their big, new, modern battleships was sunk right in those straits by our carrier planes. The other one, it was reported, was very seriously damaged. That force reversed course, started to steam back through there.

At that time a report came that the Japanese carriers were up to the east of the northern end of the Philippines, and this was the first verified location of the Japanese carriers. As the reports came in, we realized that all of the remaining Japanese carriers were out there, north of the Philippines. At this time, with our force down north of Leyte and off the shores of the Philippines, the question was what should we do.

I should interject that prior to this time, Admiral Halsey had had three of us go out and observe the operations of the combat fleet under Admiral [Raymond A.] Spruance, and we came back and recommended certain revisions of the combat information areas and the combat plot areas, and we had those revisions put in. That's a whole story that we won't take time with right now.

But we had spread out in an enlarged flag plot in this Combat Information Center the location of all the different Japanese forces, all of our submarines, all of our forces, and it was all laid out on this big plot, and this time there was a discussion over that plot. What should the admiral do?

A discussion went back and forth, and every kind of an action that any of the post-war or post-operation experts have suggested should have been done, were discussed. But Admiral Halsey's crucial decision was, he put his finger on the flag plot where these carriers had been located and
said, "We will run north at top speed and put those carriers down for keeps." He had some descriptive words that he always used in reference to the Japanese in it, but that was his decision. When that decision was made and all the orders began to be given, we went north through the night at top speed.

This can go on at great length, except by 10:30 the next morning, we had sunk every one of those last four carriers. But the one remaining big battleship and some of the other ships that had reversed and pulled back in the center, came on back through. They were not sighted by the southern forces, and suddenly they were there on the east of the Philippines, starting to shoot at our little carriers that were protecting the landings. That led to this great argument—did Halsey wrongly leave the landings unprotected while he ran north?

So then, in the morning, when this other attack began down in the center, there was a lot of history about that. But the nub of it was, COMINCH [Commander in Chief] sent a cable, top secret, to Admiral Halsey. "Explain your tactics."

Admiral Halsey sent a message back, "The Japanese Navy has been destroyed and will take no more effective part in this war."

COMINCH sent a message back, "We do not see the basis of your evaluation." Halsey sent a message back, "Wait and see." Of course, the waiting and seeing was that that was the end of the Japanese Navy, because without carriers, they tried to bring that modern battleship out once more, and it was promptly sunk.

They shifted from the building of another battleship into changing that building into a carrier late in the war, and then that new carrier, just as it came out of Tokyo Bay, was sunk by a submarine, so they never had any effective carriers any more.

In spite of that, the kamikazes were very difficult, but they never had the chance to use the kamikazes in the way they could have been used if they'd been able to hop them over carriers and then hop them onto land on to our troop ships.

It's my view—and it is, of course, a minority view—that that was one of the brilliant decisions of the war that Halsey made at that moment, but most reports are critical of it.

One section of those reports was that he should have left his heavy battleships down there, and run north only with the smaller ships and our carriers. But, of course, there are two failures of that.

The PRINCE OF WALES and REULSE, two of the biggest British battleships, were lost by land-based aircraft off of Singapore early in the war, and we knew the danger of putting battleships within the range of air attack, land-based, where the land-based attackers can shuttle in and out back at your battleships and overwhelm them.
The other part of that was that to run north at top speed, when you might run into this Japanese northern force that had two of the half battleships with them, if we ran out carriers up to within range of their guns at night, we could have had a tragedy with our carriers.

So what we did, of course, was to put our battleships up in front, like running interference, and we went at top speed with confidence, because we had to get up close to them in order to sink them, first thing in the morning, and that's what we did.

I think the correct analysis of the total war, the correct analysis of the kamikaze situation, will ultimately--in fact, some have asked that I should write a book about this whole period, and the secretary of the navy has given permission to look at all the records, and I may get into that research--but, as I say, it's a very controversial thing.

But now I should hop over. This was October of '44. The war went on intensively. Come to February of '45, we were back at Hawaii, changing command. They had change command at times between Admiral Halsey and Admiral Spruance in order to give the command time to rest and plan for the future after some of these very intensive, sustained operations where you'd refuel at sea and keep on battling.

When we got back to Hawaii, February, the admiral called me in one day and said, "Harold, look at this." And he handed me a cable. It was a cable from President Roosevelt, who was then on his way back from Yalta, saying that there was to be a conference to try to draw up the United Nations charter, and would Halsey send me back to be one of the eight to do that.

Of course, I almost passed out, because in my own mind, while I had been working on the matter of peace and speaking about organizing the United Nations as a continuing thing before I went on duty, when I went on duty I, in my own mind, thought that was it until the war was over. And here, out of the blue, comes this request. I said, "Admiral, I'd like very much to do it."

He said, "What about your section of the staff?"

I said, "Well, you always told us to have two officers ready in case we get hit. I've done that. I'd recommend Lieutenant Commander Herbert Carroll, regular navy officer, courageous, able person. He could step in and carry on. He's been my main deputy."

Admiral said, "Well, the chief of staff said the same thing, that Carroll would be the man to put in."

Very well," he said, "you can go."

And then he said, "But when you're through with that thing for the president, you want to come back and rejoin the staff?"

I said, "Yes, I do, Admiral."

He said, "Well, that'll be your orders."

So he drew orders that I should report to the president to draw up the United Nations charter, and, when completed, return to the staff, which I did.

But now we shift over, then, to the drafting of the charter. I flew back from Pearl Harbor, reported to President Roosevelt in the Oval Office. He looked up when I came in, and said,
"Well, Governor, Commander, would you like to know how you happened to be named to this?"

I said, "Yes, I would."

He said, "Well, I've never forgotten the speech you made at a Gridiron [Club] dinner in which you said isolationism was dead. And," he said, "that you hoped the senior leaders of your Republican party would realize it before it was too late."

He said, "And then you turned to me at the head table, and you said to the audience and to me, 'It's also important to realize that you can only have one president at a time, one commander in chief.' Well, I was now the commander in chief, and you'd campaigned against me, which you had, you campaigned for Willkie, but then you said that 'They should cooperate with you on foreign policy matters,'--the senior members of your party. And then you turned to me further and you said, 'Mr. President, if they do cooperate with you on foreign policy matters, you should make them co-pilots on the foreign policy takeoffs as well as on the all the crash landings.'" He said, "The audience exploded, they applauded, they stood the their feet. I've never forgotten it." He said, "I want the United Nations to take off. Thinking of that, I thought I'd name you to come back and take part in that takeoff of the United Nations."

So I thanked him, and, of course, that's the last I saw him, because when I came back for the opening of the United Nations conference in April in San Francisco, the news flashed that President Roosevelt had died down in Warm Springs. Then President [Harry S.] Truman reappointed the same eight people for the drafting of the charter.

Continuing--after reporting to start the draft the United Nations charter, after those ten weeks, and after a national radio report on the charter (which I'll come back to in a little bit), I did rejoin Admiral Halsey's fleet off of Tokyo. I did it by flying into Saipan, and the TICONDEROGA carrier was there for some repairs, so I was able to get on the TICONDEROGA. She then went on north to rejoin Halsey's fleet, so I rejoined between Saipan and Tokyo. The process, of course, is to transfer from the TICONDEROGA at sea with a breacher's buoy to a destroyer, and then the destroyer takes you over to the other ship, to then the MISSOURI flagship, then you transfer over from there.

When I came over the side to get back on the MISSOURI, Admiral Halsey was leaning over from the superstructure, greeted me and said, "I didn't think I'd ever see you again."

I said, "Admiral, you forget that those were your orders."

"Yes, I know, but I had word that the Secretary of the Navy was canceling my orders."

I said, "Well, I never received a cancellation, and I heard a rumor there was going to be, and that's why I flew out here right away."

So I rejoined Admiral Halsey, and took up my regular duty as assistant chief of staff of administration, and by taking a turn, as the seven officers did, where you take the watch for the admiral for four hours at a time--handling the admiral's watch, so to speak, over the fleet.

Of course, by this time, we had just a tremendous combat fleet approaching Japan, and there was a British force also in it. We were attacking Tokyo very frequently and the various Japanese air fields, preparing toward the time of an invasion of Japan.
In the midst of this, it so happened that I had the four-hour watch on the morning--I think it was August 12, 1945--when the order came through, "Cease hostilities." So I entered on the official log the "Cease hostilities" and gave the orders for our air attacks to come back to the fleet and so forth, for running up the "Well done" to the fleet. I found in the history books later that my original written log was there, and it was noted, so I asked the Secretary of the navy if I could have a copy, and they sent me one. So I do have my signature on the original navy log of the "Cease hostilities" from the fleet.

We then went on in toward Tokyo Bay, and as assistant chief of staff for administration, one of the responsibilities had been to prepare for the evacuation of prisoners of war when the chance came. We had prepared a detailed plan with the minesweeps and the hospital ships and so forth, how to go in after the prisoners of war. The first step, of course, when the "cease hostilities" came, was to send in our bombers with mercy drops. In other words, we had air photography locating where the prisoners-of-war locations were, and then the bombers promptly went in with parachute drops of food and medicines and clothing, all over Japan.

Meantime, we were steaming toward Tokyo Bay. And then Admiral Halsey said, "Well, I'm going to approve your detailed plan throughout," and said that "I'm going to designate Commodore Roger Simpson and his cruiser force of the SAN JUAN to be the cruiser force to go in. I think the best thing is for you to go over there and become the chief staff officer for getting the prisoners of war out, because you know the whole plan, and I'll let you and Commodore Simpson know when we're ready to go in and get the prisoners out."

So I transferred over at sea to Commodore Simpson's flagship in the fleet, the SAN JUAN, and he and I and some of his officers went into intensive detailed session on the plans, and we began signaling and pulling together the potential ships to go in.

During the days we were over there, we steamed on into Japan, toward Tokyo. One of the colorful things was that the usual thing, of course, is that the admiral would send a message, "Proceed to implement operation plan 278." Instead of that, he sent a message, "Roger and Harold, those are our boys. Go and get 'em." That was our order to go ahead and implement our plan.

So with the minesweepers in the lead, we went into Tokyo Bay, hospital ships next, personnel carrier ships, landing ships, a few destroyers, and, of course, a couple of cruisers, and we steamed into Tokyo Bay, began to take the prisoners of war out. From the air photography, on the top of one of the prisoner-of-war buildings, they had written in some kind of a white, "Pappy Boyington's [phonetic] here." That was our first knowledge that the ace from the South Pacific days, Pappy Boyington, was still alive. We thought he got shot down and killed in the South Pacific.

When we went in with the landing craft at that Omari camp, there was Pappy. He and all the submariners and all the air pilots had been treated very roughly, but Pappy tells in his book about his surprise when I came in with the landing craft, and he'd last seen me in the South Pacific.
In thirteen days and nights, from all over Japan, we got out about 14,000 prisoners of war, and we had it all organized with the landing craft to bring them out to the hospital ships. And the hospital ships would do whatever was necessary, and give them a shower and pressed clothes—if necessary, give them transfusions or blood plasma or oxygen, or whatever. It was a very intensive operation for those days, and we got out somewhere around 14,000 prisoners of war in those thirteen days of intensive activity, from all over Japan. There's a long detailed story about that, too, some of which has been in the history books and so on.

In effect, that completed my duty with Admiral Halsey. We flew back to San Francisco. One more little colorful anecdote. When we were ordered back to San Francisco, after the war was over, Admiral Halsey was to speak at a big rally in San Francisco. The navy sent some public relations officers out to meet him at Pearl Harbor on the way back, and, of course, from the way they talked, Halsey immediately knew they had a draft speech ready for him, and he said, "Tell them in Washington not to worry. I know the war is over. I won't talk about it the way I used to. If this is what they want me to give, I'll give this speech."

He got back in this big hall, and there was tremendous applause for Admiral Halsey. He got up there, started to read through this speech that had been prepared for him, and suddenly he says, "It says here that that operation took off such and such a way, but that's wrong." He threw the manuscript to the side and proceeded to talk. Of course, the crowd went wild, and the public relations officers just about went under their seats. But I'll never forget, he jabs his finger down, he's talking as if he's giving his own speech and all, you know, in first person, and suddenly he says, "It says here...but this is wrong." [Laughter] That's typical of his colorful nature.

I jumped over some things to get into that, but now I want to shift over. Those ten weeks at San Francisco were very intensive. My wife came out. When I went on duty in the war, that opened up a period of extreme sacrifice on her part. We arranged for her mother and sister to come and live at our home, and with our two children. Kathleen was a year old, and Glen about seven years old at that time, and it was a tremendous sacrifice and tension that Esther went through. But when I was ordered back to San Francisco, then she came out there, with her mother and sister taking care of the children, so she was there. Of course, it was also a time of very intense work, so that it wasn't really recreation time we'd have. Then, of course, she knew that I was going to go back to the war. But she was a tremendous encouragement and great insight, and has been all through the years, about the United Nations and so forth. I wanted to put that tribute to her into the oral history. I've said it at various times in public events, but I feel very deeply about it.

The other thing is that during those ten weeks there were very intense negotiations, and I got to know the foreign policy leaders of practically all fifty countries, because of the things that we divided up in the delegation, the things that each one would do. And there could be a whole long story about each of them. But I use this to sort of leap over to say that in each instance those who were there, of the different countries, were, toward the end of the session, inviting me to visit their country after the war.
So when the war was over, and after my naval duty was over, I served at the University of Pennsylvania as president. I made a trip over in 1947--this was before the University of Pennsylvania--and it included a trip into Eastern Europe and then to the Soviet Union. That trip included a long talk--which has been published--with [Joseph] Stalin in the Kremlin, in which we really probed this question of their doctrine that a war between the communists and the capitalists, under their Communist Central Committee proceedings, had been looked upon as being inevitable. That discussion with Stalin discussed the view that it was not inevitable--could happen, but it was not inevitable. It was a very important discussion with Stalin at that time, and I have turned over to Minnesota Historical [Society] the copy of both the Russian language of that interview and the English translation. Of course, also through that, and through subsequent sessions, I had quite a lot of contact with [Nikita] Khrushchev and the other members of the Politburo.

One of the colorful things about that was that when I went over on one of those visits with some of the Baptist leaders--the pastor of our church in Philadelphia, Dr. Carney Hargroves, had become the president of Baptist World Alliance, and had also been president of the American Baptist Convention. I had been an active church person all my life. When he had lined up a trip to go into the Soviet Union, I went along with some of them, and kind of an interesting sequence of things occurred there.

Because I knew Khrushchev from earlier sessions--Khrushchev, at that time, was in charge--and we were in the Soviet Union on their New Year's, I got word from our embassy that I was invited to come to the Kremlin New Year's dinner. I told our embassy that I couldn't do that, I'd already agreed with the president of the Russian Baptist churches that I would be at the church that night, so I wasn't going to break that engagement for the head of the Russian Baptist church, under any circumstances. The embassy first said, "You can't hardly turn this down." I said, "Well, I do turn it down, because I do have this engagement. You just explain this to them."

A couple of hours later, the embassy man came back and said, "President Zitkov [phonetic] (the head of the Baptist churches of Russia) has also been invited now to the dinner, so you'll come with him." I said, "Well, that's satisfactory. I'll come with him from the session."

And that dinner at the Kremlin that night--and not only was Zitkov there with me, but they then also invited the head rabbi and the head of the Russian Orthodox church--was the first time those two had come to a Kremlin dinner. It was quite a fascinating development that those religious leaders were invited in to this Kremlin dinner. The Kremlin dinner was a very major event, with the whole Politburo sitting up at the end of the hall, many tables, and leaders of the military and of the different facets of the communist system.

In the midst of it, an aide came down and said that Mr. Khrushchev would like me to come up to his table. So I went with his aide back up, and Khrushchev greeted me, and he said, "I want you to meet the rest of the Politburo." He said, "Some day they'll take over from me." So I went up and down and met the whole Politburo, under his introduction, there at the head table.
Of course there was a sort of a sardonic side of that. It wasn't so very long after that, that they did take over from him. But that kind of a little interlude was there. It was fascinating.

Khrushchev--a little bit on him. I've always felt that he was much more intelligent than he was given credit for, that he made a kind of a show of drinking too much, which was actually kind of a show, and he'd actually kind of play the role of kind of a dumb bumpkin, but he really would be analyzing things pretty thoroughly and carefully. That's my total view. He did try to liberalize and move the Soviet Union away from Stalinism, as is now confirmed, but he couldn't quite carry it through the way [Mikhail] Gorbachev has.

I have another basis for that evaluation. When I made the 1947 trip through the Soviet Union, I got over into the Ukraine, by request, into Kiev. And at that time Khrushchev was the secretary of the communist party of the Ukraine, and that's a key man--the secretary. He gave a dinner for about fifteen people. On that journey--that's the one where I had the Stalin interview--Bob Matteson was with me. He was a brilliant man who worked with me a great deal at various times during the years--counterintelligence in World War II, an exceptionally brilliant, able person. And Jay Cook, who was a great friend, and who was, of course, a leading capitalist of Philadelphia, and a friend of many years. So Jay Cook and Bob Matteson and I made that trip.

Well at this dinner that Khrushchev gave, there was a lot of discussion about capitalism and communism, about our journey, about the two systems, and so forth. But there was a lot of this toasting--which they did--and the toasting had this Russian expression of "Bottoms up." Of course earlier in the dinner the interpreter, in a sort of literal translation, made a mistake and when we were just about to raise our glasses, he gave the interpretation, "Up your bottom," which sent everybody into hysterics who knew the English language.

But a little later in the dinner, Khrushchev said, through the interpreter, he was disappointed that his principal guest was not brilliant at drinking the vodka bottoms up. Well, I had been observing him, so I said, well, if I had been drinking out of the same bottle that Mr. Khrushchev was, I might have been drinking bottoms up. The Russians all just roared, because, of course, I had watched the shift of bottles, and he actually was drinking water from a vodka bottle while they were--there was sort of a standard thing, they'd try to get guests under the influence of vodka, and it was quite notorious in those early days. That was one of their sort of Russian peasant tactics. You find it in other literature. Of course, Bob Matteson and Jay Cook and I knew about it.

We had laughs about pouring the vodka in the potted palm plants here and there, or spilling it on the edge of a carpet here and there. We'd empty our glasses, but not inside of us. We sometimes would enjoy a little of the caviar and vodka, but we never, in any of our trips, would let them get any drop on us by the vodka process.

That's why I have always felt that he had a lot of intelligence as a peasant leader. He knew a lot about where he wanted to take the country, but wasn't quite able to do it.
My impression of Stalin, on the other hand. He was, of course, completely in charge when I saw him, very tough-minded, steely eyes, likewise a brilliant, ruthless person, and that was quite a conversation we had at that time.

In this section, we want to talk a little bit about the 1948 campaign, what you might call the one real drive that I made for the Republican presidential nomination. I was well aware all through the years, for one thing, of the fact that I had, in my third term as governor, the endorsement of the labor organizations, and the fact that some of the national labor organizations asked me to speak to them. All this sort of relationship and my emphasis about the value of labor organizations had really put me in a position where the national Republican establishment would definitely not accept me, and would, of course, just twist it a little further to try to make me a stooge of labor, which I never was.

I was quite realistic about the difficulty of winning a Republican nomination, and this is one of the things I want to emphasize in the oral history. They say about how many times I ran for president. I never ran for president, because there was always the matter of battling for the Republican nomination and endeavoring to bring forward views that I had about what the policies of the country and of the party ought to be, in both domestic and foreign affairs, and, of course, winning some of the primaries for those views, but never winning enough of them to get a nomination. I was very realistic about all that.

Actually what had happened, too, was while I was in the navy, some of my supporters here in Minnesota, I think had, in 1944, entered my name in the Wisconsin primary as they put it, to keep my name alive while I was away in the war or something like that.

But '48 was a real national drive. We won the Wisconsin primary. We won the Nebraska primary. We won delegates in other states, but we did not have the amount of support and the amount of muscle, no. Because then at the national convention, the Dewey forces and the Taft forces made an early agreement, and that, of course, made it impossible to build up from a third position into a nomination. But we did have a very substantial impact on policy matters and on issues during '48, and what we really did was prepare the way so that in 1952, I and my supporters could be crucially effective to win the nomination for President [Dwight D.] Eisenhower.

Of course, after losing to the Taft and Dewey forces combined, in the presidential campaign in July of '48, I returned to Minnesota where I was residing at that time. In September 1948, a delegation of the trustees of the University of Pennsylvania came out and asked me to become president of the University of Pennsylvania. The university was founded by Benjamin Franklin.

But going back to the 1948 election. At that time we were willing to, and we had endeavored to, see if we couldn't nominate [Lawrence?] Vandenberg for president. I knew him very well, and I, of course, had learned to know him even better in those ten weeks when we were drafting the United Nations charter in San Francisco. I had a very high regard for him, and he had, you might
say, the establishment status in the Republican party—senior Senate status—so that I felt there would be a potential that we could nominate him. He would never permit, in '48, that we'd make an all-out drive for him, or shift over to him, although his name was discussed.

I've never known for certain whether he, at that early date, had the feeling or knowledge that he had cancer, and that he really didn't want to make a real drive at that time, or just what the total situation was. Of course, there was a period, too...I'm not clear in my own mind whether his wife was ill back at that time, or when...he and his wife were very close.

There was one time, after the San Francisco conference and in his final period of life, when I spoke in Michigan, and Vandenberg invited me to come up and visit with him, and I had a long visit with him on his porch. He was then suffering from cancer, but he was talking in terms of getting back to Washington. But while he talked in those terms, it soon became obvious to me what he really was doing. He was briefing me on his entire contacts with President Truman, all the ins and outs of foreign policy questions that he thought I ought to know about.

I had great difficulty keeping tears from coming to my eyes, because it soon became evident what he was doing—sort of a deliberatly briefing me in depth on everything he knew about, and had accumulated information about, or taken part in, in American foreign policy. He kind of wanted me to know about it before he passed on. He didn't live very long after that.

That was a very memorable and very moving event, and, of course, in kind of a different way, it had kind of confirmed my own feeling in '48 that he had the quality, that if we could have nominated him, I believe that he would have won over Truman in '48. He had the status, he had the ability, and he had the kind of position that he could have carried that through.

We made quite a number of efforts to try to open up, particularly in the period after I won the Wisconsin primary of 1948. Naturally, in this kind of an oral history, and after all these years—we're talking now about a time that's over forty years from the time of this discussion—it's not always easy to keep everything in very clear interrelationship.

First of all, my recollection is that in '48, we were kind of brushed aside and ridiculed, until suddenly in April we had a very decisive win of the Wisconsin primary. Then practically overnight we were evaluated as having real significance in the Republican party. They began to pay more attention to what it was that I was advocating, and I did advocate pretty comprehensive policies, domestic and foreign, and there was a certain amount, then, of being opened and turning away from Dewey and Taft. That was a period of time when we tried hard to get Vandenberg to come forward in a very affirmative way, as I remember the interrelated sequence of that. But he, for whatever his reasons, would not become a real strong candidate.

There were different theories. There were theories that he thought his only way of getting a nomination would be if Dewey and Taft would agree that they wanted him to be the nominee. That is, turn toward him and thereby unite the party. He was appreciative of our kind offers of support. I think in some of his own memoirs and so forth, he has said some very kind things
about me and my participation at the San Francisco United Nations conference and so forth.

But, in any event, we were never able to get a real Vandenberg campaign going, and, as I say, with the establishment opposition and the difference of the policies that we advocated in both what might properly be the internationalism versus the very strong conservative side--which has always been there in the Republican party--we were not able to break through in that respect to a necessary degree.

I may say that in the long perspective of history, I also have this kind of a perspective which, in such an oral history as this one, and a discussion as you've asked for, internationalism and progressivism in the Republican party and in relationship to my breakthrough as governor--and this ties over into a relationship to the successful breakthrough with Eisenhower in '52--it's been my perspective that the Republican party, back in the days of Theodore Roosevelt, was much more progressive and much more international than it then became for a while.

I think the reason is, of course, that Theodore Roosevelt made what historically was a tactically tragic move when he went out in his Bull Moose third-party movement. Because when he did that, he pulled out of the regular Republican organization city and county and town and village and state chairmen, up and down the line, all across the country. In other words, they resigned their regular party positions, they went out in the Bull Moose movement. Of course, when the Bull Moose movement then failed, they could not step back into their party leadership. The party leadership, in their absence, had been taken over by the extreme right.

From that point on, the extreme right, or the extreme narrow capitalist view, was very strong in party organization and party leadership, and really has never has gotten back to the kind of balance it had when Teddy Roosevelt was president or when you go back from that period of history all the way back to Lincoln.

This is really going quite far afield from our current discussion, but I might as well express my view about it--that the Republican party, from Lincoln to Theodore Roosevelt, was one thing; and that the Republican party, organization-wise, from after the Bull Moose movement, had, in effect, stripped it of its most progressive and internationally-minded people and many of its younger people.

In some of the states, it got back when very able types of governors and senators were elected and some of the states that got back under other kinds of circumstances. Of course, it got back to some degree in the Willkie campaign, and if Willkie would have succeeded in winning, why, it would have had quite an effect.

It got back quite a lot in the Eisenhower administration. See, when the Eisenhower campaign began, the polls of Republican party county chairmen and so on were very much in favor of Taft. In other words, there was a considerable indication that the Eisenhower campaign for the nomination would be a very difficult one, and it was sort of a touch and go until those crucial contests of delegations were decided in Texas and Louisiana.
Then, of course, it slipped back again after the Eisenhower heart attack, which had a very deep effect, so we're kind of bridging over into various parts of this oral history. But that all comes naturally in discussing our 1948 presidential campaign and this whole matter of my life-long policies and activities that interrelate with the United Nations conference and all my participation during those early years.

Maybe you have a few questions before we wrap up this particular segment of our taping.

**Kirby:** The Ohio primary in 1948, can you tell us a little bit about that?

**Stassen:** Yes. In effect, that was an evaluation that we had to keep Senator Taft somewhat busy in his home state and had to show that he had some vulnerability there if, in spite of the establishment picture, we were to be able to win, either for myself or Vandenberg, over Taft and Dewey at that stage. It was a close decision. In retrospect, it could well have been a mistake, but it was one of those complex situations.

In other words, we knew from the beginning, of course, that we had long odds against us to actually come through and win a nomination. Obviously there was not then, nor has there ever been, a real national primary where you can go right to the people nationwide. For so many of the states it's a matter of organization and establishment. So, in effect, what I had done in winning through in Minnesota, winning a primary versus the establishment--and the establishment was solid against us, but we won through by public support--that is really impossible to exactly duplicate on a national scene. We made, as I say, some significant progress toward it in the Wisconsin and Nebraska primary. I don't remember, either, the sequence. I think that if we had known that Taft would be in the Nebraska primary, that we'd have the chance to show our strength versus Taft in Nebraska, we might have stayed out of the Ohio primary.

Of course, I think we probably underestimated the extent of the feeling about leaving a man alone in his home state. There's a certain amount of that tradition, a certain amount of that emotion, that it's wrong to campaign against a man in his home state. But on the other hand, it frequently does happen, and, of course, it did give the establishment opposition to me, and added argument to make at that time about having been in the Ohio primary.

It seems to me that that sequence was--this could be checked--the sequence was that we had to decide whether or not to enter the Ohio primary before we knew that Taft was entering the Nebraska primary.

**Kirby:** I believe the Nebraska primary that year was the all-star primary for candidates were often entered against their will. Vandenberg seems to have been on the primary that year. But it wasn't organized until very late. I know, as a matter of fact, the decision to go into Ohio was made before it was clear that Taft was going to go to Nebraska [unclear].
Stassen: Yes. As I say, in retrospect, of course, in the matter of our own financial resources and our own energy resources, they had a definite finite limit. So that the tendency whether we would have some impact on making Taft spend money on Ohio, we also had to spend some ourselves, so he probably could better afford his.

Although I think it's hard to evaluate those in total, and, of course, you make these decisions right in a sequence when you hear all this conflicting advice. That obviously is one of the decisions in '48.

Kirby: I'm not sure that it's generally known that Warren Burger was very active in that campaign in 1948. Can you tell us anything about his policy?

Stassen: Oh, yes. He was really one of my very key friends, backers, supporters, in '48--very capable and, in fact, even before that, in running for governor. You see, we were practically of the same age. He was a young lawyer from St. Paul, we were both in the same Young Republican movement way back there, so we knew each other very well and had many policy discussions way, way back. He was a tremendous factor in the '48 campaign and activities, and then again, of course, in '52, a thorough part--we'll come to that later--in the Eisenhower situation.

I think I've emphasized that before, this matter of individuals, of exceptional ability and character. There were so many of them down through the years. I think that one of the factors probably that has been important in any situation, whether it was in war, or peacemaking, or war-waging, or political things, was to detect those kind of abilities and that kind of a character, and to work with them thoroughly. That has been a very important part of my life.

It's like I mentioned earlier. The fact that Lawrence Hall, a thirty-one-year-old man, became speaker of the house. No way could we have accomplished the things in Minnesota legislature at that very early time if we hadn't had the stalwart leadership, participation, intelligent participation in the decisions and everything else, of the speaker of the house in Lawrence Hall, and as I mentioned before George McKinnon--people like that.

Likewise, in national politics, many came in. Bernard Shandley, a lawyer in New Jersey. Amos Peaselee, the one who put together the collection of my books and my speeches--brilliant man, exceptional experience. Literally scores of them, and women, too.

Kirby: Just referring back to the Minnesota experience, that did seem to shape the overall strategy in 1948. For example, the Paul Revere Riders were used extensively in the states, something you carried from your experience in Minnesota. There was an effort to reach out to young people, I think.
June 26, 1991

Kirby: Governor, can you tell us a little bit about your accomplishments as president of the University of Pennsylvania?

Stassen: Yes. Picking up, I did touch a little bit on the fact that after the Dewey convention nomination in 1948, in fact, in the month of August, a committee came out from the University of Pennsylvania at the very time that I was considering, and our family was considering, what to do next.

The committee was Robert McCracken, the chairman of the board of trustees; Tom Gates, Jr., whom I knew and who was really quite active in the '48 convention period, a member of the trustees; and Dr. Drew Barry, who was financial vice president at the university, and who was also on the board of trustees. The three of them came out, by appointment, to see me during the month of August of 1948 at our home at 744 Stewart Lane in South St. Paul. They told me that they wished to invite me to be president of the University of Pennsylvania. They told me a fair amount about the university, and I told them we'd think it over.

So my wife and I thought it over, talked it over, compared it to other things that we'd been thinking about, or that had been proposed that we should do, and decided to accept that invitation because of our basic interest in education and young people, and, of course, because of the appeal, the University of Pennsylvania being one of the oldest universities in the country, originally established by Ben Franklin as an academy in the year 1740.

I just interject that this last year I was invited to come back for the 250th anniversary of the university, and take part in some of the events and seminars for that 250th anniversary of the 1740 founding of the University of Pennsylvania.

The result was that we made rather rapid preparations so that we could go down to Pennsylvania, to Philadelphia, and I was inaugurated there on September 17, 1948. In other words, from the August trip out, and from the July convention, we moved quite rapidly.

There is a document of the four years that I had at the University of Pennsylvania, a report, which I think is already in the Minnesota Historical [Society], or will be, so that I think my discussion of that will more be in the terms of sort of the background of the decisions that I made, in order to put some humor and some life and some animation into that report of those four years.

Kirby: You'd probably like to tell our listeners that that report is easily available from the University of Pennsylvania Archives and Records Center. So if they can't get it here, they can get it here and there.
Stassen: Yes, it is also filed there, that's true, and it is a report that I made just as I left for the service with President [Dwight D.] Eisenhower at Washington.

When I arrived at the University of Pennsylvania, and met on September 17th for the first meeting of the trustees, I then began to take an evaluation of what was the situation and what I should do.

One of the first things I did, in addition to conferring with some of the senior trustees and visiting around the campus, the various buildings and locations and student leaders, was to make appointments with a number of the university presidents that I knew.

University of Pennsylvania is one of what's called the Ivy League group of nine universities, and so I made an appointment with Dr. James Conant, who was the president of Harvard; and then a subsequent appointment with Dr. Seymour, who was president of Yale; Dr. Harold Dodge, who was president of Princeton. In each instance, I went to their universities and had usually about the equivalent of a half a day of discussion, in which I mainly listened.

For one thing, I asked them to talk about higher education generally, and their views, their attitudes, their objectives, and then about what they knew about the University of Pennsylvania, on a confidential basis, and just for their observations that would be of some value to me but would not be anything that I would convey to anyone else.

Those three gave me quite a remarkable picture of the university and of higher education. Of course, I wasn't completely unaware of the situation, in that having been governor before the war, and having moved around the country during the campaign, and being very actively interested in education, I had some background, but I'd never had a direct educational administrative responsibility, so this was one aspect that I went into thoroughly.

One of the humorous things about those conferences. I flew up to Boston in order to have the early morning appointment, which I had made, in Dr. Conant's schedule. It fitted out, as I remember, that I was to see him at ten, and we were to confer, then have lunch with a few faculty members. It was a very fine arrangement.

But I flew in the night before from Philadelphia, stayed at the Statler Hotel, and in checking with the bell captain, I learned that they had a very good barber shop that opened early in the morning, so I took advantage of that chance to get in the barber shop at seven in the morning to get a haircut, first thing—which I needed. While I was in the barber chair, the word apparently had spread that I was there, and some of the Boston reporters came to me, while I was seated in the barber chair.

Harvard, at that time, had a very well-known and very prominent director of athletics, but I had had no contact with him or no awareness of him, but one of the first questions that the reporters asked me, in addition to confirming that I was in town to confer with the president of Harvard, was what comment do I have to make on the statement of Mr. X. That's the way the question came.
I said, "Well, who is Mr. X, and what comment has he made?" Because I had not, at that time, seen the early morning papers in which he had blasted the University of Pennsylvania and said that they ought to be kicked out of the Ivy League in the football area, and so forth, and just issued a terrific blast against the university.

The media there, and he himself personally, took this as a putdown. In other words, for me to say, "Who is Mr. X?" was considered to be a very insulting putdown, because, of course, from his viewpoint, everybody knew him. But, first of all, of course, from my previous activity, I'd had no real reason to know him.

So that was one of the humorous things, and it took quite a while for me to later on persuade him that I didn't really know him at that time and that really we should talk about athletics and football teams and so forth, and I was perfectly willing to listen to him, but of course would not take any responsibility for the things that he had blasted out about from the preceding years, and we did finally work out a good relationship in all sports in the Ivy League for the University of Pennsylvania.

As I indicated, I had these very informative, very educational discussions with these three outstanding university presidents of these three great institutions, which was an important part of the beginning.

As I evaluated it, in going into the University of Pennsylvania, there was severe financial troubles. That was apparently one of the reasons they'd reached out for someone who had not been in education and had not been a part of the local scene. As I analyzed it, one of the problems had been that the board of trustees had been very locally oriented in Philadelphia and had been dominated by a man who recently had died—a Mr. Stokesbury. Stokesbury was a very powerful leader in Philadelphia, but he had also been one who, while he was chairman of the trustees of the university, had never done any significant giving to the university, and, in fact, when he died the university was not at all in any of his bequests or any of his will, and that had had a very gloomy effect, and a very negative effect, in the whole community toward the university.

There were other aspects. There had been a sort of interregnum period between presidents. A very fine Dr. McClellan of the faculty had been acting president, a very fine man, but he was appointed after the death of Dr. Gates and was very much known to be just temporary fill-in.

Thinking that over and trying to analyze it, I decided that I would assemble a list of the forty leading corporations and enterprises of the Delaware Valley, and I'd hit each one of them for a $100,000 gift to the university on the basis that the University of Pennsylvania was very important to their enterprises, its future was very important to them, and so forth, and, of course, have the open program to each of them that they were one of the forty leading enterprises that I had tabbed, and that in each instance, I'd take one of my board of trustees along with me to make this presentation.
That was finally successfully carried out, as to all forty. It did, in turn, lead to a number of things. I was not only looking at the forty, trying for $100,000--which in those years would really be quite good money--but also I had in mind that for the boards of directors of forty institutions and corporations in the valley to take up and vote upon a grant like this would be a very good psychological thing in breaking in and changing the psychology toward the university.

In this process it was also very educational to me about various enterprises. I went to see the Sun Oil Company that was located in Philadelphia. Its headquarters, and two brothers, Jay Howard Pew and Joseph Newton Pew were the leading owners of that company. Their family is still very prominent in it. I'd known them slightly from Republican years. They were very conservative Republicans. I went in to see them with one of my trustees, and told them about my program for $100,000 from each of forty corporations, and so I was asking that they at Sun Oil would give $100,000, and Mr. Jay Howard Pew said, "Well, Governor, I don't know how we answer you, but, you see, both of us are graduates of Cornell [University], and, of course, giving $100,000 to Pennsylvania, we have to first give consideration to Cornell." I said, "Well, of course you should. You should have given Cornell money long before this." I said, "You should certainly at least give them the same you give Pennsylvania."

It kind of took their breath away, because to speak up to them, they were not accustomed to people speaking up to them, and, of course, apparently in their advance discussion, they were going to, in effect, deflect me or turn me down, and do it by saying Cornell was the place where they should be doing their giving.

But in taking their breath away like that, and then pressing through and saying that I'd come back the following week to get their answer, I did get the $100,000 from them. I broke through, and then they also gave $100,000 to Cornell. Because, of course, I also told the president of Cornell what had happened, and he thanked me for jolting them, and said they would follow up.

One of the reasons that that amusing incident is now brought [up]--I told you about going back to the 250th anniversary--a very young office person was present at that conference, an office person of Sun Oil, by the name of Robert Dunlop, and they had him sit in to take notes on the conference, which apparently was one of his duties then. He later became president of Sun Oil, and later became chairman of the board at Sun Oil. When I was back for the 250th anniversary, they had him come in, and he was still on the board of trustees, or else had recently retired from the board of trustees, to present me for the seminar. He said that he had checked with his secretary, and that since that original $100,000, the Sun Oil and the Pew family had given $72 million to the University of Pennsylvania.

Of course, that was the item that gave me the best introduction to the seminar of alumni and members of the faculty for the 250th anniversary, and it was quite a striking thing. I had known, of course, that we'd followed through with many different projects and so forth, but he, had checked up that direct figure. Coming as it did, in 1990, it was forty-two years after I had been president and made that presentation originally to break through Sun Oil.
In that process, a number of other things happened. Walter Annenberg was the owner and principal person of the Philadelphia Inquirer and of one of the TV stations, and he was an active young businessman. He had not graduated from the University of Pennsylvania, and they had never given anything to the University of Pennsylvania, but he was one of the forty. Thinking in that case, what to present, in each instance, I tried to think of something connected with the university that might appeal to them. I made a presentation to him. I said that the great football field, Franklin Field, should properly have a flagpole at its entrance and a very excellent "Stars and Stripes" to raise there at the entrance, sort of the opening of the Franklin Field, and I proposed that he give $100,000 and this flagpole would be erected, and that [it] would have the plaque that would recognize that Walter Annenberg had given $100,000 for this great flagpole. He accepted.

Of course, to be one of the forty leading enterprises of the area and to have that kind of a position, and in due time the flagpole was built and the plaque was put on, and its presentation and so forth were properly celebrated. Since that time, he and his foundations have given very large amounts of money—the Annenberg School of Communications, which was a project I presented to him later. But in the years since that time, he has been extremely successful. He also had the TV Guide that became a very successful enterprise. But he’s done a lot of very substantial giving—the Annenberg Faculty Club, the Annenberg School of Communications, and many other Annenberg projects there at the University of Pennsylvania.

One of the other anecdotes of that time was that one of the forty institutions was the Du Pont Company of Delaware. That was a part of the Delaware Valley. In very early history of the university, the Du Pont family had been involved, but for many years it had been languishing, and there was nobody on the board of trustees from Du Pont. Apparently the attitude having been taken that they were all in the Philadelphia community and Wilmington was too far away or something like that. I don't know what the thinking was.

But I knew, from other contacts, that Lamont Du Pont and his brother were then the top two people at Du Pont. So I went down to see them, and I said that I'd like to get from them a suggestion of some of the younger persons in the family that were going to be important in the future, because I'd like to ask one of their young people to come on the board of trustees of the University of Pennsylvania.

Lamont Du Pont said, "I don't want you to announce this or communicate it to your board, but if you decided to invite young Lamont Du Pont Cookman, the son of my sister (there was a sister in the Du Pont family, and her name was Cookman), I think he might accept, and I think he would be a good man for you."

So I did proceed, of course without disclosing how I reached the fact of his name, but the trustees were taking my recommendations at that time and they elected Lamont Du Pont Cookman to the board of trustees. In due time he did become one of the real powerful leaders of the Du Pont family, the Du Pont Corporation, and they made very substantial gifts to the chemistry department and chemistry school at the University of Pennsylvania.

That was sort of the basic way that I reached out. One of the others was that we set priorities.
The buildings on the campus were in really inadequate, bad shape, particularly the Wharton School of Finance and Commerce, which had been the original school of finance established in the United States. It had been established originally by Joseph Wharton, who, in those early days, was an ironmaker, steelmaker, in Pennsylvania. He had written to the board of trustees and said there ought to be a way in the United States for people to learn about business and finance and commerce--other than being a clerk in a counting house and coming up as an apprentice in a financial office. And if the University of Pennsylvania would establish such a school, he would provide a certain amount of cash to start it out. I think it was something like $50,000, or $100,000, which in those days was substantial money. That's the way the Wharton School of Finance and Commerce got started.

When I came there, it had some wonderful people on the faculty, but it was meeting in old Logan Hall, which is one of the oldest and most inadequate buildings on campus, so one of the top priorities was to get decent housing for the Wharton School. In checking over the alumni and so forth, checking for more information, I noticed that there were two brothers who had gone through the Wharton School. They were listed as the owners of the Fayle [phonetic] Harbor Bakery Company in suburban Philadelphia. But in my research and checking around, I found they also happened to be the owners of the Luden Cough Drop Company upstate from Philadelphia, which, of course, was a corporation in much greater shape, condition, success than a little bakery company.

So I went to see them, Richard and his brother, and I made a pitch for them to make a major contribution to the Wharton School so we could build a building and we'd call it Dietrich Hall. They turned me down, but I said, "Oh, think it over more." I said, "You really should do this." So I came back, and the nub of that one was that I took four turndowns, but the fifth time I went, they made an provisional gift of $250,000. Of course, Dietrich Hall today at the University of Pennsylvania is one of the really great buildings and it's a great center for a great school of finance.

Along with that, when I got the Dietrich gift for the building itself, I went after special rooms in the building. I went over to see the Gimble family in New York--one of the Gimbles was a graduate of Wharton--and got them to make a gift toward the marketing department, and went on from different kinds of special things to give it a strong financial base.

There were many things like that. I think my report and the financial record will show, that for that time and those circumstances, we had a successful financial side.

One of the other sides of being president of a university in those days was that throughout the country there as a kind of picking up of the kind of publicity that was available if you attacked members of the faculty and accused them of being "pink," or leaning toward the communists, or something of that kind. And Pennsylvania was no exception. They'd had a couple of members of the legislature who were becoming like little Senator [Joseph R.] McCarthys. 

So in this instance, I got together the presidents of the main institutions of Pennsylvania. Bob Johnson was president of Temple University; Milton Eisenhower was president of Penn State—which was the state institution of agricultural and sciences side; and Fitzgerald was president of the University of Pittsburgh. We four presidents, then, with conferences, made sort of a coordinated attack on this whole matter of attacking faculties and the importance of academic freedom, and really made a spectacular change in Pennsylvania by getting the legislature to slap down the McCarthyites of the local types, and strengthening the whole matter of academic freedom and what it meant in faculties and so forth. That was an important aspect of those four and a-half years at the University of Pennsylvania.

From a student standpoint, we wanted to be sure to be open to students. One of the things I found there was that there never had been, that anyone knew of, a black medical student at the University of Pennsylvania up to that time in 1948. But it was the first medical school established in the United States. It was established by Dr. [Benjamin] Rush, who was one of the Revolutionary Era doctors, and it was also the first medical school that had opened up for medical students from the Southland. It had been, and was, a great medical school, but it had no black medical students.

So, naturally, I talked to the faculty about that. They said, "Well, we have 120 openings in each class. We have over 2,000 applicants and, literally, none of the black students ever get anywhere near being rated in the first 120."

Of course, there's a great need for black doctors. So there was an agreement that they'd reach down to try to find the best seven of the black students, and that they'd raise the number in the class from 120 to 127, so that none of the white students would feel that these seven blacks had taken their opportunity to come in the University of Pennsylvania. There was, of course, in those years, extreme objective and aim of any young man who wanted to be a doctor—or young woman beginning, too, at that time—and great effort was made to get into the University of Pennsylvania Medical School. So by raising the number from 120 to 127, they took the top 120 in the regular process of evaluation and so on, the regular methods, and then they added seven of the best blacks that they could locate in the 2,000.

There was another concern, of course. And you have to try to recreate the whole atmosphere of 1948—which many parts of it would seem incredible at this time—but they were worried that in the laboratory part of medical courses, where there were four students at a bench, and with the number of tables required for the 120, just what kind of a problem would they have with these extra seven. But lo and behold, as the word spread, more than enough students came into the dean's office with invitations that they'd like one of these black students as the fifth person at their table, and the students solved the whole matter of which tables would have the five and chairmanship of the Senate Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations to pursue his witch hunt; censured by the Senate (1954) for contempt and abuse, after which his influence declined.
which tables would have the extra student which would be one of these blacks.

The other part of that story is that long before they were seniors, these seven were all in the top one-third of the class. They were not down at the bottom. I've often thought, and may some time pursue, getting some graduate history student or somebody to locate those seven and trace them out and see what finally happened to them, because they all did graduate in medicine way back there at that time, and they were the first black medical students.

Another thing in that same range was that there were no black members of the faculty at the University of Pennsylvania, and I pressed on that and found a very able young black, an assistant professor, whose name, as I remember, was Fontaine. That opened up that part of the faculty.

Another aspect was that with all the notoriety of the University of Pennsylvania football teams and all the notoriety of Franklin Field as a great football field, there had never been a black football player at the University of Pennsylvania. There was one report that some years earlier, a student that really was black but not very black, had slipped by and got in and got on all right, but in any event, nobody definitely black on the football team.

I called in the director of athletics, and I said, "This is just plain outrageous." I think, in this instance, a committee of the black ministers of Philadelphia came in and told me about this. The athletic director said, "Well, we, of course, have tremendous number of applicants for our football teams, and we just don't have any black applicants that are good enough to qualify." This was just at the time when Jesse Owens had won four gold medals in the Olympics, and he was a young black from New Jersey.*

I said, "For you to say that, that means either that they all understand that it doesn't do any good to apply, or you're not reaching out properly, because there's a Jesse Owens right next to us who's a world star hurdler. You can't tell me there are no able young blacks who could play football." He gave me an argument, and I said, "Well, we either have black members on the next football squad, or we'll have a new athletic director."

And he looked at me, and he said, "Do you mean that?"
I said, "I mean exactly that."

So the upshot of that was that we got in, particularly, two black freshman, Larry Bell and Bob Evans, in the next squad.

Of course, back in those days, you wondered just how that was going to work out on the field, so I had some concern about that. There had been a case of a tragedy out in Iowa where a young black football player had been injured, and I think had died from the injury, and there was a question of whether he'd been savagely attacked or whether it was a normal football injury. This

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was a few years earlier. But I knew of those kind of circumstances.

So when it came to the opening game of the sophomore year, Larry Bell was an end. The opening game was with the University of Virginia, in Franklin Field. I was in the stands, of course. During that game, Larry Bell went high up in the air and intercepted a Virginia pass with one hand and ran down for a touchdown. It was such a dramatic play. Everybody was cheering him, including even the Virginians, because it was a very dramatic individual play. Really, that was one of the instances that tears really came to my eyes, because integration had arrived in Pennsylvania athletics, and we never had any problem of them going forward. Larry Bell became an All-American, or at least on some of the teams, before he was through.

Bob Evans became a center. In his senior year, the rest of the players elected him captain of the football team. Both of these men, at least in the early years of the time when I continued to hear about them, were leading very successful, active lives.

Those are some of the anecdotes out of that presidency. One other I'll mention. The law school also had been very outstanding in history, an early law school. It had been without a dean for a while, with an acting dean who did not wish to be a dean. Thinking that over, and the circumstances of it and everything, I happened to know that Owen Roberts, who had been a justice of the United States Supreme Court, had retired from the United States Supreme Court and was living out in suburban Philadelphia--I think it was at Bryn Mawr, that area--and that he was still a vigorous man, and he was an alumnus.

So I got the idea, somehow or other, and I went out to see him, and I said, "Justice Roberts, you'd do a great service to the law school and the legal profession, everything else, if you'd agree to be acting dean of the University of Pennsylvania Law School while we search for the permanent dean."

He told me I surprised him, that he'd have to think it over, I should come back a week later--which I did--and he accepted. Of course, the thing that that did--and he did a great job as an acting dean, he really stepped into it--but it also immediately meant that in searching for the permanent dean to succeed Justice Owen Roberts, who was the acting dean, it gave us a great opening for that search. And we then did find a man who proved to be a very outstanding dean, Jefferson Fordham. He became one of the leading law school deans, and did a great job. Owen Roberts and Fordham both did great work there.

One of the other of those anecdotes--and, of course, the whole five years is really full of them--the School of Fine Arts had been one of the great schools of the country, but it also had slipped. In talking to the dean of fine arts, I soon found that he really had never wanted to be dean, he didn't have any kind of an executive flare; he just wanted to be a teacher. So I asked him if it would be agreeable to him that he would step back as a professor and we'd search for a new dean, and he thanked me for it. Of course, I'd first been told that we ought to have a new dean, but nothing could be done because the dean was there and he was not an open man, and so on. He really thanked me for that.
We went out on a great search, used some of our outstanding alumni as a search committee, and we'd come upon Dr. Holmes Perkins, who was then at Harvard on the faculty. He became, especially in the matter of city planning and various aspects of architecture and fine arts, a very strong dean.

Finding strong deans, of course, and getting them appointed and getting them to accept, is one of the other kind of responsibilities of the president of an institution. So I'm just giving some of these anecdotes.

Mrs. Stassen, of course, was a tremendous support and assistance at the university, as she has been throughout our long years, and she'd give an annual dinner for the board of trustees at our home, at the university president's home. There would be over twenty at the dinner, and those would be occasions when after the dinner there would be the informal kind of discussions where many subjects could come up, which could then mature later to formal decisions.

I might say I'm quite sure that in the four and a-half years, all the formal decisions, and there were many of them, of the board of trustees were unanimous. Of course, the reason was, there was a lot of consultation and exploration ahead of time before we reached the matter of presenting formal programs.

At the first dinner, and after the dessert had been served, one of the things the senior trustee, or the chairman, asked me for was a rambling discussion of the future. I said that the board of trustees of the University of Pennsylvania was a great board, but with its great participation in the education of women, it really should have some women on its board. Well, they just changed the subject of conversation, and nothing happened.

The next dinner Mrs. Stassen gave, I raised the same question, among other questions, and one of the trustees said they believed that I probably could muster a majority of the board of trustees to elect a woman. I said, "I don't want to bring a woman on this board with a divided vote, that kind of atmosphere." So that ended that.

The third year that I was president, the third dinner that Mrs. Stassen gave, I raised it once more, and the senior trustee, when I raised it, said, "What kind of a woman did you have in mind?" Of course, they all just involuntarily broke out into kind of a laughter.

But I was ready for the question, and I said somebody like Dr. McAvee [phonetic], who was, at that time, at Wellesley, or Dr. McBride, who was president of Bryn Mawr. They buzzed up and down the tables, and they said, "Dr. McBride will be unanimously elected as a member of the board of trustees." That's the way the women line was broken on the board of trustees. Those are some of the anecdotes of that presidency that fit in then.

I had the understanding with the university board, when I accepted, that I would still be active in public matters or speaking, and I did want to do some traveling. It was during those years, then, that I did make some of my travels to Europe and Africa and so forth. I met many significant people around the world. Of course, I had an unusual opening for making those kind of visits, because having taken part in the drafting of the United Nations charter in 1945, being one of...
those eight. The senior diplomatic people of fifty countries had been there, and all the foreign ministers had been present for the signing of the charter. So I had an unusual number of contacts and invitations to go and visit countries, so that led to an unusual period of traveling. Usually it was done during the Christmas holidays or the summer vacations of the University of Pennsylvania years.

At the same time, of course, I had meetings with the nine Ivy group presidents, including the meetings... they were at that time the board of trustees of what was called the Brookhaven Laboratories, the early laboratories for nuclear science and atomic energy. Through that I got very well acquainted with the president of Columbia [University], who was Dwight Eisenhower. He came in as president of Columbia about the same time I became president of the University of Pennsylvania. And also with others of the nine university presidents that had important aspects later on.

I was also active then in the Association of College and University Presidents. I believe that I originated at that time the concept of corporations matching gifts of their employees to their alma maters. As I recall, I opened that up. I was asked to speak, it seems to me it was the fiftieth anniversary, to the National Association of Manufacturers. I gave them quite a strong message about if they really believed in the free enterprise system, they should do more for education and education of young people and a wider range of academic education and so forth, and [include] that in their financial support.

There had been a doctrine, kind of a narrow doctrine, that corporations were supposed to make profits for shareholders and distribute dividends to shareholders, and it was not their role to go out and give direct gifts to educational or charitable institutions. I slammed into the doctrine directly and emphatically as being a really narrow and outmoded and false concept of the correct role. I enunciated a concept, or reemphasized it, I'm not sure. Your memory isn't clear, really, when you know whether you pick up something that somebody talked about and you then give it an added push, or whether from various discussions, you originated it. But this matter of the concept that corporations should be good citizens, they were not just supposed to be some cold financial entity that had no citizenship or community obligation, and it broadened out the concept of the corporation. One of those broadenings was that if one of their employees or their officers made a gift to their alma mater, especially if it was for scholarships, they ought to match the gifts so more scholarships could be given.

I think probably I've talked enough about the university. As you know, I became president of the University of Pennsylvania just prior to the election of 1948, in which [Harry S.] Truman had the surprise victory over Dewey. Therefore, of course, my four years at the University of Pennsylvania were coincidental to Truman's four years in his own election as president, so I had quite an opportunity to observe. I had some correspondence with him. I took part in some conferences on issues in those years, and foreign policy discussions, especially foreign policy discussions of Asia and the Far East, where I had served out there in the war with Admiral [William F.] Halsey.

That, then, was the background for our decision that realizing that my own basic convictions and record of what might be called the more liberal or progressive side of the Republican party, and
my record of being friendly to organized labor, that there were great handicaps in getting the Republican nomination.

On the other hand, my conviction was that it was important that President Truman not be president for another four years, and neither should the Democratic party be president for another four years. And that although President Eisenhower had turned down all sort of implications and invitations in the 1948 period against taking a nomination or getting active in politics, when we had a very major session of the principal leaders of our 1948 movement from all over the country at Ambassador Peaslee's home in New Jersey in July of 1951, after a thorough three-day discussion we reached pretty well unanimous conclusion that if Dwight Eisenhower could be persuaded to run as a Republican, that, from what we knew and what I knew of him from speeches he'd made at the end of the war and as president at Columbia University, he would make a good president, he would have the right kind of policies, and that we could really go forward in the country in the kind of things that these leaders that I'd worked with and worked with me, believed in.

But it was very uncertain in July of '51 whether he would run. Of course, there was discussion that if we went out for him and he decided not to run, then clearly Taft would definitely be the nominee. It was our appraisal that Taft might inevitably be the nominee. Most of us who tended to be loyal in our own party, believing in the two-party system, really thought he would have very little chance of election, and that if he was elected, there would be difficulty with the kind of attitude that he had taken of being opposed to NATO and so forth.

So the nub of it was that there was unanimous decision that I would try to go to Paris, where he [Eisenhower] was then located, and talk to him about becoming the Republican nominee for president and see if we could persuade him. That lead to the December '51 talk with him in Paris. It's covered pretty well in my book, Eisenhower Turning the World Toward Peace, the introductory part of that. That book opens up as I speak to him in Paris. So I'll not go into that here at this stage, other than to confirm that it was a difficult process, and it was very touch and go about how we would prevent Taft from becoming the nominee, do it in an honorable manner and in proper political action, and then, of course, follow through for Eisenhower in the election.

But this all kind of grew out of getting to know Eisenhower quite well at Columbia while I was at the University of Pennsylvania, and it also grew out of the kind of strength we developed in '48, which had been, of course, frustrated at that time by the Taft and Dewey combination. And, of course, in '52, the Dewey forces were also for Eisenhower as they, likewise, did not want to see a Taft nomination. Although at that time, in public impact, Tom Dewey having been twice defeated as the nominee, and in the final election, twice versus Roosevelt, did not have so much public clout. But he still had considerable strength in the organization, and, of course, had some very able people such as Herbert Brownell, who is one of the very, very able persons of this century and the political life in this country—a man for whom I have very high regard. There were many others who came up through the Dewey organization who were active in public life as members of his administration and did make very major contributions in those later years.

Perhaps I should pause at this time for such questions you might have.
Kirby: Governor, I would like to ask some follow-up questions. You referred to your efforts in civil rights at the University of Pennsylvania. You also made a couple of key appointments during your tenure as governor of Minnesota, did you not?

Stassen: Yes, and even before that, particularly the governorship. First of all. When I was governor, I appointed Sam Ransom as the first black National Guard officer who was on the top staff of a state National Guard. He was a veteran of World War I, had been a star high school athlete, wonderful man, and in moving in the state to show our feeling against the widespread segregation sentiment and so forth, we made that particular move of lifting him up, properly and under his own record. He was well qualified to be a major. We made him one of the top National Guard officers in Minnesota.

When we did it, there were indications, or you might say fears expressed, that we were going to lose our federal money, because way back in those days segregation was still the word about National Guards and so forth--and the armed forces--and we made that deliberate move against it, and it was well received and they never did . . . well, there were these rumbles about taking away some of our National Guard money. They never did actually move in that direction in those years.

My own convictions and feelings, I think, probably go way back to my own family, the attitude of my father and mother and brothers, and our sort of religious convictions. Going back to when I was a student at the University of Minnesota, I was on the debate squad. In the early participation on the debate squad, we were asked whether we would accept a young black student as a member of our squad, of our three. Fred Reynaud--I believe he's originally from North Dakota--and I said we'd take him. So this young student, whose name was Earl Wilkins, from Kansas City, became a member of our debate squad at the University of Minnesota, and we three debated together against other teams. I think the picture of the three of us are in some of the University of Minnesota publications and annuals.

Earl Wilkins was the brother of Roy Wilkins, who became that great leader of the NAACP [National Association for the Advancement of Colored People]. Earl Wilkins died tragically of tuberculosis some time within the first ten or twenty years after graduation. But that Wilkins family--I don't know the story, I believe there is a book, either by Roy Wilkins or by his son--but apparently the Wilkins family somehow or other had the idea that they could get a better education and an open education by coming up to Minnesota, so that's how Earl happened to be a student while I was a student at the University of Minnesota, and he was an integrated member of our debate squad. That, of course, was way back in the 1920s. It must have been about 1926 or 1925 when we integrated that debate squad.

Also when I was governor, I appointed Walter Finke [phonetic] as the director of the new combined public welfare activity, all the different kinds brought together. Walt Finke had the same kind of conviction that I've been speaking of. He put in Minnesota the policies that welfare, all aspects of welfare, should be handled without any discriminatory aspect on race or color or creed or anything of that kind. That had strong meanings. While our black population
was relatively small in percentage, it did have direct implications. Likewise, of course, we had
the minority of people of Indian descent, of the red race. Walt Finke was an important
individual, a man of great intelligence and integrity in handling the whole welfare side of our
administration.

**Kirby:** Governor, I wonder if you could tell us about the M.I.T. [Massachusetts Institute of

**Stassen:** While I was president of the University of Pennsylvania, I got a call one day from
either Jim Killian or Compton at M.I.T., saying that they had this great convocation planned at
which [Winston] Churchill was going to speak, and Truman was going to speak on a separate
occasion, but Truman had just notified them that he couldn't fulfill the engagement. They had
had a meeting, and they asked me to come up and speak in his place--fill the program in other
words--and be announced as a substitute and a filler in the speaking program.

Naturally, I had a very high regard for M.I.T. and for Carl Compton, the president, retiring, and
Jim Killian, who was going to be inaugurated. So I agreed to do it. With the help of Bob
Madison, we went to work on research to prepare that message. There is a publication of the
address itself, put out by M.I.T., that includes the whole address and comment about it and so
forth, and there are also pictures of it, so I'll simply say that it, of course, was a tremendous
occasion. Winston Churchill was on the platform when I spoke, and he had spoken the day
before.

One of the interesting anecdotes of that was at the dinner, before the evening meeting. I think it
was at the dinner, or it was at one of the conventions when there was a long head table. They did
one of these head table things where husbands and wives are sort of on opposite ends of the head
table, relatively to the center of the head table. But in that process, Esther, my wife, was seated
next to Winston Churchill, and I was seated next to Mrs. Churchill, Lady Clementine. During
the preliminary period of the luncheon, Esther noticed that Winston Churchill kind of leaned
forward and looked down the length of the head table, and put up a gesture of lifting up his two
arms with his hands down, and she laughed and said, "What does that mean?"

"Oh," he said, "that means I'm asking my lady's apology, that I was kind of gruff and rough when
she woke me for dinner. I was taking a nap. That's my symbol for a long-range apology." So
that was the symbol he gave for that. I don't think I've ever seen that particular gesture of his
described anywhere, but it's a very interesting and amusing thing, and he explained the gesture to
Esther at that dinner occasion. That's a little anecdote.

But all the other official records of it, and the speech itself, and the research we did for it, are in a
volume that M.I.T. themselves put out. I think it's the mid-century something or other. They
were called mid-century convocations. They're connected with Killian's inauguration. But the
preliminaries and all this explanation and the actual address is in that book.

**Kirby:** Is this the same James Killian that later served as Eisenhower's science advisor?
Stassen: That's right. The same James Killian--a very outstanding scientific man, a great administrator, a great public servant.

Kirby: During your world travels in late 1950 and early 1951, among the leaders you met was Douglas MacArthur, whom I believe you met in Japan. Of course, as you mentioned in your book, Eisenhower Turning the World Toward Peace, during the '52 campaign, you had served as a liaison to MacArthur. Can you tell us anything at all about that meeting with MacArthur?

Stassen: Yes. Of course, as you know, my first meeting with MacArthur was when I went over with Admiral Halsey to confer with him. That is, Halsey was conferring with him, and I was just sitting in, in Brisbane, Australia. That was way back in 1943.

During the war, and after that, there were various times when we would have joint sessions between the commands that I would see MacArthur with Halsey, or see some of his officers, and things of that kind. There was quite a long period of time of a very active participation between the Halsey command at sea and the MacArthur command on land.

Then, of course, I saw him at the surrender ceremony on the USS MISSOURI in Tokyo Bay. He was the one who took the surrender ceremony. I was still then assistant chief of staff for administration to Admiral Halsey, and so had assisted, with Lieutenant Commander Bill Kitchell [phonetic], in the administrative arrangement on the MISSOURI for that ceremony. I was there, of course, for the surrender ceremony, along with, I guess, literally a hundred different admirals and generals of the Allied side of the war when the Japanese came on board to surrender, and I talked with MacArthur at that time.

When I traveled to Japan after the war, I went in and paid my respects to General MacArthur, and visited with him about what he was doing in charge of the occupation of Japan. Of course, he had these very strong concepts of how he was reshaping the Japanese government, reshaping their dedication not to go the armaments and war route again. He had very strong views, and he was very able.

I think it is really a classic example, through all of history, of a military general winning power, having a tremendous impact on the nation that he has helped to defeat, and has reshaped, and obviously, as you see now, so many years later, a tremendous reshaping and tremendous development of Japan in a very different way from their earlier militarily imperialistic approach.

He talked about what he was doing, and we had some very good sessions. He was then in Tokyo. He had his own headquarters there, and actually, I think it was in the old embassy office, and I conferred with him at that time.

Then I next saw him when I spoke to him at the Waldorf in his headquarters there, and I was speaking on behalf of President Eisenhower. Quite a bit of this is touched on in my book of Eisenhower Turning the World Toward Peace, which tells about the Eisenhower election and the MacArthur phase of it, including the MacArthur career.
Kirby: You met a broad range of people on the trip. You also met Dr. Albert Schweitzer, who seems to have made quite an impression on you.* Is that correct?

Stassen: He made a great impression on me even before I met him. In other words, I've always read very broadly, so I knew of Dr. Albert Schweitzer's writings and of his philosophy and his concept of what he called "reverence for life." So that when I made the trip through Africa, down the east side and back up the west side, I scheduled it and planned it ahead of time, that I would stop in and see Dr. Schweitzer at his jungle hospital at Lambaréné. I think I wrote some about this for the Reader's Digest back in those years.

Kirby: Yes.

Stassen: One of the amusing things there was that when it came to arranging...we flew up through the Belgian Congo and then going over into French Equatorial Africa to get on in toward Lambaréné, where Schweitzer's jungle hospital was located. We found that the arrangements had been made for a very old tri-motored airplane to fly us into the jungle, and I had quite a few misgivings, but then the French governor of that Gabon province said that he would personally escort me in that plane to the jungle airfield. So I felt a little better, if the airplane was the official airplane for the French Equatorial governor, in Gabon province. So we flew in.

The fascinating thing was that as we landed at the jungle airport and taxied up, there was Dr. Schweitzer at the airport, and he had in his hands a large pithy helmet that he immediately handed out to me and said, "Put this on. We are in the equatorial sunshine. Don't go around without this today."

I, of course, greeted him and thanked him for being at the airport, but I also said, "How did you happen to know that we would be landing here this morning?" He said he'd picked it up on the BBC radio broadcast. They had been kind of recording as we'd go from place to place, from South Africa and up, first of all, down the east coast and up the west coast, and that swing through Africa.

That was another interesting thing. He had an exceptional awareness of what was happening in the world. Of course, he was running this jungle hospital at the same time. I asked him how he could be that much abreast of the world. "Well," he said, "if you stop to think, so much of what you read and listen to in the rest of the world concerns the fires that have happened, the accidents that have happened, the different things of that kind, that really have no basic significance for fundamental things. But if you just listen to BBC at a certain international hour, they're hitting the high spots of what's happening in the different countries." So he'd kept quite abreast of what was happening in the world.

*Albert Schweitzer (1875-1965). French theologian, musician, medical missionary. Gave up the life of a brilliant scholar and musician to become a medical missionary in Africa; set up a native hospital at Lambaréné in French Equatorial Africa, 1913; espoused a philosophy of "reverence for life"; a great organist who wrote a biography of J.S. Bach, 1905.
In fact, it was while we were approaching there when it was announced that he was going to be awarded the Nobel Peace Prize (1952). That's the timing of that period. But we saw him before he was given the Nobel Peace Prize, and we had scheduled this meeting with him before it was announced he was going to receive it.

He was a very, very great philosopher, an amazing career. One of the things on the follow-through from that trip that I arranged--that was during the part of time I was at the University of Pennsylvania--was with our contacts through the medical school, so we arranged that many of the drug companies sent medicines that he needed down to him, and supplies, as gifts to him in the jungle.
June 27, 1991

**Kirby:** We're covering the Eisenhower administration today, Governor. How did you come to be appointed as Mutual Security director?

**Stassen:** I was president at the University of Pennsylvania at the time, and I had been active in his [Eisenhower] campaign for both the nomination and the presidency. Between the election and the inauguration, he asked me to come over to New York to see him; he told me that he wanted me to come in and take a major part in his administration--particularly to handle all the foreign operations and aid and so on--to follow through from what had been the Marshall Plan, and also wanted me to take a seat at the National Security Council table and the cabinet table. He said he was going to emphasize that he wanted all of his people to participate in all issues. The way he put it, of course, it was a strong implication that I really ought to serve him and follow through, and also that I would be able to have a real impact on policy. Then, I told him I'd have to think it over, and I went back and talked it over with Esther [Stassen], and we had really had a broad plan. I became president of the University of Pennsylvania after the [Thomas] Dewey nomination in September of 1948. We really planned about eight or ten years as president of the University. Of course, our children were there in school, but [I] decided that I really should do it, and Esther thoroughly agreed with the decision. She, of course, has been just as intelligently interested in, and devoted to, the objectives of peace throughout the years as I have been.

So I went back and told him that I would accept it. Then he told me that he was going to have a preliminary meeting of his cabinet group, and asked me to come over to the hotel in New York for that session. I believe it was January twelfth, or somewhere in there, of 1953.

I went over for that session, and in a way it turned out to be more significant than I had anticipated in this sense. He, as his own files and his own histories will show, read his proposed inaugural address and there were comments on it all up and down the table.

Then at one point, during those sessions, George Humphrey, who was to become secretary of the treasury, suddenly said--in one of his very firm and emphatic voices--that the very first thing that the president should do, and he really ought to announce it in the inaugural speech, was take off all wage and price controls, which had been there under the [Harry S.] Truman administration with the Korean War going on. He said this should be taken off and announce it the inaugural address and do it right away. I looked up and down the table, and nobody seemed to be intending to speak.

At that time, I was not aware that they had talked to the president about this a great deal, coming
back from Korea, between the election and that date of January twelfth when Humphrey and
[Secretary of Commerce Sinclair] Weeks had joined the HELENA ship with Eisenhower and
traveled from part of the Pacific, and they apparently had pounded their views on it.

So it seemed to me—as I quickly try to review in my mind where we were—first of all, that it
would be very much the wrong way to start the administration with such a sudden announcement.
I knew, of course, that Eisenhower had made no statement during the campaign that he was
going to do that. I knew probably his speeches and his campaign as thoroughly as anybody,
equally probably to Herbert Brownell and C.D. Jackson. Those are about the only two that
followed all aspects of the speaking and the campaign as thoroughly as I had.

Furthermore, I knew quite a bit about the economic situation in the country, and I also recognized
that I had known George Humphrey somewhat from the standpoint of being the executive of one
of the steel companies with interests in Minnesota, from way back, and as one of the leading
executives in business in the Cleveland-Pittsburgh-Detroit triangle area.

So I stepped in, and I said, first, "Mr. President, may I speak on this?"
And he said, "Certainly."
I said, "I think it would be a great mistake to announce in the inaugural or suddenly that
you're going to release these controls. I think it would give a wrong impression of the
administration's manner of proceeding, and of your manner of proceeding. It would have an
impact toward inflation right away, and just would be wrong." [I said] that we ought to do it
carefully, step by step, as the new administration got going.

Humphrey immediately rejected my objection very emphatically, saying that there won't be any
significant inflation because they'd tighten up the interest rates right away, and that would control
that aspect of it, the Federal Reserve would do that, and that this was the way to start strong in
the administration, and put down my statements very strong.

Then the potential secretary of commerce, Weeks, spoke up in support of it, and so did Charlie
Wilson, who was going to be secretary of defense and was head of General Motors.
But at that juncture, fortunately, very fortunately, [Henry] Cabot Lodge spoke up in support of
my position. He said that he thought my points were valid and he said, "Furthermore, it's the
kind of action that should not ever be taken without advance consultation with the Congress,
particularly the senators, and actually with the leaders of both political parties, before you should
pop a thing like this."

It went back and forth a little bit more, and then President Eisenhower suddenly said, "I think
Cabot and Harold are right. We won't take the wage and price controls off in the inaugural, and
we'll study it at the beginning of the administration."

When we broke up that session, I stepped over and spoke to George Humphrey. I said that I
hadn't known this issue was coming up, or I would have told him in advance what my position
was on it. But he was very put out that he had been rejected in that first meeting, and said I was
180 degrees wrong in the stand that I took.

I also went up and checked in with President Eisenhower after the whole session was over, and I said, "Was it okay that I spoke up?" He said, "Absolutely. That's one of the reasons I want you at the table." I said that I knew that that created some frictions with others and they would have some basis to feel that my appointment as head of the Mutual Security Program didn't give me a right to speak on that kind of a subject. He said, "No, I've emphasized, and I'll emphasize again, people at my table I want to speak up on any subject, anytime they have something to say. As you observed, I agreed with you."

The amusing thing is that when the minutes finally came out, it said that Eisenhower and Lodge and Stassen were opposed to immediate release of controls, and Humphrey and Weeks were in favor of it. That's just a couple of sentences in the minutes, but it was a very crucial thing, and I realized immediately, and, in fact I knew even before that that my viewpoint on issues and on the philosophy of government and everything else were just so basically different. Of course, I respected and recognized the basis of the viewpoints of Humphrey and Wilson and Weeks, but there it was. So that was quite an introduction to the cabinet table and the beginning of the administration.

I finished up at the University of Pennsylvania. I think the last meeting with the trustees was January nineteenth or twentieth of 1953. Esther, my wife, and the two children had gone on down ahead, and then I flew down and joined the inaugural proceedings the day after I resigned as president of the University of Pennsylvania.

The beginnings of the administration, of course, were very active, and I began at once to take charge of my portion. There are reports on all these kind of things, but I think maybe sort of anecdotes would be most significant.

I realized immediately that Secretary [John Foster] Dulles, from the speeches he'd made--especially during the Dewey campaign and in the earlier stages of the period of the Eisenhower campaign--had definitely different foreign policy views than President Eisenhower.* In other words, he was very much sort of for going to the brink for pressing for uniting Germany. That was a top priority on his part.

I was aware that there was a long background there of his law firm having represented the German interests all the way back from World War I, and he, of course, had this great, long record in foreign policy. So I knew he'd be coming from different experiences, different attitudes, and I also knew that he was number one in foreign policy and cabinet-wise, of course, he had the protocol seniority over me, so that it would be a complex working situation.

It shows in the NSC [National Security Council] minutes, which are now substantially released, and in various memoranda through the years, there would be tendencies at times where the president, after quite a strong discussion of a major question, would then reach a decision in the very early stages where he would say, "I've concluded Harold's right on this point."

So I actually went to see him, and I said, "I don't know whether you realize it or not, but when you say that, you make it tougher for me to work with the other cabinet members. Their feelings are pretty strong, and you must sense the atmosphere in the room when you make a remark like that, so it's really better if you'd come down on substance and don't identify me with it in your comments, because I have to work with all of them. I'm trying to work thoroughly with every member of the cabinet on my responsibilities."

The initial protocol of the Mutual Security administrator--which was a successor of Averell Harriman--had been broadened out quite promptly to what was then named as Foreign Operations Administration.* It took in economic assistance, but defense support assistance, military arms, technical assistance, educational assistance, and, of course, full participation in the National Security Council.

In working on the National Security Council, I had analyzed suggestions from the joint chiefs [of staff], of some of their officers, and picked a major general to be my man on the planning board a man named Bob Matteson, with great research ability, to be my research assistant and representative on the planning board of the National Security Council, so that I was able to take a very effective participation in all of the National Security Council decisions and studies.

The National Security Council table, under Eisenhower's administration, was the place where his major decisions were focused in those early years, and it was a very active process.

In the book, Eisenhower Turning the World Toward Peace, there's quite a bit of comment on that, and some reflection of those minutes. I don't remember whether the book says so, but what I did when I started working on that book, when I found that they had declassified a great deal of the minutes, I ordered copies of the complete NSC minutes from the day of the Eisenhower inauguration down through the [Geneva] summit meeting of '56, or maybe to the end of '56. The library charged us thirty-five cents a piece, but getting that whole range was the very basic documentation to confirm recollections, or sharpen recollections, or seeing how they carried the issues of that time. Of course, in a way, that first term came to a peak when Eisenhower did decide to have a summit meeting with the leaders of the Soviet Union. It was very far-reaching. There were many far-reaching decisions which are all in the history books, but they're better reflected in the NSC minutes than anywhere else.

The next best thing is his own memoirs, and you have to have in mind his memoirs were written leading up to 1963, and I think Ewald [phonetic] was his principal assistant in writing those memoirs. Ewald was a thoroughly dedicated participant in the [Richard M.] Nixon organization in the Republican party and in the structure, so to that extent there would be sort of a different emphasis between Nixon and Eisenhower in that period. And, of course, that was then the period of the [John F.] Kennedy administration, Nixon having been defeated in his first effort to be president, in 1960, to succeed Eisenhower.

It is well for future historians in evaluating Eisenhower's own memoirs to have in mind Ewald's work as it is described; and it's also described in the book that Ewald himself wrote on his work for Eisenhower, and then it's also well to check up on Ewald in his relationship with Nixon and his own philosophy. He is an able person. He's very able.

The other thing, of course, is to have in mind that the memoirs were all written after the heart attack--in other words, after the administration was over. The heart attack was in 1955, September, October, and the second administration began in '56--that is, election of '56--ended in '60, and he went into the memoir period from '60 to '63.

I would emphasize that for future historians who review the Eisenhower administration, they really ought to review it from the standpoint of two major separations--up until the heart attack and from the heart attack until the end of his second administration. Because while he was an excellent president after the heart attack, you might say the center of gravity on major decisions shifted toward the individual cabinet positions. In other words, inevitably, after the heart attack, greater responsibility to act without presidential approval moved over to each cabinet member. That would include particularly Secretary of State Dulles, secretary of defense, chairman of the joint chiefs, and secretary of the treasury.

There are two things about it. One is that there was a noticeable degree shift toward less initiative in foreign policy and toward more of the Dulles influence on foreign policy, more of the Humphrey influence on financial and domestic policy, and so forth. I do not mean that there was as significant a change in Eisenhower's own conclusions. Of course, Milton Eisenhower continued to have a very important influence in Eisenhower's decision-making. From the standpoint of my philosophy and my views, Milton's philosophy and views were more in the same area that mine were.

Likewise, as time moved on, C.D. Jackson kind of wore himself out and left the administration. He'd been very innovative and thoughtful and quite a remarkable individual.

Nelson Rockefeller, with some of his staff support and with some of his own willingness to

explore different things, at times would more or less be on the same side of an issue as I would be.** Other times he would not be. He would have his own distinct views and his own policy people. But he finally left the administration. He, in effect, wore out his influence. And so it went.

In one lecture I made by request at the Kennedy Institute some time ago, I mentioned the importance of distinguishing before and after the heart attack, and one or two of the historians that were there at that time had indicated that they'd had some of that thinking, and were fascinated that I did emphasize it. I haven't tried to read anywhere near all the things that have been written, but that's a very important consideration.

In my book, I refer to it in his earlier times when he would come around, and he'd take on what we called his command tone of voice. He was a very thoughtful type of leader. He did not really act much like a general in command of a situation. For that matter, of course, he'd been an unusual military leader. But when you got to know him and observe him and study, there was a time when he'd be very bored with people sort of rambling on, things that didn't interest him, and other times he'd be very intent on adequate discussions, and there were times, of course, when he'd want to move things through, and his voice would shift to what those of us who followed closely would call his command tone.

I think one of most dramatic instances of that is mentioned in my book. Dulles had been constantly putting out the story that Eisenhower and Dulles were against holding a summit. You'll find that he put that story out again in early May of 1955. Then you'll find in the minutes of the Security Council, in one of the sessions before the end of May, Eisenhower turned to Dulles in the NSC meeting and said, "Foster, I've decided to instruct you to advise the other foreign ministers and heads of government that I'm prepared to go to a summit." Well, that had tremendous implications. Of course, it was one of these things where the command tone came through. It was very rare for him to use the word of "instruct" to Dulles.

A lot of discussion, and historians kind of puzzle about his having selected Dulles as secretary of state. As I analyze it, he had a very strong feeling that he had not had a diplomatic experience, even though, of course, the kind of things that he had been engaged in doing in the military had very much of a diplomatic side to them, and he'd shown a lot of skill in it, but yet he felt the lack of the whole schooling and experience that Foreign Service officers and secretaries of state of should have and did have. So in that respect, I think he always felt he wanted to listen thoroughly to anything Dulles had to say, and Dulles's viewpoint, and very frequently he would agree with him and go along with him. But particularly if he was going to overrule it, and if he was going in a different direction, he wanted to hear out everything about the Dulles and Foreign Service viewpoint.

The same thing on secretary of the treasury. He knew, of course, and he had, I think, a real sort of respect and affection for George Humphrey. He knew he was extremely conservative. Some of the historic papers will show how much Milton Eisenhower objected to some of the Humphrey viewpoints. But he wanted to hear the conservative business side before he would make a definite move different than that.

**Kirby:** So you definitely would refer to Eisenhower as an actively engaged, well-informed president who was active in all the major decisions of his administration?

**Stassen:** Yes, especially up to the time of the heart attack. Of course, there was the sort of interregnum when [presidential advisor] Sherm [Sherman] Adams had a lot to do, and Nixon had some increased things to do at the time he was recovering from the worst aspects of the heart attack, and then he had some other health problems, as you know.

If an issue got discussed thoroughly at a cabinet meeting or NSC meeting, if he would come down on it, his philosophy really didn't change, is the way I would analyze it. But he wasn't as forceful and, in effect, insisting upon cabinet members going his way instead of going the way they were going.

Likewise, individuals who had a different view than a particular cabinet member had on that area, would be reluctant to do, after the heart attack, what we did do at times before the heart attack; and then, say, press our point in such a way that Eisenhower might set up a special Security Council meeting or a special conference, and have certain participants come in, in order to go into it more deeply so that he could decide it. And that would be particularly like on some of the atomic energy matters and some of the relationships.

Of course, another place where it can be understood and has a continuing relevance was with the Marshall Plan.

There were those who said to do everything they can to have them be even more hungry, that you're engaged in a Cold War and you don't want to feed the enemy, and the East Germans were part of the enemy. Then there was the other view, of which I think Herbert Brownell and I and C.D. Jackson were participants. As I recall, even the British, at that stage, were against the matter of making food available to the East Germans.

But after very thorough discussions which went on for more than one session, Eisenhower finally made an announcement, in one of his command tones, "You'll feed the East Germans." I think it had a profound effect, for a number of reasons. First of all in the discussions, some of those opposed to it said that furthermore, to the extent that any food reaches the East Germans, they'll never know where it came from; and furthermore, the Russians will partly divert it. Eisenhower more or less cross-examined me and the Security Council, and so did C.D. Jackson in our operation coordinating board--"Can we develop a way in which we'd be sure that the food would go where we wanted it to go?"
My organization said, yes we could; and we did, of course, do what became very well known. We devised a package that would hold about twenty pounds of surplus food—powdered milk and lard and beans and things like that—and the sack had on it a symbol, which I believe is actually still used, but which was designed by our staff at that time. It was clasped hands over a shield of red, white and blue, and I think it said "United States of America" on at least some versions of it. These twenty-pound sacks were the way in which the food would be made available in West Berlin, for the East Berliners to come and show their identification and carry it home.

Literally, the New York Times of that period can be followed that showed the actual facts, millions of packages were made available. Hundreds of thousands of East Germans came across the line. They had what we called then a German People's Congress on the streets of Berlin, because they didn't fear the secret police when they were in such great numbers on the streets.

Prior to that period, there had been a lot of concern in the intelligence circles that the Russians, the communists, were doing very heavy infiltration of the labor unions of the Ruhr, and that they apparently were planning on some kind of a disruption of the whole Ruhr—the Ruhr being, of course, the coal and steel area in the Federal Republic, or western side, of Germany. But when that feeling of the East Germans and the talking on the streets of Berlin ended, the communist infiltrations of the unions of the West Germans just evaporated. There just wasn't any more.

The second major thing—the Soviet Union had been building up some divisions of East German soldiers and had been arming them with increasingly heavy armament and heavy artillery. When that period was over, they began to pull the heavy armament and heavy artillery away from the East German divisions, and I think they realized—and I always contended in my analysis of anything in the Security Council—that they could never count on East German divisions being on their side if a cold war turned to a hot war. I think it was one of the very major restraints on the Soviet Union in that whole period. That is, of course, my individual viewpoint.

After the heart attack—and, of course, there was quite a period of time when it wasn't certain whether Eisenhower would run again—I thought that he should run again. But I thought, from the total picture, that he ought to have a new vice presidential candidate, because sitting across from Nixon for then over three years at the cabinet and NSC, and of course knowing of his public speaking and so on and the type of his campaigns, I felt that first of all, if Nixon was his candidate for vice president, that we would lose both houses of Congress, that sentiment that they had, that confidence in Eisenhower, but that it gave a different picture when Nixon campaigned for the Senate and for the House seats, and he did a lot of that.

After a lot of study, I also felt that Chris Herter, who was then the governor of Massachusetts and who I had known for a number of years as being a man of what I referred to in one of my earlier oral history points, and in public statements, that he had those two qualities of intelligence and integrity.* In any event, with those two qualities, I felt he had that kind of a creative center

*Christian A. Herter (1895-1966). U.S. diplomat, journalist. Governor of Massachusetts,
philosophy. He was not an extreme conservative or liberal. I felt that if he would be nominated for vice president, that, for one thing, it would be a great safeguard if President Eisenhower, during the campaign, had a spell of illness that might cause the loss of the whole thing. If he had a vice president of the Herter policy and capacity and record, it would safeguard in case Eisenhower got ill during the campaign, and I thought it would lead to winning both houses of Congress and to a future direction of the Republican party.

That effort, of course, failed. I was unable to convince President Eisenhower that he should take the strong stand, although clearly, when I first presented it to him, he said that it would be wonderful if he had Chris Herter as a running mate. But the political side came down heavy on the basis that he should not do that, and I think if he had not had the heart attack, I think he would have made the decision then to have Chris Herter as his running mate.

The records, the historic files now, especially from some of his talks to Milton [Eisenhower] and to General [Lucius] Clay, showed that he had more of the view that there ought to be a change than I realized he did have.* But I, of course, reluctantly, knowing what a tough situation it was to reach that conclusion, during that '56 period. I have all the files, but my files for 1956, in the early months, show my speeches and letters and so on.

In that period, in early '56, before the whole issue of vice presidential came up, I was asked to speak to the school for young Republican leaders, and they had about 300 Young Republican leaders in the three-day session in Washington, and I was asked to do one of the speeches. Those '56 files have that speech, and I happened to come upon them recently, and they'll be turned over to the Minnesota Historical [Society], along with many of the other things. But I would suggest in this oral history that looking at my talk...now this, of course, was, you might say, right in the real direct operating side of politics of that time—in talking to 300 Young Republican leaders from all over the country, in the early part of 1956, you have a lot of what was the Eisenhower record, what were the issues that had come up. You might say it's a more significant thing than I even remembered that it was. Of course, in reading it, you have to have in mind it's before the decision to run, when I felt he should run, and it's before the issue being raised of Herter and Nixon and so on.

**Kirby:** This is probably in January of 1956?

**Stassen:** January to March or April of 1956. There's a group of files, and I'll be turning them over as I do, step by step, to the Minnesota Historical Society. I mention them here, because they have more than ordinary significance—the actual speeches and letters of that time that I was


making.

The 1956 Republican convention, of course, said as long as Eisenhower would not take a position that he ought to have a new vice president, they could not make the change, so then I decided the right thing to do is to simply accept his decision and support, as I always had, the Republican nominees, president and vice president, down through the years, even though in many instances they did not represent the philosophy I had, but I believed strongly in a two-party system and that I should continue to be active in my own party.

Kirby: There has been a lot of things written about that incident.

Stassen: Yes.

Kirby: The July twentieth meeting you had with President Eisenhower provoked a lot of discussion. I believe that was the first meeting as Eisenhower was ready to go to Panama, where you broached the subject with the president. As I understand it, you didn't ask the president his opinion on whether you should pursue this course; you simply volunteered your points of view. Am I correct in saying that?

Stassen: No. It was very clear. I've wondered, and I think I'd check again--I don't know where you found out--is, are there any minutes of that conference? Are there any Ann Whitman recordings or anything like that, or any of his own diary or anything like that?

Kirby: No. Unfortunately not. Eisenhower did not use a recording device on a subject that was purely political, and I believe it was Goodpaster.

Stassen: Andy Goodpaster.

Kirby: So we don't have any actual record of that conversation, other than individuals who claim to know.

Stassen: Yes, there are a lot of claims about it. There are also claims about what he said afterwards, and all that sort of thing. But actually, that first conference, I really laid it on the line that, "Unless you do not want me to do it..." In fact, at that time also, I was going to go up and talk to Nixon, which I tried to do, and my objective was going to be to try to get Chris Herter nominated. His response was, "Wouldn't that be wonderful?" And it was very planned.

Of course, I had a working relationship with him, that anytime he would simply say, "Well, I'd rather not you do X, Y, Z," I never did it, as long as I was part of his administration. I have always had this sort of a philosophy, or principle, if you're under a certain leadership, you respect that leadership and stay with it until you reach the point where you have to step out, and then you can speak up again. That's not always an easy line to draw, but that was it.

In retrospect of course, I think things, in effect, moved more rapidly than perhaps he would have
liked at the time—or than I would have liked—in the sense that Nixon did not keep his appointment with me and was sidestepping, and I tend to think that General—the congressional liaison, name doesn't pop to me right now...Persons--I think General Persons talked to Hall or Nixon. Hall was the Republican chairman. Then they were moving immediately not only to keep me from seeing Nixon, but also to build counterfires and to build fires against Chris Herter accepting that position as the potential vice presidential candidate, so that I had to make the decision of, in effect, letting the whole thing get swept aside without ever having opened it up. Those are tough things to decide at the time, tough things to evaluate afterwards.

Also, the final thing, as you may know, is that we did lose both houses of Congress, and fortunately there were no ripples in Eisenhower's health during the final campaign, so that he consistently ran, in any tests I ever saw, about 6 percent lower with Nixon's name than he did on his own or with Herter or anybody of that nature on it.

Kirby: Prior to your July twentieth meeting with Eisenhower, the first time you spoke to him about this, did he talk to other party leaders and administration officials about this effort to any large degree, do you remember?

Stassen: When you look at the historic records now, he had been talking to General Clay. I don't know for sure the timing. I've never had the opportunity or the intensification of time to check back. Apparently there was a definite time when he suggested to Nixon that Nixon take a position in the cabinet and develop administrative experience and a different image, so that Nixon would then be available as one of those who might succeed Eisenhower in 1960, and Nixon turned that down. I believe that he had done that before I went in to him. I was not aware of it at that time, and didn't know of it until much later.

Likewise, some of the things I have seen, some of it's in history books, some of it, I guess, in his own memoirs. He had much more personal view that the Nixon vice presidency was not so desirable than I myself realized when I went in to him. But I don't believe that anyone else had urged Herter to him prior to my going in there.

Kirby: I asked the question about timing for two reasons, actually. It's not clear when Herter was asked to make the nominating speech for Nixon at the convention.

Stassen: After I saw Eisenhower.

Kirby: After?

Stassen: Definitely. That was a move in their effort to chop it off, so to speak.

Kirby: Well, I'm glad we got that figured out. The other point is, it's not clear that when Herter was spoken to about joining the state department, eventually becoming secretary of state, or was it under secretary of state?
**Stassen:** Under secretary.

**Kirby:** There has been some kind of *quid pro quo* and some people have said that. . .in fact, I believe Sherman Adams in his memoirs, says that somebody well before this had spoken to Herter about joining the state department. Others have said this was a *quid pro quo* to Herter at the time. It would be interesting to know when word got out that you were interested in putting Herter on the ticket--trying to put together the chronology to make myself clear. But you did not talk to people about specifically putting Herter on the ticket before July twentieth, to the best of your recollection?

**Stassen:** My thought at the time, except for talking it through with Esther, but I had not talked to her about making the public statement until it was made. But in those days, I had talked to her about it; she knew my feeling about Nixon's particular inaccuracy and difference of viewpoint and sort of an unusual lack of kind of moral commitments and principles that I had learned observing him across the table through the years. But in my view, you see, at that time, I should not, and could not, go out and try to enlist anyone else to join me in that until I had asked Eisenhower's clearance. I had talked to Governor Herter. There have been some claims about that, too. But he knew before I went in there, that that was the thing I was going to recommend, that I felt I couldn't say, and I did not advise him in a way of asking his approval of it, because this, of course, was the whole thing. Obviously it was a very intense and difficult thing.

My recollection of the sequence is that I told Governor Herter of my personal conclusion that he really ought to be the nominee for vice president. I told him I was going to talk to President Eisenhower about it. Then I went and talked to President Eisenhower about it. I did not talk to any other political figure up to that point, because, in my view, until I told Eisenhower that's what I was going to do and give him a chance to stop me, and until I talked to Chris Herter and gave him a chance to stop me, I shouldn't start.

Then, of course, there were all kinds of claims and tumult--naturally, a very intense period. Then, of course, Chairman Hall turning loose the full weight of his headquarters and himself to smash down my endeavor, and, of course, that, in a way, was a very conservative thing.

Historically, one of the very interesting things about that is that Hall was removed as chairman of the national party not long after that, at Eisenhower's request. Now, I've never tried to research just exactly why that was, but I do know that there was a point where Hall was no longer chairman of the party, and I know that the reason was, Eisenhower didn't want him there anymore. Just how that all added into this picture, I'm not sure.

**Kirby:** Richard Nixon says, in his memoirs, on page 175, that on August twenty-second, at which the convention was to select a vice presidential nominee, you went to President Eisenhower's suite at the St. Francis Hotel with a letter addressed to Hall, demanding that the nomination for vice president be postponed until the next day. Nixon goes on to say, in his memoirs, that Adams talked you out of sending this letter. Is that an accurate representation of
how the final event happened?

**Stassen:** I don't have any recollection of such a letter. I don't right now emphasize that it wasn't true. Nixon went down to see his father. They put out a story that his father was critically ill, and that kind of reaching out for the sympathy circumstance has figured prominently in Nixon's tactics through the years. But, anyhow, it happened right at that point.

I think that it could be that with Nixon going down there, and, of course, at that time also, I was talking very seriously to some of the very senior party leaders at that time as to whether their own check-ups didn't show that it would be much better for the party and for the policies and for Eisenhower if Herter was the nominee, and that they should take a part in asking Nixon to withdraw. Of course, when he left San Francisco and went down to Whittier, Southern California, that interrupted that kind of a process.

I really don't remember any effort to postpone the actual naming of a vice president, because that was a day later. Of course, I had always said to President Eisenhower that what he finally decided was what was going to happen. He knew at all times, whether others felt so, that any day that he said to me, "I want you to accept Nixon on the ticket," I would do it, which I did.

**Kirby:** And you placed Governor Herter's name second to Nixon's.

**Stassen:** Governor Herter's nomination speech for Nixon. I was one of the seconders, yes.

**Kirby:** If we could just go back a little bit on this. In your book, *Eisenhower Turning the World Toward Peace*, regarding the [Senator Joseph] McCarthy issue, you said, "It infuriates me to see Eisenhower's handling of the McCarthy issue misrepresented by historians and biographers, and especially by Harry Truman." Can you tell us a little bit about this? How you believe they had misrepresented the McCarthy issue?

**Stassen:** Yes. Eisenhower's view from the very beginning of his administration was that he was very much against the things that McCarthy was doing and the kind of actions he was taking. He made that clear all the time. But he thought that it could only be handled by a United States senator--that he was a senator, he was in the Senate, the Senate had to do it. That if he tried to tell the Senate what they ought to do or join the issues that McCarthy was raising, he simply gave it much more publicity, gave it headlines as Truman had been giving it from the very beginning, and it would take longer to solve it. That unless you put the responsibility on the Senate and insisted that that's where it had to be, so that they finally would take their own action on it, that it would delay a solution.

It's similar to his thinking on the Supreme Court decision on the school integration in 1954. In other words, it's another instance in which substantial bodies of opinion and substantial legions of historians [infer] that Eisenhower ought to have done more against McCarthy, he ought to have done more in support of the Supreme Court decision on segregation.
Of course my feeling is that if they really look back at the totality of the history, and they see how the McCarthy thing was finally solved by the Senate and the public opinion at that same time, and when they looked at and see how the civil rights issue was finally dramatically handled at Little Rock, when the executive branch was finally and unmistakably involved and in direct clash with not only the anti forces, but also with the governor, they will realize the true situation.

Kirby: Comparing the actions of President Eisenhower and President Truman toward McCarthy, you say that Truman fell for the bait—meaning McCarthy's bait. Can you tell us a little bit about what you meant by that, compare Truman's response to McCarthy with Eisenhower's?

Stassen: When McCarthy made his very first wild statements, Truman sort of answered in the same level. That is, he maybe called McCarthy all kinds of names and things like that, and it was guaranteed front page all over. Now, of course, maybe it was big in other respects, too, but if at that stage some other senator had simply said that, "McCarthy is just nuts, he doesn't know what he's talking about, he's making wild charges," and if Truman had taken that kind of an attitude, then McCarthy would have gotten a lot less distance out of it than he did.

I've already talked about how, as president at the University of Pennsylvania, I handled the offshoots of that kind of issue in the legislature and in the media of Pennsylvania. Quietly, we mustered together the presidents of Pittsburgh University, Temple University, and Penn State, and we brought forward the affirmative side of academic freedom and what it meant, in different ways and in different circumstances, building public opinion. We did not call those senators and House members names, although there were a few of them who could well be, and some of them were calling them "little McCarthys" or something, but we didn't call them names. We didn't clash directly with them. We came forward with the alternatives.

I do not make any claim of influencing Eisenhower's own handling of the McCarthy thing. In fact, the book tells how I touched base with him when I felt that I had to go up there and protect my own personnel. The details on that can be found. That was a very dramatic and emphatic thing.

But he [McCarthy] was going to, in effect, try to destroy one of my deputies by attacking him like he did other employees. When he opened up his attack, I was seated alongside of my employee, and he said, "I'm asking So-and-so this question," and I said, "And Senator, I'm answering you." I interjected right into it. It was a very turbulent hearing. That was the first real clash with stopping him on that kind of tactic.

You see, likewise, even at that time, while I had said that his actions had an undermining quality, I did not call him any names. Truman went the other road, like he did at various times. He called McCarthy as many names as McCarthy was calling the administration. So that's a different way of handling an issue of that nature.
Kirby: During the campaign, you had a great interest in labor questions, I believe, and your book talks about your involvement in the appointment of Martin Durkin.

Stassen: Yes. Matthew.

Kirby: Can you fill us in on that?

Stassen: Well, you see, I had a long background with organized labor. I had worked out solutions in Minnesota when I was governor. I had appointed the first state labor conciliator the president of the typographical union—a very able union man. I have two brothers who were members of organized labor, and other relatives. I believed in organized labor.

But this background of my relationship with organized labor led to Eisenhower naming me as the liaison for his campaign to organized labor, and I served in that capacity. So then when he won, I advanced this thought that it would be good if the secretary of labor was a person from organized labor.

I might say, in that respect, one of the other interesting items is that you'll find in the fourth draft of the first State of the Union Address, there's a statement something like that Eisenhower was saying in that first State of the Union that his administration did not propose to harm or injure organized labor, something like that, or unions. That strong policy declaration was stricken out somewhere between the fourth draft and the draft that was actually delivered while I was over in Europe. On the other hand, with what I had put in there about ending segregation in the District of Columbia, both of those statements, I knew, were in accordance with Eisenhower's convictions. In the one instance, he persisted in saying it. In the other instance, someone persuaded him not to say it, even though he believed it, in other words.

In effect, in the drafting and re-drafting—really a complete new draft—of his State of the Union message, I utilized my total awareness of his own philosophies, convictions, his speeches, and so forth, and then tried to bring them down into the proper framework for a State of the Union Address.

Then there was a tug of war in the cabinet, just like the matter that I spoke about of the wage and price controls and the Humphrey policies and so forth. Properly, after I delivered to him the fourth draft, which was my draft for State of the Union, I sent it to all the cabinet members, and then I left town. I haven't had a chance, and I haven't found, in fact, the fifth draft, sixth draft, and the seventh draft of the one that was delivered. But I did find the fourth and the seventh later, and the seventh is the one that's published. I laid them down side by side in a fascinating comparison a few months ago.

Kirby: Reorganization plan number seven, this is what reorganized Mutual Security Administration and the Foreign Operations Administration. I know the details get old after all
these years, but were you involved in the reorganization of the Mutual Security? Did this have your approval? Did you feel that the reorganization into the Foreign Operations Administration was a plan that you could improve upon? Were you satisfied with the shape the Foreign Operations Administration took in its final form?

**Stassen:** I did not consider it was the best form. I was not very deeply involved. Of course, I was in the situation then where the president asked me to take on a new responsibility. That timing isn't all clear in my mind, either. I didn't try to name my successor. That influence came in from George Humphrey in naming John Hollister, who was a lawyer friend of Humphrey and Taft from Ohio. He became the new administrator when I left. Of course, a number of factors come in there. I don't have clearly in mind right now the timing and sequence of all of these.

I agreed that in the whole Foreign Operations there should be a constant change in this matter of economic and military assistance to other countries. You had to constantly evaluate it. In fact, you know, it was under my administration that we ended foreign economic aid to most of the countries in Europe, that they had now come along far enough. I sent all those special teams out of business people, and then reviewed it. We'd say, "The Netherlands doesn't need this Marshall Plan anymore, we'll close that up and wrap it up. Germany doesn't need it anymore," and so forth. I did a lot of the closing-off of it. In fact, there were a number of different kinds of proposals as to how they ought to be administered. I guess there still are. It's a continuing thing in the government.

**Kirby:** The new responsibility, of course, was the position of special assistant to the president for disarmament, to which you were appointed in May of 1955.

**Stassen:** That's right.

**Kirby:** Building our way toward that Geneva Summit, can you tell us for what purpose the position of special assistant to the president for disarmament was created? This was quite a unique position.

**Stassen:** There was, of course, on the part of the president--and really on the part of all of us--a very major awareness of the developments in space and the developments in H-bombs, as contrasted to A-bombs; there was a tremendous power of the H-bomb, multiplied so much over the power of Nagasaki and Hiroshima, and the matter of missile delivery, and all aspects of this, had tremendous implications for the future of the world and the future of our policies.

In the early couple of years, in very active issues that would come up, Eisenhower could never get a coordination of opinion. In other words, some of the joint chiefs might come in on something, and some of them on something else, and the secretary of defense might have a view, and Dulles may have a view, and Lewis Strauss may have a view, and so forth. In the meantime, of course, there were supposed to be negotiations. There was this negotiation about a position that the objective is to ban all nuclear weapons in the world--sort of a propaganda line. Of
course, this propaganda clashed with the Soviet Union on issues.

So Eisenhower had a feeling there needed to be a concentrated study about this whole thing and he didn't have any feeling of how it could be done within the departments and between the departments as it was then organized, but that he had to reach out and put the responsibility on somebody to bring it together and analyze it, re-analyze the whole outlook of the space/atomic, space/nuclear weapon age that was opening up before us and before the world.

When I look back later, it's clear also, in his own thinking he thought in terms of James Conant, retired president of Harvard who was then High Commissioner to Germany, and of me, with my background. Those are the two he thought of who could take hold of such a study and do it for him.

When he reached the conclusion that he'd like to have me do it, and I was in the process of traveling in Foreign Operations, he sent a special cable--which is in the documents--to me, asking me if I would do it. I answered that I wanted to talk to Esther first and if he wanted me to do it, I would do it. So that's the background on that.

But there would be a number of times in National Security Council meetings when two responsible officials, two or more, would express to him different ideas about what the space/atomic age was going to mean, and he never felt he could get hold of it, that he needed to have it re-studied and pulled together and presented to him.

Kirby: You had what struck me as an interesting way of assembling your staff for disarmament. You got, not representatives but members of the different departments to serve on your staff. Was this to get some sense of what the position of each department was?

Stassen: Also, they'd be open, but they would each have a channel to know exactly what we were doing, and that we would have a way of reaching back in to them for information when we needed information. It was, in effect, a human resource to come in from each department. I don't remember how I described it, but I was reaching out to get individuals who had intelligence and who would be sort of exploratory minds, research minds. That again is the sort of thing that I've done through the years.

I don't know whether we covered this in the oral history on the United Nations, but when I was flying back from Admiral [William F.] Halsey's staff to report to President [Franklin D.] Roosevelt, when he wanted me to be one of the eight to take part in drafting a prospective charter, I knew that I had no staff whatsoever at that time--I'd left my governorship staff, of course, with the new governor; I'd left my navy staff with Admiral Halsey's command; I had no personal organization. So after thinking it over, I sent telegrams--at that time, cables--to the presidents of, I think, Harvard, Yale, Princeton, maybe Minnesota, and said the president had appointed me to this, I was going to have the right to assemble a staff and wanted to assemble a staff. Did they have any exceptionally able students in international affairs, in international research, who had gone off to war and been wounded and returned and would be available for a staff assignment? That is the way in which I got Cord Meyer and John Thompson, two veterans
who had been wounded, two who had been students in international relations, and proved to be remarkably able staff members at the United Nations in San Francisco. Of course, from the state department side, I got Ralph Bunche and I got Ben Gary, so I don't think there's any question that I wound up with the very best staff that anybody had at the United Nations conference at San Francisco.

So when I got this special assignment, I reached out to the military units and the Atomic Energy Commission and CIA, state department, and asked for suggestions of personnel and asked for the type of personnel. I didn't take their persons automatically. In some instances, they would send me the names of three or four colonels or something like that, and I'd look them over, sometimes even interviewed them. But that's where we put together that staff.

**Kirby:** Almost immediately, the first meeting of the White House disarmament staff, after you called them together on April fifteenth, you announced that you wanted the staff to convene at the marine base in Quantico, Virginia, for a week's skull session, as it is often called.

**Stassen:** Yes.

**Kirby:** What did you hope to accomplish at this Quantico meeting?

**Stassen:** To get everybody to speak out, think out, every kind of an idea, and knock them down, pick them up, be a thorough research session.

**Kirby:** The reason I ask is that it was there that your report to the President, May twenty-sixth, was developed. Not to be too specific, but it seems that this was a major report to the president where you listed options for arms control, including aerial inspection, I believe.

**Stassen:** That's right.

**Kirby:** I know there's a lot of discussion, you mentioned it in your book, this source of the Open Skies proposal, but this aerial inspection plan was presented before Nelson Rockefeller had his Quantico meetings. It would seem that this would be the logical source of your Open Skies proposal. Do you think that that's an accurate statement?

**Stassen:** Oh, it is. There's no question that--what's his name, is it Rostow of Rockefeller's staff?

**Kirby:** Walt Rostow? I'm not sure.

**Stassen:** There is a book issued by somebody in Nelson Rockefeller's staff that makes an absolutely false and erroneous report about the source of Open Skies. In other words, I did on this as I do in everything, like when I was working for Eisenhower, Open Skies was Eisenhower's proposal--period. I kept focus back on that, which is what I think is the right way to work with a president, if you really want to work with him.
You don't do any leaking. Just like the fact that I never told anybody that I made a fourth draft of the State of the Union Address, you see. Until I found it in the minutes, I didn't even say it retrospectively at the time of the book, but it's in the official White House minutes.

In this instance, General Jimmy [James H.] Doolittle was the first one that spoke emphatically.* In addition to these active staff people from each department, we reached out for senior people who would have special knowledge and special brains about these things. For instance, Dr. [Edward] Teller, I had him in our conferences—not the staff conferences, the other, the advisory conferences.* Dr. James Fiske was the head of the American Scientific Society and the head of the Bell Telephone Laboratories. Dr. Harold Moulton was the head of the Brookings Institute. Ernest Lawrence, first Nobel Prize winner of atomic energy.

I'd question them, and sometimes we got them in the same room and let them argue back and forth, and we'd project things to them, and then listen to them. So we did a real intensive searching process. In those sessions, in turn, these special staff people that I brought in from the departments—including Bob Matteson—would be listening to them and giving me memoranda and reactions. It was a process that we went through—intensive process.

Kirby: A lot of people are interested in the respective roles of Nelson Rockefeller and others, and you, during the development of the Open Skies program, and this is why I ask. Steven Ambrose, for example, says on page 259 of the relevant volume, he says that by June tenth, you and Nelson Rockefeller had a report on disarmament ready. Did you work with Nelson Rockefeller jointly to develop a disarmament plan that early?

Stassen: No. He was working sort of parallel. There is a Rockefeller report in the library, and it doesn't have any Open Skies in it at all, but it was a sizeable report about how to be alert on the propaganda side of the Geneva Summit. He was also in favor of holding a summit, but it's betimes inside the administration. He was not a member of the National Security Council, but he frequently was present at National Security Council meetings by invitation of the president, and he had a position at that time, also, for a while in there. He was another assistant to the president. He also had public relations people which were tending to do this business about giving him credit for a lot of things. I literally just sort of ignored it. They put out stories where he would take credit for things that I actually had done, or this or that.

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*Edward Teller (b. 1908). U.S. physicist. Called the "Father of the H-bomb" for devising a secret element that made the device practical and leading the H-bomb project as administrator (1949-52); received Fermi Award, 1962.
There's this book, Rostow claiming that they had this report recommending Open Skies, and it just isn't in the report. His book is actually...he even calls it Open Skies. It's just a false book--I mean, it's an erroneous book.

**Kirby:** If any of the people listening to this oral history are interested, the May 26, 1955 report you wrote to the president is available, for the most part, in the Eisenhower Library, and there is a copy right here in the Minnesota Historical Society in the Robert Matteson papers. It's in that paper that you conclude that the traditional American goal of eliminating all nuclear weapons was no longer feasible, and instead it advocates arms control, possibly a little different. You place a high priority on inspection and guaranteeing against a surprise attack.

I don't want to ask too detailed questions after all these years, but you submitted that report on May 26, 1955, and then it was distributed around for comment to the various departments. Do you remember coming under increasing pressure from not only Dulles, but people like Arthur [W.] Radford and Lewis Strauss?* Do you remember their reaction to your arms control proposals?

**Stassen:** I think it's fair to say, in fact, at that period Admiral Radford and Lewis Strauss and Foster Dulles did not want to reach any agreement of any kind whatsoever with the Soviet Union. They all shared the view, in various ways and reasons, that any kind of an agreement reached with the Soviet Union would build up the Soviet Union's prestige in the world, and that the Soviet Union would not abide by the agreement anyhow, and that it would have some restrictive quality for us, and that it might make it more difficult to get future defense appropriations if we had any kind of an agreement. Therefore, they did not want any agreement reached.

On the other hand, they, all three and others, knew that President Eisenhower sincerely wanted to reach an agreement that would decrease the danger of future surprise attack. He became thoroughly committed that that paper we developed was intelligent and was right, and even his memoirs sort of speak of his disappointments in some of these regards. So they all realized that if they came out in any NSC meeting directly against any kind of an agreement, Eisenhower would smash them down in his drillings and decisions. But if they worked to advocate things that they knew the Soviet Union would not possibly accept, or rather extreme demands, that that would be the way to upset the process.

So I was constantly trying to persuade them first of all, each of them in their own way, that it would be good to have some of these first-step agreements, that it would be good, and that also it was good in foreign policy to be working in this direction and to think of many future years and what its impact would be. I would have direct sessions with each of them, trying to move them. It was sometimes a little bit of a success and sometimes not. Again, that's not entirely unique.

I spent a lot of time, for example, with Senator Arthur [H.] Vandenberg.*

June 28, 1991

**Kirby:** Governor Stassen, reaching toward the Geneva Summit, were you aware of the details of the [Nelson A.] Rockefeller plan for aerial inspection in the days and weeks leading up to the Geneva Summit?

**Stassen:** Literally, in the days and weeks leading up to the Geneva Summit, there wasn't any Rockefeller plan for aerial inspection whatsoever. In other words, Rockefeller deserved full credit for, and his group made, a report recommending proposals for exchange of delegations and students and so forth, so that exchange program that took up the agenda the day after the disarmament schedule, he deserves. And his group deserves full credit for, and he participated with the president [Eisenhower] in drafting that message about exchanges between the Soviet Union and United States.

Not only did his group not have any proposal on the so-called aerial inspection and Open Skies program before Geneva, but, in fact, when I went down to the library to do the research in Abilene for my book, *Eisenhower Turning the World Toward Peace*, I found a copy of the Rockefeller report to the president, and I got a copy of that. That does not have anything in it about Open Skies or anything like that.

The Open Skies proposal came up exclusively and directly with the beginning comments by General Jimmy [James H.] Doolittle in our advisory groups, the advisory group that had outstanding military and civilian people in it, and who would meet with the staff that I had assembled. He focused on the most important aspect--moves toward arms control and arms limitation was to decrease, for each side, reciprocally, the danger of surprise attack. It, of course, met a responsive chord from all of our advisors then in our group and our staff, because of the psychology of that period of time--now, we're talking about the period at the early part of the Eisenhower administration in other words early 1955.

The background then, psychologically of course, had been the terrific surprise attack that had been made against the United States at Pearl Harbor, the tremendous loss of ships and men, the tremendous blow we took from that surprise attack of the Japanese at Pearl Harbor. And for the Soviet Union it was the surprise blitzkrieg through Poland at the Soviet Union by Hitler's Nazi Weimark that had driven in so far into the Soviet Union before they finally stopped it way back at Stalingrad.

Then, of course, as you put that together with this increasing evidence that there were going to be missiles with nuclear warheads much more powerful than the atomic bombs at Hiroshima and Nagasaki that would streak across the oceans and would hit within sixty to ninety minutes from
the time they took off, the matter of the potential of surprise attack, the danger of it, and the kind of psychological aspect that it was creating and would increasingly create on both sides of the so-called Cold War, or the East-West Conflict, were so evident that it not only brought thinking into focus, but we changed the focus of the thinking.

The focus, to a great extent, up to that point, had been not too well coordinated, but a lot of talk about banning nuclear weapons from the face of the earth, or turning all nuclear science into international control. Our research showed that there's no way that you could detect warehouses of nuclear weapons or H-bombs if they were shielded with proper lead shielding and buried in a vast area secretly. So somebody who had agreed to ban them all could suddenly show up some years later, or even under a different administration, and say, "By the way, we have this group on hand," and if there were no counterbalancing force, there would be a devastating world picture.

So that's where it emerged from our studies, this matter of the so-called banning of all nuclear weapons was not the way to go, and was not sound, but that instead, the matter of the potential that anybody that used them would have a retaliatory use of devastating dimensions, and that deterrent aspect, that the deterrent was the way to go, rather than this sort of a myth about being able to put the genie back in the bottle and repeal the nuclear age.

Along with that was, of course, this matter of getting a confidence or being safeguarded against surprise attack, and that led to many different kinds of proposals about opening up to inspection stations and seismic stations for nuclear testing, and it focused in on the photographic developments of aerial reconnaissance. A reciprocal opening-up to photographic airplanes would give both sides the confidence that the other side was not preparing to launch a surprise attack, and that this would decrease the tensions, and tension is one of the sources of danger of a war being triggered and an outbreak when nobody really wanted one, from that thinking.

We focused and analyzed and brought forward this whole area of the analysis of what the space/atomic age was going to mean, and brought it into focus to the president in our initial reports and in our follow-ups with all the different departments.

As I say, there was the reluctance of Secretary Dulles and others, to have the kind of initiative toward reciprocal opening-up that the Open Skies would mean, and various kinds of objections to it, and, of course, objections to having a summit and talking to the Soviet leaders.

But Eisenhower took hold of it, solidly, from the first report to the NSC on about May twenty-sixth, and followed through. My book tells a lot of it. The NSC minutes will show a lot of it. Of course, I still have the actual yellow memo sheets, what we ordinarily call legal types of notepads, in which I drafted the original Open Skies message at Geneva, in which Eisenhower made a few changes in and actually delivered it. That's the background of it.

Maybe at this point, in mentioning it, I think it was [Walter] Rostow of Rockefeller's staff made some claims in there, and they actually are erroneous.
But I should say, also, that all through the years, they should have in mind that I did not spend my time reading any kind of long articles that were written about what I was doing or about me or my activities, favorable or unfavorable, because I would be concentrating my time and energy on the forward thrust of things that needed to be done.

Take specifically, of course, my great admiration for Bob Matteson and the terrific service that he gave. He's presented me with...I think he has four volumes. I've never read them. I read bits and pieces if something comes up, and, of course, I'm well aware that his recollection, or his interpretation of things, can be different than mine. I've never tried to clarify or correct someone who was completely adverse to me except as those things would show up in some focus where they had to be dealt with. I never took them up.

Another example of that, for example, is the fact that Dulles objected very strenuously when the president, in a press conference, told the press that I could be called sort of a "secretary for peace," and Dulles took personal objection to it in the conference with me and said he didn't want me to ever use that name as long as he was secretary of state.

I never reported that session with Dulles, or his statements, until I found in Dulles' files, years later, in the Eisenhower Library, his own memorandum of his own session in which he objected to me. He made it a memorandum for his own files. Of course, when it was corroborated in that way, then it, to me, became a proper subject to weave in and explain some of those psychological and very real problems.

In the wake of the tremendous impact of the Open Skies proposal worldwide, and when the favorable atmosphere toward Eisenhower's leadership at that time, as I remember, was evaluated at something like 87 or 90 percent of world public opinion, there was that immediate realization of a change from the tensions of reciprocal apprehension on both sides of the world, the change that began with Eisenhower's agreeing to meet at a summit, and his proposal which would, psychologically, move so much against either side thinking that the other side was going to be building up for a surprise attack. So even though it was not accepted, it, of course, was followed up by the fact that the satellites developed photography.

From the beginning, it was accepted that satellites would be flying over both sides, both the Soviet Union and the United States and the whole world, and they could photograph, not quite the same as a photographic airplane, but they do constitute very major assurance against any tremendous build-up for surprise attack without the other side having some sense that something unusual is going on that they could talk about or ask disclosure of.

Literally anyone who would study the tensions and apprehensions between the world, and the inner confidential minutes or documents on either side of the world, up to the Geneva Summit of 1955 and the Open Skies proposal, I think, will find clearly that there's never been the degree of apprehension of the potential of a war breaking out since that date as there was before. So I think that historically, if we continue hopefully and prayerfully to not have an outbreak of a nuclear world war, the Geneva Summit of 1955, I believe, will be the turning point in that world history.
Not the exclusive turning point, but the most crucial one, in my view.

As we are in this beginning of this fifth of these series of sessions of this oral history, I think it's an appropriate time for me to also make some comment that I have a very high regard of President Eisenhower's leadership. I consider that he was one of the seven greatest presidents in the first 200 years of our country's history. I think that as the historians open up secret records--and they are increasingly becoming available at Abilene and in other sources--that they will constantly increase their appraisal.

What actually used to happen--and I discuss this some in my book, but this may also be a good time to mention--in that period before the heart attack, Eisenhower brought about the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence settlement program for the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence Seaway. It had been kicked around for many decades, and they had failed to bring it through. The tendency was, when he brought it through successfully, for the media and the academia to say, "Well, he was lucky." The time had come, and so he was there to get the benefit of the accomplishment. They did not really give him major credit at the time.

In fact, in studying it through, and of course in working on it with him as I did in those years in all major things, these aspects to it are some of the most significant. All the earlier considerations for trying to have an agreement between Canada and the United States about how they would approve each other's construction methods and contracts and all that sort of thing, and out of our studies, Eisenhower came down to the decision to let Canada build and contract for everything on the Canadian side of the project, and the United States build and contract everything on the United States of the project, with neither one having any authority over the contracting methods or the details of contracts, or supervision of the others, so that no agreement was needed for that, but to have excellent engineering coordination and planning as to how the two were to fit together into one Great Lakes-St. Lawrence Seaway.

Then, through that, that was one of the key factors in changing the long deadlock and the question of the kind of detailed treaty of construction that would need to be ratified, all of the complications in the Congress, that's the way he resolved the problems.

Then there had been great opposition by the railroads to the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence Seaway. One of his basic matters there was to bring in all the Railroad Association executives and listen to them, all of their concerns, and he then designed the fact that the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence Seaway would have to carry tolls of its own proper share of costs so that it would not become an extreme unfair competitor, and also to convince the railroad people that the economic development that happens along the seaway, just like it did in the Ruhr in Europe, leads to a lot of railroad business rather than just being a replacement of some of the railroad things. So his willingness to sit down with railroad leaders and listen to them and then devise a method of at least partially negating their fears was an important factor.

Likewise, the matter of the power companies. They had been concerned that out of the
construction of the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence Seaway there would be tremendous power developments and that this might completely upset the whole power supply and pricing and so forth. So he established policies with reference to the power that would be developed in connection with the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence Seaway that would be fair in the competitive relationship to other existing sources of power. In other words, properly working on each of these aspects of the problems in an intelligent way and without outside incentives or outside aims was a very key thing.

I guess this is the place, also, for me to make the comment that I have never encountered any person in any place in our public life that had any greater, from my feeling of it, devotion to the fundamentals of the United States and its system of government, its system of freedom and the rights of people, than Eisenhower had. He never would contemplate the petty political maneuvering or manipulating or deceptive moves.

Another way of putting it, he was one of the most results-oriented president and leaders that I've ever known, and quite a contrast, in a number of instances, to what you'll find in a so-called "image oriented" leader or politician--that whole analysis of the public people from the standpoint of where they are results oriented for the good the people as a whole, or whether they are image oriented. And, of course, with the other aspect of the heavy financing, then to use heavy financing to build an image, have that be the priority rather than the orientation toward a real results.

One of the other things, of course, that he accomplished in those first years, was the superhighway system that now completely crosses our nation north and south and east and west. He originated that superhighway program. He did it with a combined objective that it would be one of the ways to have full employment rather than great unemployment when the Korean War was brought to a close. In other words, a utilization of the productive capacity of the country through various ways of a sound, constructive use of that capacity, and, at the same time, to do something that was of lasting public value.

So that kind of joint test, which was put to a number of things, then led to the emergence of the superhighway program and the beginning of the implementation, and then to overcome the tremendous local bickering and delay of states and cities about where is a highway going to go, and about wanting to control its route and things of that kind, and the apprehensions that are always there, that a program would take things away from the control of officials who are then in control. So, properly delineating the areas of control between a control over the superhighway route and, on the other hand, also assisting toward local highways which could have more local control, and then building tremendous public sentiment and understanding, which he did, and, of course, where he enlisted General Lucius Clay, one of the really brilliant generals out of World War II, to be the head of that superhighway public relations program and information educating commission.

So the methods which he followed in so many of these things, and of course the economic and statistical proof shows his as the greatest years of balanced budgets and balanced world trade and
constructive accomplishments and full employment of any administration, and where it was tended to be put down as being lucky, if they get in and analyze it, study it through, they'll find these were methods of leadership, methods of action.

I speak emphatically about the period before the heart attack. He continued to be a very good president after the heart attack, after he recovered from it. There was literally, in dimensions of comparison, a very marked difference between the genuine Eisenhower nature of the years of administration before the heart attack, and the more limited Eisenhower administration flavor after the heart attack. So in commenting today on that Eisenhower side of my experiences, there is a reason that I made these comments.

In the preparations for the Geneva conference, in that NSC meeting the latter part of May of 1955 when he said to Secretary Dulles, "I instruct you to advise the other governments that I'm prepared to go to a summit," Dulles' immediate rejoinder was, "That's going to take an awful lot of preparation to properly prepare for a summit."

I was going to interject, but before I could, Eisenhower obviously observed it and thought ahead about it, and he said, "I'm going to have the planning board of NSC get ready for it." In other words, he was aware that pulling something into the state department and bogging it down was one way to frustrate it, so he countered that immediately by putting more of the planning for the summit over into the planning board of the NSC. Of course, there I had a member, along with everybody else, and all the departments were involved.

Then, in the actual planning of the delegation to go over there, the president called me in one day and said that Dulles doesn't want me to be on the delegation, and that Dulles wants to focus the whole thing on reuniting Germany, and claims that unless we reunite Germany and press for that, that that would be the genesis of World War III.

I, of course, had the position, and told the president, that you never could drive through a reunited Germany under the circumstances of that time, and that it was wrong to go to a brink of war over that kind of an issue, that the forces of history and economic competition would work it out gradually through the period of time. That, of course, also inter-tied with that matter of feeding the East German people, which is also described in the NSC minutes in the New York Times and in my book.

So Eisenhower was very well aware of the differences of my view of policy and Dulles' view. He said to me, "I don't want to overrule Foster right directly, because Foster is the secretary of state, and the whole setup for summit meetings is that they first have a meeting of the secretaries of state and foreign ministers, and then they have a meeting of the presidents and heads of state, and each one meets each day. I don't want to just bluntly overrule Foster on that, but I think I will want you there. So do you mind going over to Paris quietly and being available if General Goodpaster calls you to come on up to Geneva?"
I said, "No, I certainly will do that, if that's the way you want it." I made some further comment about Dulles was wrong to try to have the whole conference center on reuniting Germany, because that would mean a failed conference, bad for Eisenhower, bad for the world tensions.

So I did, then, slip out to Paris. Goodpaster called me to come forward, and then he also told me subsequently, that Rockefeller would also be there, because Rockefeller, at that time, was working on this matter of the contacts between East and West—the exchanges of delegations and students, scholarships and exhibitions.

When I arrived in Geneva, the president in the first meeting with Secretary Dulles and all the different representatives of our delegation, and with me, said, in Dulles's presence, that he wanted me to prepare this speech for the arms control and limitations, and that, of course, was the speech that brought forward the matter of the Open Skies.

Dulles made a further effort to leave the Open Skies out. In fact, in the draft that I circulated, I have the copy of my draft where he actually crossed out the Open Skies.

**Kirby:** This is the draft you drew up at Geneva?

**Stassen:** At Geneva, yes. The working method was that when I prepared the draft for the president, then everybody else that's involved gets a copy of that draft, so then when the president calls a session, they all know what he's talking about. That's the working method, a method that I've always followed very strictly. You might say I've had the handicap, at times, of others going around and talking to a president, without me present, about things very much in the line of my recommendations, but I still always went to the other method and kept them all advised.

Just like, too, when he asked me to do the first State of the Union message when he was not satisfied with the first three drafts that had been prepared for him, and I did the fourth draft. Then copies of that went to all the cabinet members before I flew off, under his orders, to Europe to assure the countries of Europe about the nature of the Eisenhower policies, because there had been so much attack on Eisenhower during the campaign that a general shouldn't be president. Of course, Truman had tried to put him down, and so had [Adlai] Stevenson. There was sort of a lot of misgivings in Europe—what would it mean to have a general as president of the United States. So assuring certain aspects of continuity was one part of the things that Dulles and I did on that first trip through Europe in 1953. But that trip, in turn, took us away from the United States during the period of the delivery of the first State of the Union Address.

**Kirby:** The follow-up for the Geneva Summit was the foreign ministers' meeting, at which Dulles was present. Do you believe that Dulles provided enough leadership, worked hard enough, for Open Skies? Of course, we're getting into the heart attack period now.

**Stassen:** Furthermore, there's a very important point there. First of all, immediately after the summit, Eisenhower sent a message, wrote a letter, to the Soviet Union that was really a superb letter. I think it's in my book. At least it's in the files. Then the heart attack came soon after that.
After the heart attack, and after other messages had come in from the Soviet Union, Dulles prepared a letter for the president to send, which shifted the follow-up of the whole matter of Open Skies and arms limitations over to the foreign ministers and secretary of state. I am quite certain that I never saw that draft before Eisenhower sent it; I never had a chance to confer with Dulles or the president about that draft, and that that, in effect, sort of sidetracked the follow-through on the Open Skies after the heart attack, and in a way that made a profound difference in the world picture.

But my basic view is that Eisenhower, in the period leading up to the Geneva Summit and in the Geneva Summit, and in his message immediately after the Geneva Summit, made such a powerful turning of the world toward peace that nothing in the intervening years could turn it back to the kind of tensions that there were before the war. And while there were long delays and frustrations and different kinds of policies and mistakes by other presidents since that time that you can trace through, I think future historians should trace through and realize that the ending of the Cold War and the reflection of the results of the competition of systems, without starting any bombing or shooting on our side, are so strong that Eisenhower's policies and Eisenhower's three years before his heart attack should be given very major credit, along with some credit for the United Nations organization and for other leaders along the road, for the fact that the Cold War ended and communism collapsed.

Kirby: You've had several interesting encounters with [Nikita] Khrushchev over the years.* One of them occurred on April 24, 1956, at Claridge's. It was a memorable exchange with Khrushchev and got a lot of attention. I wonder if you could tell us about that. This took place in the context of a U.N. subcommittee meeting in London in March 1945.

Stassen: Yes. In our negotiations we met in different locations, and at one period in time we were meeting in London in the so-called United Nations Subcommittee on Disarmament, which was a representation of the British and the French and Soviet Union and the United States and the Canadians. That was a subcommittee of the U.N. There was a period of time in there where we were having our sessions in London.

During that period, Khrushchev and [Nikolai] Bulganin scheduled a visit to the United Kingdom, to London, and to the officials of the United Kingdom.** Then when that was approaching, they extended an invitation for me to come to the reception. There was a big reception being held. Khrushchev and Bulganin were the ones conducting it. In other words, in those kinds of visits, there really is usually a reciprocity. There are certain events conducted by the host government and certain events conducted by the visitors in their embassy.


My recollection was that it was when the Soviet Union had their major reception, large number of people, a lot of hors d'oeuvres and so forth, that they invited me to come. As I did through the years, when he was working with me, my main staff person, my main research assistant, I asked that Bob Matteson be invited to come along with me.

So we went there, and we were in the reception line; we were having hors d'oeuvres, and then I was invited to come over to a side room. Bob Matteson went in with me, and there in the side room was Khrushchev and Bulganin, and they wanted to talk. So we had a very meaningful talk about the relations of the United States and the Soviet Union, and about our proposals and status of negotiations, hopes for negotiations, hopes for future relations. It was a real back-and-forth discussion. Went on for quite a long time.

We wrote a thorough report to the state department afterwards about the whole thing. Of course because of the charged atmosphere of all these negotiations, there were misrepresentations about it afterwards, but they were significant talks, and I think it advanced the fundamental objective of moving through that period of history without having the two superpowers begin a war.

Kirby: There have been some differing accounts of what happened there, but there is an available report that you wrote, I can't remember whether it's in the Eisenhower Library or here in the Matteson papers, but there is a report that you wrote available.

Stassen: I would think that probably the basic report at that time would have been a top secret report back to Dulles and the president, and I'm not sure whether that ever did become available. I don't know. I'm not sure. I have never had an occasion to check back on it. Bob Matteson has a remarkable memory and sort of a photographic mind, and he also has, of course, his own strong views, so he could write down recollections of it. They wouldn't necessarily be the same as mine. I'm not sure about that.

Kirby: It has been said that your position as disarmament advisor was a particularly difficult one in the time immediately after the heart attack, really throughout 1956, during the disarmament talks, because Dulles was on the ascendancy. You have spoken to this somewhat before, but is it accurate to say that the U.S. disarmament position was essentially on hold in 1956?

Stassen: There was certainly a great difference. In other words, I wouldn't quite describe it as being on hold, in that we kept working on these things, but you really couldn't move a controversial aspect without the president's direct decision. Of course, it came to a climax in the famous working paper—in other words, in effect, maneuvering so that I would get the president and the secretary of state and the secretary of defense and the chairman of the joint chiefs and the chairman of the Atomic Energy Commission all in the room together to see whether I could get authority for further initiative.

I finally got authority for sort of a working paper probe of Soviet position, because they started to make some moves of consenting to inspection stations and consenting to some limitations of
number of armed forces, and we were making progress. I drew up, with our delegation, what we called a working paper of a proposal, which was not a proposal of the government--there are copies of that paper available, I think I've already turned them in to the Minnesota Historical Society--and Eisenhower asked that I check with the NATO Council before presenting the working paper ideas to the Soviet Union.

So I went to Paris, directly from Washington, made a presentation to the NATO Council, got their blessing to go ahead with it, went over to London with this whole combined departmental delegation, and in the residence of the ambassador of the United States, I presented the working paper.

Years later, I found that Dulles then flew down to see Eisenhower at the Bermuda Conference, and claimed that I had gone ahead without talking to NATO, which was absolutely a false statement. I didn't know that he'd said that. But at that stage then, there was a series of events in which Dulles personally came to London and, in effect, chopped off the negotiations. In other words, he claimed I'd gone beyond my authority, and I had not. I didn't realize that he claimed I hadn't gone to NATO, because I had gone to NATO, and I did have a favorable thing. In fact, there was even a public report from NATO's own press release people that I'd been there and that they'd approved, or were favorably disposed toward, my discussion then of some exploratory zones of limitation in Europe and some beginning overflights of Open Skies. We were exploring different ways and different kinds of arms limitations.

Kirby: I just want to make it clear in my mind. Is this the May 1957 incident?

Stassen: Working paper, yes. That was one of the real climaxes of this period.

Kirby: This took place in the context of the London disarmament talks, as I recall, and you flew back to Washington to develop this working paper. I believe there was a meeting on May 25, 1957, at the White House, of key NSC advisors, and then you went back to Paris to consult with--

Stassen: NATO Council.

Kirby: Yes. You did consult the NATO Council, and then you went to London.

Stassen: There is a story. I think I discovered in someone's book, years later--Larson's book--Larson's book tells about Dulles coming down to Bermuda and so-called breaking into Eisenhower's office there with sort of a great display of anger at what I had done, and I didn't know about his claim. Of course, that was a period in which he sent Ambassador Holmes over to sort of sit in with me in order to sort of monitor what I was doing. There was a lot of that very difficult circumstance. So that if I'd known all about these things, at that time currently, I might have said to the president, "We've got to have a joint session and really bring all these things out, and you have to decide," or something like that.
But I had great reluctance to put him into a very tough session because of the heart attack, and because, of course, the ever-present thing that if we had too much tension and too much explosive situation, and if the heart attack caused him to pass away, then we'd have a great tragedy. So those were the kind of equations that had to be considered as to how we moved along.

Kirby: Some observers have said that when that event transpired, Dulles was already conducting almost open warfare on you.

Stassen: Yes.

Kirby: The specific case they refer to is Dulles' effort, successful effort, to transfer the Office of Disarmament from the White House to the state department, which I believe was accomplished on March 1, 1957. Did you feel that your access to Eisenhower in the months preceding that incident was limited, that you had less access to Eisenhower because of Dulles?

Stassen: Yes, but not as much because of Dulles, but because of my...I'll put it this way, I don't think I ever asked to have a personal session with Eisenhower on these kind of issues without Dulles and [Arthur C.] Radford and [Lewis L.] Strauss present. I felt in the first place, of course, that it wouldn't be an intelligent procedure to try to have him make decisions without them, that he certainly would want them joining in the decisions, or at least want to listen to them first. So it was a very difficult time to know just how to work. And then having in mind that he had the heart attack and then some other illnesses, so that there were these kind of limitations. How do you operate under these circumstances? What do you do? And so forth.

Kirby: Just to continue this line of questioning, Eisenhower said in his memoirs that you were convinced, prior to May 1957, that the Soviets were eager for a test ban and a halt in production because of the progress the British were making with their H-bomb program, the proliferation of nuclear weapons. You were convinced they were eager for an agreement. Do you believe that an agreement was possible in May of 1957? At the time, do you think you were close to achieving an agreement?

Stassen: I wouldn't say that. I would say that clearly we were making headway, clearly we were having an impact right in the top. There's no question about reaching the top leaders of the Soviet Union, because, as I say, when Khrushchev and Bulganin were in London, there's no question that they wanted to talk.

Have you seen the so-called working paper? You have. I used it, in effect, to try to inform and develop the understanding of the leaders of the Soviet Union about the world picture, in other words, about the nature of the United States policies. Also I tried to use my 1947 conference with [Joseph] Stalin to get through, into the top levels, some different understanding effects. I did always feel that there was a correct analysis of facts, there was a mutual interest in not having a nuclear war. That was a hard, fundamental fact, so then it was the matter of working back from there. There was an element, of course, the British were very determined to go ahead
with developing their own nuclear weapon, and they became concerned that if the United States and the Soviet Union reached agreement to stop nuclear testing, that the offshoot of it, they'd have to stop, and there were those kind of concerns crosscutting in there. There were elements on the French side of the concern as to what the implications would be.

So there were all these tremendous differences of viewpoints and the implications, and we had to constantly try to analyze them all and try to follow them, and then try to figure out how do you make progress through them.

Of course, I always did feel that the progress, the measure of it, was not so much the question of whether you reached any certain agreement, but what was the influence in totality toward increasing the danger of a war or decreasing the danger of a war. That was what the final test was.

Because, you know, you can reach treaty agreements, and the treaty agreement can be the thing that explodes the world into war. So that's part of my analysis of where we were and how we should conduct it, and in a way I would think that through this whole period, I would say that anyone would have had exactly and comprehensively the same analysis, day to day, that I was having. In other words, I had to be the final analysis of what should I do next.

**Kirby:** Do you recall the Soviet response to your May twenty-first meeting?

**Stassen:** Yes. I have a copy of that, too. Have you seen that?

**Kirby:** Yes. Would you consider that to be a favorable response, or at least a constructive response?

**Stassen:** Before that response came, there had been some, in effect, chopping-down of what I was working on by others. I do not know--and I don't know whether we ever will know--what did the Soviet Union leaders hear, or what was reported to them, between the time of my working paper and the time of their response.

**Kirby:** This paper generally offered the Soviets a brief suspension in testing in return for future limitations on nuclear weapons production. That's, of course, an oversimplification, but that might be a good summary.

**Stassen:** It's not quite an adequate summary. There's a lot more to it than that.

**Kirby:** Yes. Lewis Strauss, in particular, was adamant that no test ban shut off U.S. development of a "clean bomb."

**Stassen:** Yes. Lewis Strauss, and I think Ed Teller, went to see the president at that stage, to press their viewpoint.
Kirby: Again, do you think was a deliberate effort to stop the movement toward the treaty?

Stassen: Yes, definitely. Sure. They didn't want any restriction of any kind.

Kirby: You did return to Washington on June eighth for a consultation with Dulles. Do you recall that meeting? I understand that you did fly back on June eighth for a meeting with Dulles, where you talked to him about the overall decision. Does that meeting stand out in your memory? Do you recall it at all?

Stassen: June eighth of what year?

Kirby: Of 1958. This is following the May thirty-first presentation of the talking paper.

Stassen: It couldn't be.

Kirby: I know that you went to, I believe, your son's commencement.

Stassen: I was going to say that I came back for my son's commencement, and, at that same time, had some conferences. Do you have the records? What was the date when Dulles came to London?

Kirby: Dulles came to London a couple of months later, and I didn't bring that date with me, I'm afraid. Oh, yes, Dulles went to London on July twenty-ninth. Of course, Julius Holmes flies on back to London with you.

I may be wrong about this. Did this incident pretty much shut off any realistic progress toward a comprehensive treaty during your service in the Eisenhower administration?

Stassen: You can't really say any one thing shut it off. We kept endeavoring to work on it, endeavoring to break through. Of course, there was this very strong British interest in going ahead with their testing and their production of atomic weapons, and then there was the French viewpoint, along with, of course, Strauss' viewpoint.

Kirby: You did leave the Eisenhower administration in February of 1958.

Stassen: You were talking a minute ago about '57, weren't you?

Kirby: Yes.

Stassen: You said '58. I think you misspoke.

Kirby: Oh, did I? I'm sorry.


**Stassen:** Because I did leave the administration in '58.

**Kirby:** Yes. I'm so sorry. So are you satisfied overall that all was done that could have been done during your service in the Eisenhower administration to achieve a treaty with the Soviet Union on arms control?

**Stassen:** I did the best I could, at each stage of it. If there had not been the heart attack, I would have been a more, you might say, insistent on a review of the first years of tough issues--

**Kirby:** Governor Stassen, another foreign policy follow-up question. Robert Matteson has spoken about two foreign policies within the Eisenhower administration--yours and Secretary Dulles'. You've already indicated some degree of the differences between the two. Do you think it's accurate to say that there were two competing foreign policies within the Eisenhower administration?

**Stassen:** I wouldn't put it that way. I don't remember ever reading Bob Matteson's article, and, of course, he and others at times would move into the confrontation thing when I would still be trying to persuade. Through the years, I've had many experiences of persuading people to go along on an objective that's very important. You might say that I never stopped trying to convince Foster Dulles in what I believed was the right move to make. I did make some headway with him at times, and, of course, sometimes I would deliberately have Allen Dulles, his brother, and Foster together in the conference in order to try to get some different kind of reasoning in it from Allen--different factual facts.

In retrospect, I did reach the conclusion in 1958 that, under all the circumstances, I couldn't accomplish anything more inside the administration, and that it would be better if I got out and then was free to express my views personally and thoroughly, which I then did. But in retrospect, it's my feeling that Dulles' cancer development affected him for quite a long period of time.

I think this was one of the areas that there needs to be more medical and comprehensive study--when an individual has a developing cancer, what is the effect on his mental and reasoning capability and so forth. I've had a number of experiences with individuals through the years, various kinds, and when they finally discover that they do have a cancer, that has had a profound effect.

Of course, one of the most dramatic was the change of real personality expression of [Martin P.] Durkin in the cabinet of the administration, the secretary of labor, where he became very sort of cantankerous and noncooperative in the administration, and then it developed that he had a brain cancer. I think that was the beginning, and it affected him much before the tragic shift of his

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kind of analysis and participation.

I believe that there was an impact of cancer on Dulles' attitudes, long before it was diagnosed, at least publicly diagnosed, that he had cancer.

But in any event, my approach kept on the line, working on convincing Dulles and Strauss and everybody else on these foreign policy issues, and also being willing to listen to their arguments and analyze their views, and then, of course, participate with Eisenhower.

As I've indicated already, there was a very major difference in the matter of policy decisions after the Eisenhower heart attack, from before that. Of course, my basic objective the whole time was the try to move the policies of our own and other countries in a way that would decrease the danger of the outbreak of a nuclear third war.

**Kirby:** Shifting to the policies of the Republican party on domestic matters, could you tell us about your decision to run for governor of Pennsylvania in 1958, after you resigned from the Eisenhower administration?

**Stassen:** When I decided I couldn't accomplish anything more inside the administration, I not only wanted to go out then and be free--since I had imposed on myself a restriction of not speaking out in a dissenting way from Eisenhower's decisions, or the perception of Eisenhower's policies--but then also that if I could develop some manifestation of political support, that it would increase the strength of my voice. Plus the fact that it is my view, and continues to be my view, that there isn't any equivalent--other than being in an elected office--to that of being a candidate for an elected office, as a method of having your views reported and considered, both by the media and by the public, and that this is a very important aspect.

I sometimes put it this way--if somebody goes down on a main street and throws a rock through a window or burns the United States flag, they get a lot of attention, and then they tell what they're protesting about. That's kind of a realistic aspect, an unusual aspect of the media, and that has to be taken into account.

Naturally, not wanting to do any of those kind of things, and yet wanting to have an impact on the policy of the country and the decisions of the people, you then have to be a candidate and express your views. Of course, there have been many instances, in many different circumstances through the years, and I consider that in nearly every campaign that I conducted, there was some value out of it through the years.

One of the most dramatic, of course, was that in my second election as governor, on the foreign policy issue there was a general sort of a perception that Minnesota and that a lot of the country was isolationist. But I came out very strongly, very early, just the opposite of isolationism, and as a matter of our participation in the world.

Then, when in November of 1940, even though [Wendell] Willkie was defeated, the fact that I
was decisively reelected gave my voice much more clout from that time on in the political circles, because then I wasn't just the Boy Wonder or accidental governor of 1938 with what many of the old-timers thought were erroneous views; I became someone who had been carrying out some things successfully, and whose people had given him a strong endorsement and actually, at that time, against an America First campaign by Hjalmer Peterson.

I've been a strong believer, always, in trying to find ways in which you can reach the people with an informative, detailed explanation of the basis of policy, and then give them a chance to express their views upon it.

There's another aspect of that. The whole development of the so-called negative campaigning in more recent years tends to mitigate against having elections serve as a basis of deciding issues. So that needs a lot of continuing study.

Plus the fact of the sort of over-exaggeration in the television age, of the pictorial incident, as I mentioned earlier, the breaking of a window or the burning of a flag. A pictorial incident becomes the greater impact than almost anything else you can do.

So that's been the situation, so I've been very realistic and knowing that on the one hand the Republican establishment is much more conservative than I am, and, of course, in the Eisenhower nomination we carried through the issue with a lot of detail against the Taft view of being anti-NATO, being semi-isolationist, being sort of anti-organized labor. We carried it through to the Eisenhower election and made quite an impact also on the policy structures. But that was somewhat short-circuited by the heart attack, and its further follow-through. So realistically analyzing all of these circumstances, has then led to my various decisions through the years.

Kirby: I'm sure people would be interested in learning what you've done through the years. In 1958, I believe, you established a law practice in Philadelphia, and you remained in Philadelphia until some time, I believe, before you came back to Minnesota.

Stassen: Yes. I've been an activist and I've had a very active law practice. A very successful law practice, having come out of the Eisenhower administration, and, of course, I had a very successful law practice before I became governor. There have been those two periods in which I've been an active lawyer. But also I've continued to be active on policy analysis, policy participation in any opening I had, of the convictions I've had, and I've been, of course, aware that the establishment of our Republican party through the years has not been as friendly to organized labor as I have been. That's naturally used against me by political opponents. They don't have the same view toward the rest of the world as I've had, so have different policy convictions.

Of course, I've had another factor that I think is kind of an oral discussion that I should make some direct exposition of. From the very beginning, as a district attorney, as a county attorney, and, of course, especially as the governorship, it has become increasingly clear to everyone that
there is no way whatsoever that they could ever buy a decision from me, nor is there any way that
anybody else could be in a position where they would demand a decision of me. In other words,
I've never been under the control of any organization or individual, and, of course, I have a career
of never having been involved in anything that had any kind of a bribery aspect to it.

It's realistic to know that when special interests are pressing hard on something and want special
favors, in many instances they want an officeholder who will respond to some kind of incentive
or offer other than convincing him of the merits of the proposal.

So I recognized all aspects of this in the political operation, and operated within these kind of
personal convictions and rules, and at the same time, knowing how difficult that is in the political
operation. Of course, as you get more and more of the utilization of large funds for the
advertising of political views, and more and more toward emphasizing negative views instead of
affirmative views, it makes it more and more difficult for the way in which you carry on
successfully my kind of political objectives.

Kirby: Speaking of personal convictions, you have been active in the Baptist Church throughout
the years.

Stassen: Yes, all through the years. I am a person with a deep and abiding faith in God, with a
personal conviction of Christianity, with a respect for all other religions and all number of
conclusions of conscience. That's been basic as a lifelong philosophy. Out of that, of course, I
was asked to be president, at one stage, of the American Baptist Convention, where they alternate
between the clergymen and the laymen.

It was in that capacity, in fact, that I made a presentation of a peace award to Martin Luther King,
Jr., very early in his career, long before his great message. I was personally present in the march
to the Lincoln Memorial where he made his famous "I Have a Dream" speech. I took part in and
supervised the raising of funds in the American Baptist Convention to present to him, down in
his church, for support for his activities.

Of course, I have met with Dr. Albert Schweitzer and studied his philosophy and theology of
"reverence for life," and evaluated that in relation to other things.

Kirby: Do you remember the circumstances of this award to King?

Stassen: It was when I was president of the American Baptist Convention, and it was in Atlantic
City. That would be 1963, I believe--quite early in the totality picture. It would have been prior
to the "I Have a Dream" speech, in the period when he was first building up.

Kirby: You've been active in efforts, as you've described, in liberalizing the Republican party.
From your perspective of your sincerity, would you be willing to evaluate for us the foreign and
domestic policies of presidents since Eisenhower? I wonder if you could tell us your views on
Vietnam, for instance.
**Stassen:** My view on Vietnam was that--and these are of record--it was a very bad mistake to drive into the jungles of Vietnam. I tried to dissuade them, President [Lyndon B.] Johnson particularly. Of course, I supported, internally, Eisenhower in refusing to go into direct American combat, but provide only arms and advice to the Vietnamese. My view was that the United States should take a stronghold on Cam Ranh Bay, which was the naval base, and a strong hold on the Mekong Delta, not go into the jungles, to try to get both North Vietnamese and South Vietnamese invited into the United Nations, get a United Nations force put in at the dividing line, and then let those forces of history and their competition of systems work their way out. I am on record that it was a mistake to drive in the jungles, and it was a mistake to pull out completely from Vietnam.

Of course, anyone who wants to evaluate it now...there would have been a tremendous difference if we'd held Cam Ranh Bay and had that as a great American base out there, instead of just relying on Subic Bay and Clark air field.

**Kirby:** Was Nixon's performance as president something you might have predicted from your experience with him in the 1950s?

**Stassen:** Well, yes. I'm frequently asked now, in more recent years, how did I happen, as your question put it, to more or less correctly analyze Nixon at such an early date. It's a strange way of putting the question, because, of course, at first I was put down as doing a terrible thing in trying to get Chris Herter nominated for vice president. But now in more recent years, that's been understood more, and I think if those tapes ever open up and they really study the whole discussions of Nixon with his people, they'll understand more and more about what, after sitting across the table from him for three years, I had felt about him.

Also, you have to understand the conflict. My view is that you do need to maintain two major political parties, and that leaders don't jump around between parties; they have to go along with even disagreeable decisions in parties, and let the people move between parties and between their candidates in their decisions, that that's the best operation of a free system.

For example, as a matter of record, through the years, I was very much opposed to [Barry M.] Goldwater being the nominee, but when he became the nominee, I supported him.* I did not jump away from Goldwater. I've worked on the basis of the long-term continuing influence on policy decisions.

I think it's probably a good place to bring it right down to date. I haven't turned these papers over

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yet, but I tried, up to the very last day to move both President [George] Bush and Saddam Hussein away from starting war--bombing and shooting. I wrote a whole series of messages to the president, pointing out Eisenhower's restraint, his willingness to show force, but his great restraint on starting any bombing or shooting, and I do consider, right today, that President Bush made a tragic mistake in opening up the bombing and the shooting. It did not open windows for peace; it closed the avenues of peace in the Middle East for the time being, and opened up many other tragic kind of circumstances.

My views continue to be very much in line with the policies expressed by Eisenhower in those years before the heart attack when Eisenhower was Eisenhower, so to speak, and in fact views with which I'd had some participation in and influence.

That's about the nub of it. My philosophy and convictions and policies and principles have not basically changed through the years, but they have tried to adjust to the factual conditions, and to still keep thinking about the future.

Kirby: Speaking of the future, Governor, you've spoken with us over the past five days about the past, and I know your perspective has always been toward the future. I wonder, speaking now in June of 1991, if you could tell us in general terms of what you would like to see happening within the Republican party and the country, in general, in the future. Can you tell us a little bit of that, as a way of concluding this interview?

Stassen: As a matter of fact, I'm in the process of thinking and listening and trying to decide in what way I can have the best influence on the future policies of our country.

As I indicated, I tried very hard to move President Bush back from the beginning of the bombing and the shooting. I offered to go over there to try to negotiate a peaceful conclusion before. I think it was a very bad mistake for us not to take any part in the negotiations between Iraq and Kuwait and Saudi Arabia before the invasion, and, of course, also a very bad mistake not to...it was right to go in with our forces to stop him [Saddam Hussein] from going on in to Saudi Arabia, no doubt about that. That was a clear kind of affirmative move, showing force and stopping the aggression. But it was wrong to open up the bombing, and wrong not to sit down with our representatives with him, and emphasizing that they should do that.

I did offer to go over with anybody that they wanted to designate to go with me, because in the Eisenhower years, of course, I did have a lot of negotiations and worked with all those countries, as well as I was in charge of the [Foreign] Operations program toward seventy-one countries of the world. That's the nub of that.

But right now, I wouldn't try today to say just what is the best way to influence United States Republican policy or the United States national policy for the future years, but I am thinking a lot about it.

Kirby: Governor Stassen, the Minnesota Historical Society thanks you very much for these interviews. Thank you very much.