Interview with Robert E. Matteson

Interviewed by Alec Kirby
Minnesota Historical Society

Interviewed on May 30 and 31, 1991

AK: Let's go back to World War II, if we could. World War II was a pivotal time in your life. It changed a lot of things. Can we go back, and can you tell us what you were doing at the time of Pearl Harbor? You were at Carleton at that time, I believe, and you were an instructor at Carleton College. You have listed President Cowling as a primary influence on your life. Can you tell me why President Cowling was so important to you?

RM: President Cowling was a great friend of my mother's. My brother had been at Carleton and died of pneumonia there in 1932 in the infirmary. Dr. Cowling felt badly about that. He felt the medical attention he'd been given wasn't good enough. My mother, after that, gave the Madison Basketball Trophy to Carleton in memory of my brother. That was in 1934, and I had gone to Carleton in 1933. Dr. Cowling, after my mother and father were killed in the automobile accident in March 1936--I was a junior--became sort of my foster father. [Referring to photograph]

He wanted people more interested in government to go into the government, because he was extremely conservative and didn't like the Roosevelt New Deal. He introduced me to Harold Stassen in 1938 in June at the Minnesota Club. He had been an early supporter of Governor Stassen's, because they both were interested in the League of Nations, and they both knew Frank B. Kellogg, who was then secretary of state for Minnesota. The day of my graduation, 1937, the Kellogg Foundation gift was announced--$500,000 to set up the Kellogg Chair at Carleton had come.

That's how I became an earlier supporter in Governor Stassen's 1938 race for governor. So he introduced me to Stassen, hoping that I would go with him, and I would bring along with me his extremely conservative point of view. But he was disappointed in that, because it turned out that I wasn't as conservative as he was.

AK: I do know that Governor Stassen and the president had a falling-out of sorts a little later.

RM: That's right.

AK: Perhaps we could get back to that a little later. During World War II, at first you
moved to the State Department, after working for the Surplus Marketing Administration. Just very briefly, during your time at the State Department, did you form any early impressions of what the State Department was like, the way it operated, that you reevaluated later or that you found to be correct later? Were there any early impressions you had of the State Department that stand out in your mind? At this time, you were working for John Dryer.

**RM:** Yes.

**AK:** I believe, at the time, you wrote a couple of memos that were somewhat critical of the way the State Department was slow, ponderous. Was that your impression of the State Department?

**RM:** Yes, I had two impressions. One was that there was a division of opinion that ran all the way through the State Department between those who advocated what might be called a hard line and those who advocated something that was more conciliatory. This was shown by the difference between Lawrence Duggan, who was the political advisor of the secretary, and L. Voncil, who was the head of the Division of American Republics. That impression is reinforced later on when I went back into the government in 1953.

Also, I had the impression that with a war on and Latin America being more or less out of the central theater, it was sort of a backwater. I wanted to get where the action was, and I, therefore, decided to leave after six months. I was married and had one child, and so I was deferred. But I volunteered, and they were happy to accept me.

**AK:** Right before we get to that, while you were in the State Department, you had the opportunity to observe Nelson Rockefeller, another individual that you had worked with in the 1950s, or come to know in the 1950s. I realize that Nelson Rockefeller did not work in the State Department, but what was your early impression of Nelson Rockefeller? You describe him in your book as a "doer," somebody who put an emphasis on results. Am I stating your views correctly, and is that the way you found him in the 1950s?

**RM:** Yes, I liked Nelson Rockefeller. He was liberal. He wanted to get things done. He was unhappy with the bureaucracy. And he had a nice personality. He, at that point, in 1943, was Coordinator of Inter-American Affairs. So there was some interconnection there between our office and his.

**AK:** If I might ask you just one more question about the State Department. You mentioned that there was great tension between Cordell Hull and Sumner Welles. Do you remember the nature of this conflict, this tension between Hull and Welles? It might not be that important of a question. I just thought I would ask.

**RM:** I don't know.
AK: Okay. You mentioned that you were not content to remain at State with the war going on. You wanted to get into the action. You chose to enlist as a private in the Army. I'm asking these next series of questions because we'd like to get a personal glimpse of you in this time period. You chose to enlist as a private in the Army, and you seemed to be particularly enthusiastic about being a private in the Army. Why?

RM: Good question. It was because I was always eager to see the other side of the track, and I wanted to see how things were with people who hadn't had some of the advantages that I have had. Another example of that was when I went down to Washington as an intern, a Rockefeller intern in the National Institute of Public Affairs in '34 or '37. I decided to live in a tenement on 14th Street where they didn't have running water and you had a pump. They had kerosene lights. I didn't stay there very long. I stayed there about, I think, a month or six weeks.

AK: On 14th Street, Northeast?

RM: Yes, that's right.

AK: I lived at that location myself a few years ago. It's changed a great deal.

You, with a Harvard background, a background in public administration, were placed in antiaircraft artillery training. Was this by choice?

RM: No. I knew nothing about it and had really no interest in it.

AK: Are there any memories that you could share with us of basic training at Camp Callan, any memories that stand out in your mind about what you experienced there?

RM: At Camp Callan, what I remember the most was when we were out on some field exercise climbing a cliff, and cutting my leg, and so I had to go to the hospital. This delayed my departure, and my unit shipped out without me. So I was up for reassignment, and I was reassigned to the infantry and was on desert maneuvers in Arizona. I went with the 80th Infantry Division as an infantryman in the Yuma desert maneuvers.

AK: It's not clear to me how you wound up placed in the Camp Ritchie Intelligence School after you were assigned to the 80th Infantry. How did that come about?

RM: It came about, one day I was out on maneuvers--on a night maneuver, I guess it was. I was called down to headquarters. They said my name had come up for assignment to Camp Ritchie Intelligence School. So they asked whether that interested me. I said it did. They lost my name, which was sort of par for the course, and I didn't hear anything
more about it until about two or three weeks later when they called me again. They said, "Your name has come up for reassignment to Camp Ritchie."

And I said, "You told me this two or three weeks ago, and nothing happened."

They said, "Well, we lost your name."

So the idea was for me to go there, still be assigned to the 80th Infantry Division but go with the G-2 of the 80th Division headquarters in the counterintelligence corps—the photo interpretation, it was at that point.

AK: You left for France on August second. You almost immediately toured the front with the chief of—of course, you went to England first. Then you went to France. And upon arriving in France, you toured the front, do you remember, with the chief of staff? If you don't remember that trip, what was your first impression, personally, of the war, upon seeing the real war, as you say, for the first time? What stands out in your mind that you remember the most?

RM: I remember seeing some villages that were destroyed badly. I remember the hedge rows and the gun emplacements. I remember the sounds, at night particularly, of shells coming in. And I remember that we were stuck there for a while until, I guess it was, the breakthrough at Avranches. And then we were like a genie out of a bottle. We moved fast. We moved south. We were supposed to go into Paris, at first, to liberate Paris. But they wanted the French Second Army to go in because it was Paris. They wanted their own people to liberate Paris. So we went south. Our objective was Moselle. And we raced across France. I remember seeing at night—I was driving in the back of a truck—these villages that were on fire and stood out against the dark sky.

We'd occasionally run into snipers, but no organized opposition. Patrick Kelly, I think was his name, was the staff sergeant who was, I guess, the G-2 and an enlisted man. He was wounded in the truck. I was sitting, I think, in the same truck. He got shot, but he wasn't shot badly. That was the only incident that happened all the way across to Moselle.

AK: As I understand it, it was during the Battle of the Bulge that you were assigned to the CIC European theater. Is that correct?

RM: Yes. What happened was that somebody in CIC had been killed about that time. Instead of sending back to the United States for a replacement, Captain McMillen, who was the head of the CIC detachment, picked me out from the photo interpretation part of the G-2. I think I'd had a respectable score on the Army intelligence test, and he was impressed by that, I guess. I never really talked to him about it. But he asked for me, and they agreed to let me go and go into that. This was the time when we were near Nancy on the Moselle.
AK: Now, Germany surrendered on May 7, 1945, and it was on that day, as I understand it, that you learned where General Kaltenbrunner was. You learned his whereabouts, as I understand it. How did you become involved in the Kaltenbrunner case? Was it part of your duties to trace down Nazis?

RM: Yes. It was one of the many tasks. In fact, the main task was to search out Nazis wherever they were, particularly those who were in the Gestapo, the SD, the intelligence service, and those that were in the extermination squads, and also those who were in the Abwehr, the military intelligence. And it was just by accident that I came across the trail of Kaltenbrunner, as we pursued the remnants of the men who were going south to join up with the mythical national redoubt defense.

AK: Yes, you and Sydney Bruskin, I believe, happened to learn the whereabouts of him, and you contacted the Austrian police, and they told you that Kaltenbrunner and Dr. Robert Ley had passed through Gmunden, as I understand it. In your pursuit of Kaltenbrunner, you were, as I understand it, the first to reach the concentration camp, Ebensee, on May fifth. This was May fifth before the surrender, as I understand it. Can you tell us about what you found, what you saw, at this concentration camp? The Germans had left, as I understand it.

RM: The day before, yes. What we found was barbed-wire fence with a lock on a gate. And the first thing I remember was these inmates who came to the gate and to the fence in rags and unshaven and looking gaunt and wanting to get out and wanting food. I think we broke the lock and went in. They took us to the hospital, and the hospital was next to the crematorium. In the hospital on shelves—they looked like shelves—were two, sometimes three people, huddled together under rags, blankets, that were tattered and worn, and they wanted food and medical help. We didn't have any, so they started to cry. Then they took us over to the crematorium, and the crematorium was stacked high with bodies that they couldn't burn fast enough, because the people were dying so fast. And then they took us back to the chemical ditch behind the crematorium where they had what they called the [German word] a decree that Kaltenbrunner had initiated, where they shot them in the back of the neck and they fell back into the chemical ditch and their bodies would decompose over time.

AK: This occurred during your pursuit of Kaltenbrunner. You found his wife first. Could you tell us how you happened to find and capture his wife?

RM: She was in Strobl on Vochlenbruch, and we had come into Bad Ischl. As we always did, we contacted the police and the Austrian resistance. We learned from Sepp Plieseis, who was the head of the Austrian freedom movement, that Mrs. Kaltenbrunner was in this villa in Strobl, which was about something like thirty or forty kilometers west. So I asked for an escort to go out there. We went out, and Sepp Dietrich's Panzer Army was retreating before the Russians were coming in from the east.
We got out to Strobl, and we contacted the mayor. The mayor was very frightened. He knew where Mrs. Kaltenbrunner was, and he agreed to take us out and point out the villa, but he didn't want to go up to it. So I went, and I had to walk up a long walkway and leave the car down by the gate.

**AK:** And you walked up to the villa alone?

**RM:** Yes. And as I walked up, some men came out of the woods, and they were the Dienstelle Kaltenbrunner. I think he was number fourteen assigned to protect Kaltenbrunner's wife and family. And they came out and had heard over the radio that Germans were being called on by Eisenhower to turn in their arms. They knew the war was over. They wanted to go home. They had had enough of the war. So they didn't do anything to me. They just followed me up.

I rang the doorbell, and this large blonde woman with dark glasses came to the door. I said I wanted to see Frau Kaltenbrunner. My German wasn't very good, but I could make myself understood. I forget what she said, whether she said she was Frau Kaltenbrunner or what.

In any event, I got inside, and she went upstairs. I didn't know what she went upstairs for. I didn't go upstairs. I started looking around downstairs, and I think it was then that I found the first picture that we had of Kaltenbrunner. He had tried to hide his identity, because Heydrich, his predecessor, had been assassinated in Prague. And the first picture that the American press had had of him after he was captured, in the U.S. press, was a picture of H. V. Kaltenborn. It didn't look anything like him, but the name was similar.

**AK:** It was an oversight on somebody's part, then.

**RM:** Yes.

**AK:** She directed you to her husband, and she wrote a note to him?

**RM:** No, that was later with a mistress.

**AK:** Oh, I'm sorry.

**RM:** She said she didn't know where Kaltenbrunner had gone, and she said he'd been there--I think it was on May second--and had held a meeting with Dr. Wilhelm Hoettl, who was the head of one of the offices in the Sicherheitsdienst, the SD, the intelligence, and a group of other people. He had taken off, but she didn't know where he had gone. So I told her that she was under arrest for further questioning and took her down to the car. She went up and packed her stuff. Her bodyguards came after me as we came out to
the car. They didn't try to prevent me from taking her. They were thinking of their own lives and what was going to happen to them rather than about her.

So we took her back through Bad Ischl. By that time, Sepp Plieseis was a communist and fought in the Spanish Civil War, had information that Kaltenbrunner was in the town of Alt Aussee. I took Mrs. Kaltenbrunner back to our 80th Division headquarters for further questioning and told them the information I had and asked for permission to go outside of the 80th Division area, which Alt Aussee was outside of the area, and go up and try to find him. I got permission to go, and I left early the next morning, picked up my interpreter, and then we went on up into Alt Aussee and got there, I think it was 8:30 in the morning.

**AK:** And this was on May eleventh?

**RM:** I think it was, yes.

**AK:** Yes. At this point, you develop a plan to capture Kaltenbrunner, who was up at the cabin. Correct?

**RM:** Yes.

**AK:** And this turned out to be quite an operation. How was the plan developed? Was it your idea, the way it was going to be carried out?

**RM:** Yes. What happened was that when we got into Alt Aussee that morning, the first person we happened to run across was Prince Chlodwig-Hohenlohe, who was down looking at the Nazi RSHA unit headquarters. They were occupying one of his buildings. He was a large landowner, his family had been, and his grandfather had been the emperor of Germany. He arranged for us to get a room in the Eibl, the hotel there. I contacted, again, the mayor. The deputy mayor was really part of the Austrian freedom movement, and he had information from a forest ranger than Kaltenbrunner was up in the Alt Aussersee, which was a six-hour climb in the Totes Gebirges, the ten mountains of the Austrian Alps. I asked him to get me guides, including the forest ranger, to take me up there. And the idea was my plan.

**RM:** But they brought four men, and they were all ex-Wehrmacht, people who knew the area well. They hunted in the area. But they were miners in the salt mine. They told me that we had to leave about midnight, because we wanted to get up there when the crust on the snow was still hard. It was in May, and when the sun in May would hit the crust by noon, it would be soft and you'd sink in, and at the pass there was three feet of snow. They brought me Austrian clothes, and we got dressed in the office, the office that the RSHA unit had there on the main street. The four Austrians brought rifles with telescopic sights. The plan was for them to lead me up to within a couple of hundred yards of the
cabin, and I would walk up alone without any arms, acting as a passerby who was traveling over the mountains between the valleys because the transportation had been knocked out. And that's what we did.

But, in the meantime, there was a man named Major Ralph Pearson, who was part of the 80th Division headquarters. He was the head of the military government. He was with, I think it was, the 318th Infantry Regiment. Information had come back from the head of the Austrian resistance that there were art treasures in the area of Alt Aussee that were hidden in the mine. And he being in the military government, that was one of their assignments, to recapture things of value that were like the Austrian and European art that had been taken by Nazis and were being put into places of safekeeping. He insisted, because he was in charge of the area, that I, who was then under him, take a squad of infantry. I objected because I thought it would blow the plan if they saw a squad of infantry with rifles and uniforms. We finally agreed that I'd be in charge of the operation and that I would agree to them coming along, but they would stay out of sight and down the slope so that anybody in the cabin wouldn't see them.

AK: Were these infantry that he insisted you bring along American troops?

RM: Yes, they were volunteers, because the war was ended. They wanted to go home. They didn't want to get killed. Most of them didn't want to get killed when they were on the eve of going home. And so those that came were all volunteers.

AK: So you went up the mountain with the four Austrian guides and the American infantry people. And you were also carrying a note from his mistress.

RM: Yes, from Gisela von Westarp, who was a blonde, twenty-two-year-old countess who was working in the Himmler headquarters as a secretary. That's where Kaltenbrunner had met her and had started a liaison with her. And as a result of the liaison were twins born in March 1945, and this was May 1945. They were two twins, one boy named Wolfgang, and the other a girl named Ursula. And she didn't want Kaltenbrunner killed. She knew the Russians were coming in from the other side. She wanted to go up with us, but she had the twins. And the deputy Arthur Scheidler's wife, Iris Scheidler, wanted to go, too, because her husband was with Kaltenbrunner. She thought if she went with us that this would serve to protect them; there wouldn't be any shooting if they saw her with us. I, not knowing what they were up to, rejected the whole idea and left them under the guard of Sydney Bruskin in the house. It was called a guest house--a stable, I guess it was called, that they made into a guest house of Prince Chlodwig-Hohenlohe.

AK: Can you describe the scene for us? When you went up the mountain, at 500 yards from the cabin you set out alone. Can you describe the scene? What happened next?
RM: I walked up on the blind side of the cabin. There was one side that had no windows, and there was a wood shed attached to it. I remember feeling very much alone and wondering why I was doing it. I heard the signal. I thought it was the signal. It turned out to be a bird that was flying through, and I thought to myself that the bird felt about as lonely as I did. I got up on the porch, and I knocked on the door. I could hear snoring coming out from one of the shutters to the left of the door. I went over, and I knocked on the shutter. A man got out of bed and came across and asked me what I wanted. I told him I was cold, I was passing over the mountain to the other valley, and I'd been traveling all night. He looked at me as if to say he couldn't believe what he was seeing. I took out then the note from Gisela von Westrap and gave it to him, and he came out on the porch. He didn't let me go in. I could see that there was another man in the bunk next to the bunk that he'd gotten out of. That's all I could see, just one other person. And he came out, read the note. It took him a long time to read it. He was trying to figure out what it was all about. The four Austrians who were watching all this from down below from behind there—I guess it was rocks—came out with their weapons in a carried position, not in a shooting position. They thought, as they told me later, it was a false lead and that nothing was going to happen. When he saw them, he turned around and went over to the trousers hanging beside his bed, pulled out a revolver and came toward me. I got off the porch over to the blind side of the cabin where he couldn't see me, and they, seeing this, took cover, and they sent the message back to the infantry squad to come up.

So we went up on the porch and we waited for a while, called for them to come out. They didn't respond. A man came out at one point and looked around and went back in again. We started to force the door, and when we did that, the door opened and four men came out with their hands over their heads. One of them, I could see right away, was Kaltenbrunner, but he was using the name and false papers of a doctor in the medical part of the Wehrmacht. And when we searched the cabin, we found Gestapo Badge No. 2 and Kripo [Kriminalpolizei] Badge No. 2. We found his card indicating that he was the head of the German intelligence, the SD. These were in the ashes of the stove where he'd thrown them, I guess, just that morning, not thinking that anybody would be up there. We found the last message that he'd sent by wireless to Hitler's headquarters and telling them how he was beginning to Stuka dive-bomb some of these places that they didn't want the Allies to find, the concentration camps. We found empty champagne bottles. We found a submachine gun stuck up in the chimney. We found revolvers. We found American tax-free cigarettes.

We packed all this stuff on our backs and started down again. I went on ahead into the village. That's a picture of it [referring to photo]. That's the area up there, and Ebensee is marked up on the top to the left there. That's the mistress there with the deputy's wife, Iris Scheidler. And that's the picture of the Nuremberg trial. That's the picture of the chart of his position in the RSHA.
AK: I see. I meant to ask you before what the note that she wrote to Kaltenbrunner said.

RM: It just said that he should come down with the bearer of the note, that the Russians were coming in from the other side.

AK: Did you play a role in the interrogation of Kaltenbrunner?

RM: I didn't play much of a role, but my main job was to be in charge of security from a CIC standpoint of the key personalities at the Nuremberg trial. We had an office in the Palace of Justice where the trial was being held. But I was called on by the justice, Jackson, chief investigator and the chief investigator for Kaltenbrunner, who was handling a number of the twenty-two war criminals there were--to help him. His name was Harris, I think. He asked me for a lot of background on him. But I didn't, myself, interrogate Kaltenbrunner.

AK: You got the Silver Star for this. When did you find out that you were going to receive the Silver Star, by the way?

RM: Actually, I think, on June fifth.

AK: Did this come as a surprise to you?

RM: Yes. I wasn't thinking about that at all.

AK: You also, by the time you left the service, had several others. You had four Battle Stars.

RM: Yes. They were the Normandy, the Battle of the Bulge, Germany, and the assault on the Austrian National Redoubt Area.

AK: You also have the Combat Infantry Badge.

RM: Yes. Because I accompanied squads or platoons into villages with them as we moved in to take villages.

AK: Let's see. You have the Good Conduct Medal. Am I missing anything here?

RM: The field commission. I was commissioned in the field and made second lieutenant.

AK: Oh, yes.
**RM:** Battlefield commission.

**AK:** You did make other arrests, and then you became involved in the Nuremberg trial. Your job there was to take charge of security for members of the International Military Tribunal and all the dignitaries. That was your job, to be in charge of security matters. You had some difficulty getting cooperation in the implementation of your security plan. How well organized, from a logistic standpoint, did you find the Nuremberg trial to be?

**RM:** Not very well organized. I remember the first day I was there I decided to try to enter the cellblock myself without the proper pass. And I walked up to Guard Post 1, and nobody stopped me. I went through 1, 1A, 2, 2A, down the long corridor to the cellblock. I got to where there was a guard on the cellblock entrance, told him I wanted to see Kaltenbrunner. They opened the door, the gates, and let me in. I started walking down to the cellblock to where Kaltenbrunner's cell was, and I was called back by the guy in charge of the twenty-two cells. He wanted to see my authorization from a Colonel Amen, who was in charge of the investigation of the prisoners. And they asked me to sign the book. They took me down to Kaltenbrunner's cell and opened the door and I went in. And he recognized me. He stood at attention, as they were supposed to. I asked him a few questions. He asked not about his wife or children, but about his mistress.

And I left, couldn't believe that the security was that bad. I reported it and tried it again. I think it was just a couple of hours later, had the same result, and that time I saw, I guess it was, Robert [unclear], a labor leader. And the third time I tried it was after a week had gone by, and they had put guards on each of the cells. I still got in without the proper pass. I got in to see Julius Streicher. Julius Streicher was more concerned with the fact he had a hole in his trousers than that he was on trial for his life. So I went back and reported all this, and they started a sweeping reorganization, and everybody was cashiered.

I was staying at the hotel in Nuremberg--it was the only one left--and remember going into the bar at night, and everybody turned their back on me because I was responsible for their friends being cashiered. I found security bad. They had people working on the inside of the Palace of Justice in the courtroom, former SS--well, they were still in the SS--prisoners, under inadequate guard. They could have been doing anything, putting stuff in the walls or in the floor. They finally got it cleaned up without any great incidents.

But I remember one night standing in the lobby of the Grand Hotel. Some guy came in, fell in a pool of blood at my feet while I was talking to somebody. He'd been shot by one the snipers coming out of the catacombs that were underneath Nuremberg. These catacombs went all over the place--I mean big tunnels. There was no way of rooting all them out. So we just left them there. As they appeared to shoot at people, we found out where they were and picked them up.
AK: When the trial began, did you provide any assistance to the prosecution?

RM: The assistance that I provided was to Whitney Harris, who was the man in charge of the Kaltenbrunner case, a man from St. Louis, I think, and he was working under Justice Jackson. I gave him all the information I had in terms of the questions that he was asking. But other than that, I told him about the people who we arrested who were part of what they called the Dienstelle Kaltenbrunner.

AK: I'm sorry?

RM: It's called the Dienstelle Kaltenbrunner. It was the security people that were protecting the Kaltenbrunner family. And I also told him particularly about Wilhelm Hoettl, who was still living in Alt Aussee, whom we arrested, and the others. We arrested I don't know how many people, sixty, maybe a hundred people, in the area of Valtosee. We found the cache of gold and counterfeit English pound notes that they were going to use to sink the Bank of England, in the bottom of Toplitz, where it had been dumped. I gave him all that kind of information.

AK: In your book, The War Years, you refer to Nuremberg as clearly one of the great trials in history. You apparently reject Robert Taft's argument that it violated international law. Am I summarizing your feelings at the time correctly? And have you changed your attitude at all? Do you still believe that it was a proper, fair, appropriate trial?

RM: It wasn't perfect, but it was better than nothing.

AK: You were discharged in January 1946, and you were offered a job as head of a CIC of a region in Germany. I'm not clear whether this was a government or a military role.

RM: Yes, this is in the military.

AK: But you did reject that.

RM: Yes.

AK: Overall, what were some of your thoughts on the war? You mentioned in your book that, for you, the war meant adventure and a great cause.

RM: Yes, that's true. That was as I felt.

AK: What was the most difficult part of the war for you personally?
RM: Being away from the family.

AK: And so you returned to Minnesota. Can you tell us just briefly about your brief run for Congress? How did this come about? I'm interested in what led to thinking about running for Congress, and I'm interested in about what issues were important to you, because, of course, you did become involved with Harold Stassen.

RM: Yes. Good question. The way it came about was that there had been a certain amount of publicity in the Twin City area after the capture of Kaltenbrunner. There are other reasons, I guess. I had friends in the area, and a group of them got together, led by a guy named Bob Leach, who was in a law firm in St. Paul. And he got Jimmy Otis, who was later a Supreme Court judge; Ted Christianson, the son of former Governor Theodore Christianson; Cole Oehler, and a group of about five or six to spearhead a movement. They wanted me to run for Congress. The Democratic Farmer Labor Party had been in for a while. St. Paul was Catholic. I was Protestant. It was mainly labor. St. Paul was sort of divided. People who lived on the hill were considered to be one side of the track. People who lived down near the river were people who were considered to be on the other side of the track. People on the top of the hill were Republicans, and the people who were in the lower part were Democrats, and they wanted somebody to run who would challenge the incumbent, who was a Democrat and who had a war background.

AK: Who was the incumbent? Do you remember?

RM: I can't remember now what his name was.

AK: People like Bob Leach, Ted Christianson, Jimmy Otis, were all these people what you would call, and what you called yourself, liberal Republicans, believed in liberal republicanism?

RM: Yes, right. We believed in the United Nations, and we were followers of Harold Stassen, who had been elected governor.

AK: You had considered yourself to be a more or less liberal Republican, a believer in internationalism for some time, I believe. I believe that you voted for Franklin Roosevelt in 1944?

RM: Yes.

AK: Is there any other way we can define what a liberal Republican was in the context of Minnesota in 1946--a belief in internationalism and the League of Nations? Do you remember having any particular thoughts on domestic policy? What separated you from the old guard in Minnesota? Do you recall any differences about labor policy?
RM: One of the things I remember in running for Congress after I had filed was the effort made by the large companies like Minnesota Mining to try to get me out of the race because my domestic views were too liberal. When I went to Washington on the internship in the fall of ’37, I had gone with a former senator who was a Democrat Farmer Laborite, Henry Shipstead, first. And then I went with Senator Lundeen, who was the other senator from Minnesota, who was a Democratic Farmer Laborite, who had gone to Carleton, where I had gone. And then the second half of the internship I was going with Representative Tom Amlie, who was progressive, from Wisconsin—thought of as progressive—and who was more radical than any of the other representatives from Wisconsin and who was being assisted by Nathan Fine, who was a Russian Jew who believed in a radical domestic policy.

I was going around at that time during that internship year with Frances Wheeler, who was the daughter of Burton K. Wheeler of Montana, a senator. She was the head of the later laundry worker strikes in the District. She, I remember, took me to the White House, as her brother, to a dance that Franklin Roosevelt had for some of the families of Congress. And that’s when I first met Franklin Delano Roosevelt and his wife Eleanor. I remember as we drove into the White House grounds we had a flat tire. It made a loud noise, and the security people came running out and surrounded us and took the car way off to some place and changed the tire. So it was all set when we came back.

AK: The Secret Service changed the tire on the car?

RM: Yes. All those people were on the radical side, the liberal side. They were more radical than liberal, if those are the right terms.

RM: Whenever I went back to Minnesota, he would carry on a correspondence. He wrote a book called The Farmer Labor Party in the United States. It was, I think, written in the late 1920s and ’30s. He was a speech writer for Lundeen, and then he was speech writer for Tom Amlie.

AK: So what you were doing throughout this time, prior to 1946, is learning about different sides of political issues, different ideological perspectives. I notice that Shipstead, for example, was an isolationist in foreign affairs.

RM: Right. So was Lundeen.

AK: Yes. And you rejected that view, having thought about it pretty early. I mean, you considered yourself an internationalist for some time prior to 1946.

RM: I was for world government.
AK: Did you support Willke in 1940?

RM: Yes, very strongly.

AK: And in 1944 Willke ran in the Republican primaries. I know that you were in Europe at the time. I think you were in Europe during the Republican primaries.

RM: Yes.

AK: Did you support him, or had Willke drifted too far by then for your tastes?

RM: Willke, by that time, was passing into the shadows of oblivion, and Roosevelt was the man that was certainly toward the United Nations, and that was the reason why I supported Roosevelt.

AK: Well, it is certainly very clear that you believed in internationalism or the United Nations in 1946.

RM: That clipping right there shows what I stood for.

AK: Yes, I'll have to look at that a little later.

Ed Devitt changed his mind and decided to run, and Bob Leach was asked by, if I'm getting the story correct, 3M to get you to withdraw. Is that correct?

RM: Yes.

AK: And from that, you became disillusioned--is that too strong of a word?--about the influence of large corporations.

RM: I was disillusioned. I was very idealistic, and I couldn't see this as the role of business corporations at that point.

AK: Did these corporations like 3M have a good relationship with Harold Stassen at this point?

RM: Yes, they did. Pretty good. Although they didn't support him, I don't think. They were isolationists. They tended to be isolationists. They tended to be for business. They tended to be for all of the things that one would associate with a conservative point of view.

AK: Well, it was immediately after you withdrew that you went to work for Harold Stassen. I know this is a general question, but can you tell me about what your
impressions were of Stassen, what you thought of him in 1946? I realize that you met
him before. But from the perspective of 1946, what did you think about working for
him?

RM: He was, to me, the knight in white shining armor that was the successor to Willke
in '40. And I knew that he had been the keynoter at the Republican convention and had
stepped out off the podium and had led the floor fight for Willke, which won Willke the
Republican nomination. He was one of the ones with great influence at the convention
who shifted the Republican Party from isolationism to internationalism. And he had a
great record as governor.

In fact, when I finished my internship here in Washington, before I went on to Harvard,
that summer I came back and met him again, the year after I had originally met him. I
originally met him in June 1938 at the Minnesota Club when Dr. Cowling introduced me
to him. Stassen, at that point, had asked me to travel with him on a train around
Minnesota.

AK: This was when he was campaigning in 1938?

RM: Yes.

AK: Campaigning for governor?

RM: Yes. But I didn't do that, because what I wanted to do in '38 was to get into the
domestic side of things in a city the size of St. Paul--get down in the mud flats with the
workers and the minorities that were coming out of Mexico and working in the vegetable
gardens in and around St. Paul. And I did that, but I also went in to see--I guess that was
a year later, after he'd become governor. I went to see him and asked him if he would be
interested in establishing within the state of Minnesota a state internship program that
was modeled after the one that I'd gone through on a national basis in Washington. He
was interested, but they didn't have any money to support it. He said, "Well, we'll put it
aside for the time being," but that he was for the idea.

AK: You were very idealistic, as you say, at this time period, and Harold Stassen was a
knight in shining armor to you. He had certainly transformed the Minnesota Republican
Party from isolationism to internationalism. Realistically, when you went to work for him
in 1946, did you that he had a reasonable chance of becoming the Republican nominee in
1948?

RM: Yes, I did. Nobody had given him a chance in Minnesota. He defied all the odds.
He had tremendous capability. He had a direct point of view. And I thought that he
could apply the same intellect and energy to the U.S. scene, and he had a good chance.
AK: I certainly want to talk about his 1948 campaign in some detail, but I feel we must talk about that 1947 trip you took with Stassen. How did Jay Cook become involved in that trip with Stassen that year? Do you know?

RM: Jay Cook had been at the 1940 convention, and I think Stassen met him then. But in Minnesota, there was a Jay Cook park up around Duluth. It was named after Jay Cook's grandfather. Jay Cook was one of the great empire builders, had a lot of money and was well known in Philadelphia and in Pennsylvania. And he was the prime leader of the Republican Party in Pennsylvania, and the convention of 1940 was there. They got to know each other when Stassen was the keynoter of the Republican convention that year.

AK: That's where Stassen met Cook?

RM: As far as I know.

AK: About your trip, one of the things that strikes me is that you and Stassen and Cook were in Greece the week before President Truman announced the Truman Doctrine. I know that while you were in Greece you met with Paul Porter, Truman's special emissary in connection with aid to Greece and Turkey, and you met with the American ambassador, Lincoln McVeagh. Did you have a sense that the monarchy, the government, in Greece was in jeopardy? Could you see a great deal of civil turmoil in Greece? Could you see any danger of a communist victory in Greece?

RM: I can't remember now too much about that, but I do know that there was a danger that was felt of communism coming over that whole area.

AK: I have to ask you about one other country before we get to the Soviet Union. In Germany, you met with Lucius Clay. I ask this because Clay was so very important in 1952 in getting Eisenhower to run, and, as I understand it, Stassen and Clay had a great deal of discussion in 1952 concerning Stassen's candidacy and Eisenhower's candidacy. Do you recall what your impression was of Lucius Clay? Do you recall that Stassen and Clay seemed to communicate well, had a good relationship?

RM: I think they had a good relationship, but I don't remember enough about that.

AK: Do you recall very much about your meeting with Marshal Tito in Yugoslavia?

RM: Yes. Marshal Tito was quite a guy. He was very colorful. But we went there for lunch, and he had as his interpreter General Velebit, and he had a police dog named Tiger. And I remember how Tito—we had chicken for lunch—he'd throw the chicken bones to his dog, which was against all rules, because they felt the dog would choke on the chicken bones. But Marshal Tito, the main thing I remember was how strongly independent he was and how he wasn't going to buckle under to Russian communism.
While he was a Marxist himself, he wasn't about to be part of the Russian empire, the Russian Soviet empire.

AK: So you could sense that he was independent. He hadn't broken yet with the Soviet Union. You could sense that Tito was an independent guy. You mentioned in your book that what he was most interested in when you talked to him was Kaltenbrunner's Gestapo Badge No. 2 that you show him.

RM: Yes, he was. He was very much interested in intelligence and police matters. He wondered who I was on this. He wondered why I was along. I guess somebody mentioned that in World War II that I had found Kaltenbrunner, and that excited his interest more than anything else. He took me aside when we broke up for lunch, took me off and questioned me about it. But he was very much interested in the intelligence and security side of government.

AK: Tito was interested in intelligence and security matters.

RM: Yes.

AK: Of course, the big event of this trip was your trip to the Soviet Union. If I may talk about some other people besides Khrushchev and Stalin and Molotov, one of the first people you met in the Soviet Union was George Marshall. Did you discuss the Truman Doctrine with Marshall? Do you have any particular recollection of Secretary Marshall that you can tell us about?

RM: I don't remember that we talked with him about that. We must have, though. But the thing that I remember the most about him was at the Spaso House, the ambassador's residence, they had a tea one afternoon, I guess it was. He was standing alone at one end of the living room, and because he was a great man, everybody was sort of shy about approaching him. So I decided to go up and talk to him. We had a fascinating talk about the war and about George Patton, the Third Army, and the 80th Infantry Division. For some reason, the thing that stands out in my mind was that he referred to his wife as "the tail to his kite" and how if it weren't for her and her advice and criticism, he wouldn't have gotten to where he was in his life. He was a tremendous figure. He was, in my judgment, of all the people I've met, truly a great man.

AK: Great because of his abilities?

RM: Because of his abilities, particularly because of his ability to get people together, to see both sides of the issue, to mediate and to negotiate differences, and because, being a military man, you sort of looked on him and assumed that he'd be sort of a stereotype military man. But he turned out not to be--much broader, and really a grasp of the world situation. I had great admiration for him.
AK: You met with Molotov, you and Stassen and Cook. Molotov's tone was conciliatory, was it not? You mention in your book that Molotov seemed to portray himself as being very conciliatory. Is that correct? He did criticize Churchill's Iron Curtain speech, didn't he?

RM: Yes.

AK: What can you tell us about that first conversation with Molotov?

RM: I had the impression, as I remember now, that Molotov had carried back from the San Francisco conference a very high opinion of Harold Stassen, and when Stassen started running for president, Molotov must have seen Stassen as a man that he could talk to. So when Stassen did what no other candidate had done before then, decided as part of his campaign to go to Europe and meet the leaders, he accepted an invitation that Molotov had sent and offered him to come to the Soviet Union and see it as it was. Hedidn't do it right away, but he did it a year after that or two years after that. And in that conversation, because he was the guest and invited by the Russians to come, he had the feeling that what Molotov said was, much to my surprise, anything he wanted to do, he could do. So he named the things that he wanted to do, with the exception of seeing Stalin. And the reason there was an exception there was because Stalin was sick. He had a cold. And when he asked to go out into Siberia to Sverdlovsk and see factories in the Siberian area, I was amazed, based on our previous knowledge, that they would permit him to do that. They did. He wanted to see collective farms in the Ukraine. He wanted to meet as many leaders in the Politburo as they had time during the time that he was there. And he saw, I think, six out of fourteen.

AK: Yes. In fact, on the day that you all were supposed to go to Kiev, that morning you were awakened by Kondrashov. They said that Stalin could see you that night at 11:00 p.m. Stassen asked you and Jay Cook to compose a list of questions that Stassen might ask Stalin. What kinds of questions did you recommend? Were these the questions that Stassen did, in fact, ask? Did you discuss at all with him what kinds of questions you might ask?

RM: At a party that we had here last week, there were 150 people here. It was in celebration of Stassen and his work at the U.N. He made concluding remarks, and in the course of his remarks, for some reason he mentioned the questions that I had handed to him before the Stalin interview. And he said the key question that Ihad wanted him to press was, was it possible for the Soviet Union, with very different economic and political systems, to coexist in the same world with the U.S. and its different capitalistic, democratic system. And that was the question that he asked. When Stalin replied, he said, "Of course. Why not? They could coexist." And this was really amazing to the policy body in the Kremlin, we found out later, and it was a different point of view that
Stalin had taken, and it could be said to be the first step toward glasnost.

AK: There was a controversy over the transcript of the interview with Stalin. Could you tell us about that, how that happened? You took notes, as Pavlov took notes. There's a great story in your book, which would be great if you could reiterate for us here, that Stassen actually typed up the notes. Could you tell us how all of this happened and what the controversy was?

RM: Yes.

AK: I know this is a long story.

RM: I won't make it too long. Stassen said to me and to Jay Cook before we went into the meeting, "Look around. Observe things. Don't take notes unless they're taking notes." And so when I got in there and saw that Pavlov, before he translated what was being said, wrote down and then read from his notes what was said--he was taking verbatim the whole thing--so I started. I didn't know how to take shorthand, but I took a lot of notes, which turned out to be virtually a verbatim transcript.

When Stassen ended the conversation with Stalin, he asked Stalin whether it was possible for him to make public the transcript. And Stalin said, "Of course. We Russians have nothing to hide." He turned to Pavlov and said, "Make available to Mr. Stassen your notes."

Pavlov said, "It will take me a while to put them together," but that he would have me come over, and we'd go over them together, because he saw that I was taking notes.

And so when we went back to the hotel, the Hotel National, I told Stassen that I had these notes, but I didn't know whether I could read my own writing or not because I had done this so fast. I thought I could make out almost all of it. He brought a typewriter. He knew that I didn't know how to type, but he did know how to type. I didn't know that he knew how to type, and I was surprised. But I sat there, and I was dictating to him the transcript.

AK: Through the night.

RM: Through the night. It took until, I don't know, a couple of hours before we were leaving for--was it Kiev or Stalingrad?

AK: I think Kiev.

RM: Yes. Then when we came back from Kiev and were at the ambassador's, Bedell Smith's--for lunch, was it, or dinner?--the telephone rang, and they said it was for me. Of
all the people sitting there, it was for me. I went to the telephone, and it was Pavlov saying he was ready to see me to go over the transcript. So I went back into lunch and told Bedell Smith that I had to leave early before we had dessert. And he said, "Don't go running out of here for any Russian." I said this was important to us because our trip would be financed by articles that we wrote afterwards and we needed to get this transcript. Mrs. Smith spoke up and said, "We'll give him his dessert earlier than the rest and he can go."

So I went out and got in the car, and it was a large ZIS limousine. I said, "Pavlov, the Kremlin." The driver shook his head and off we went. We got to the gate of the Kremlin and went to the telephone booth. I telephoned in and found that Pavlov wasn't in the Kremlin; he was in the Foreign Ministry Building outside of the Kremlin. So he took me over there. Just as we got there, Molotov arrived in a large ZIS limousine with curtains down for security reasons. So I got out, and I went to the elevator. The security people kept me from going up in the elevator, because that was the elevator that Molotov was going to go on. They took me over to another elevator, and I went up in that.

By this time, I was about twenty minutes late, I think, and went in to see Pavlov. Pavlov was only interested in getting agreement to what they wanted to put out. We didn't know at that time that there was a running argument within the ruling circles, and they had different avenues of publication to the Russian public. He had a transcript that was very abbreviated, left out a lot of it. So I went back to Stassen. He decided to put out the one that was based on my notes, not on his.

AK: Do you think that Pavlov intentionally tried to get you to agree to an incorrect or abbreviated transcript? You said that he was late for an appointment and had to rush out. Do you think this was intentional on Pavlov's part?

RM: Yes.

AK: And that the errors in his transcript were intentional?

RM: Yes, they were to support the side that he and the people he associated with within the Kremlin wanted to prevail in this internal struggle that was going on.

AK: And so they took out the part of the interview where Stalin said that depression and war with the United States was not inevitable, if I'm correct.

RM: Yes.

AK: Overall, in general, is there anything about that trip that stands out in your mind that you'd like to tell us, with the meetings with Stalin? I haven't asked you about your meeting with Khrushchev.
AK: Many individuals were associated with that, and I wonder if we could try this. I wonder if I could mention a few individuals associated with that campaign, and you could give me just an off-the-cuff description or your recollection of them. Maybe we could give this a try. This might be too general.

RM: I think I probably will fail you on that one. We can try.

AK: Okay. We'll just give it a shot. The individual who's associated with that campaign that we all probably know best is Warren Burger. Now, I understand Warren Burger served as a kind of chief of staff during that campaign.

RM: Yes, he did.

AK: One of his duties was rounding up field men, or coordinating the work of the field men who would go to the various conventions in the states and try to get Stassen delegates in the various states. Do you remember when you first met Warren Burger?

RM: In St. Paul in 1946, and he, at that time, was with the--I forget the name. I don't remember right now. But I remember meeting with this large group of people that worked with Stassen.

AK: What has attracted the attention of many people about that campaign was the use of presidential primaries. Was there a strategy for winning the nomination that centered on using presidential primaries? Was that a coherent strategy thought out and planned by the Stassen campaign?

RM: Well, I think there was to the extent that that was the best way to get your name known and to get your views across to the people. A number of states that had primaries increased as the years went by. In 1948 there weren't that many who wanted to have presidential primaries. But Stassen had great confidence in his own ability, having done what he'd done so far. And he used that as a vehicle for gaining the presidency. That was the only way he could have gone.

AK: And what was your function during that campaign?

RM: I was with research. The first job he gave me was to go down into Illinois in 1946 and spend a month there and find out what they thought of Stassen. He knew that he wasn't very popular in Illinois because the Chicago Tribune wasn't. I went down and traveled all over the state. I was coming down as a war veteran who was interested in domestic politics and international politics, but I wasn't really down as a person who was doing this for Stassen. I talked to everybody, using the fact of my being a veteran of World War II as my introduction and saw everybody, all the candidates on the Republican
side, saw people like Charlie Wheeler, the editor of the Chicago Daily News, saw the Chicago Tribune people.

AK: You saw the Chicago Tribune people. What was their reaction?

RM: They would have nothing to do with Stassen. They were America first, isolationists. I came back from appearing with Stassen and couldn't get to first base in one month. I told him that. In fact, I didn't pull any punches and gave a long report on the whole thing. He saw that I'd gone into it pretty thoroughly. He liked that facet, even though it was a negative reporting.

AK: The first breakthrough primary for Governor Stassen that year was Wisconsin. Did you travel with the Stassen campaign in Wisconsin?

RM: I wasn't as closely identified with that as a lot of other people. The people to talk to on that that I know of that are around are Warren Burger and Bernard LeVander, who lives in St. Paul. He was at the party the other day. Those would be the two principal people.

AK: The reason I ask was, of course, Joe McCarthy supported Stassen in that campaign, and I wonder how helpful Joe McCarthy was. But maybe that was outside your area and you don't have a recollection of that.

RM: I remember that Joe McCarthy had been in the service, Stassen had been in the service. They both had been in the Pacific, and both were war veterans with good records coming out of the war, I guess. Like with Nixon, the same thing was true with Richard Nixon. These young people, at that time, McCarthy and Nixon supported Stassen. It was only later that the negatives of McCarthy became clear. But I didn't have much to do with either McCarthy or Nixon.

AK: Can you tell me at all about the decision to go into the Ohio primary, into certain parts of Ohio? There was a great deal of dispute on that within the campaign organization, wasn't there?

RM: There was. A lot of people thought he was making a mistake going into Ohio, that traditionally favorite sons were left alone in their state, and that you just created trouble for yourself if you went in. Stassen, as he did on many of the conventional things, defied convention and went in. He did it in only a partial way. He selected certain districts to go into. He probably got something like twenty out of sixty. He won fourteen, I think. He won more than most people thought he'd win, but not as many as he said he would win.

AK: Yes, he won nine delegates, I believe.
RM: Nine delegates?

AK: Yes. Which was not bad.

RM: I think he said he would win fourteen.

AK: Yes. Earl Hart was particularly enthusiastic about Stassen's prospects in Ohio.

RM: He was from Ohio.

AK: Yes. Earl Hart seems to have encouraged Stassen to go to Ohio.

RM: Right.

AK: And Bernard LeVander appears to have opposed it quite strenuously.

RM: That's right, yes.

AK: There was an idea that because of the tremendous animosity between Dewey and Taft, that an alliance might have been possible between Stassen and Taft at the convention, despite their ideological differences. It was suggested that this alliance might be possible because of the great enmity between Dewey and Taft. Do you think that Stassen's move into Ohio jeopardized or made impossible any kind of alliance to stop Dewey?

RM: My guess is that it probably did. I don't really know.

AK: Then, of course, there's the Oregon primary. You have said that Stassen lost the Oregon primary because he was dead tired and because Dewey waged a furious last-minute campaign.

RM: And I didn't put in there to consider it was because he was on the wrong side of the issue.

AK: On the decision to outlaw the communist?

RM: That's right.

AK: Did you go to Oregon?

RM: No.
AK: Yet, despite that, there was still a strenuous effort on Stassen's part at the convention in Philadelphia in 1948. Do you recall Stassen making any sort of attempt to make an alliance with Robert Taft despite his entrance in the primary? Did you attend the '48 convention?

RM: I did. I stayed with Jay Cook. My wife and Jay Cook's wife became good friends. I was a good friend of Jay's after that trip. I don't recall any now. I can't remember.

AK: Were you at all active with Stassen in the campaign with Dewey in 1948 in the fall campaign?

RM: I went to Albany with him, and we helped draft his Labor Day speech, which kicked off the fall campaign. But that was, I think, the extent to which I was involved in it.

AK: It was at this time that Stassen accepted the job to become president of the University of Pennsylvania.

RM: Yes.

AK: What was the reaction here in Minnesota with the announcement that Stassen was going to move to Pennsylvania?

RM: Well, there was a divided opinion. Some didn't understand why he would move his base from Minnesota, which was a smaller state and was out of the axis between Washington and New York. After he'd been offered the presidency, there was reason to move to Philadelphia. But if he stayed on there, a number of them that would have wanted him to run for the Senate, not for president, and were critical of his move and thought that he should have stayed in Minnesota where he would have made a great senator. But I think he felt that he would get more into the swim of what was going on closer to the sources of power if he were living in the East. And so, like Eisenhower, he accepted the presidency.

Tom Gates, Jr. came down and, I think, with Bob McCracken, the chairman of the board, and asked him if he would accept. After giving it some thought, he said he would. He liked the fact that it was a university founded by Benjamin Franklin, who was in public affairs, and this gave him reason to participate in public affairs, which other people define as politics.

AK: To what extent do you think Stassen was looking toward 1952, when he made the decision to go to Pennsylvania? Of course, this was before Truman's upset victory. But it has been suggested, and I believe you have suggested this, that he was looking toward
trying to capture Pennsylvania's delegation again in 1952 using Jay Cook. Do you think that was a major reason for his going?

RM: It could have been, yes.

AK: He's received high marks from many people for his performance as president of the University of Pennsylvania. And you joined him there, of course. Could you tell us about what you did working for him and the classes you taught at the University of Pennsylvania?

RM: I taught one course in international relations. My main job was the assistant to the president, and I did research and traveled some, like a trip around the world, Africa and Asia, in 1950 and '51.

AK: I know one of the things you did is provide the research for Governor Stassen's address at the M.I.T. Mid-Century Convocation at the Boston Garden where he appeared with Churchill. Do you remember what kinds of things Governor Stassen asked you to research for him for that address?

RM: I can't remember. I'd have to look that up.

AK: Okay. And you met Churchill at this time, at the Ritz-Carlton.

RM: Yes.

AK: Do you recall that meeting? Could you tell us about it?

RM: Just a brief meeting.

AK: Were you involved in Jay Cook's run for governor in 1950?

RM: Only in an indirect way, not directly.

AK: Stassen, while he was president of the University of Pennsylvania, invited a number of prominent individuals there, as you know. One of them was John Foster Dulles. What was Stassen's relationship with John Foster Dulles at this time? Of course, they had a stormy relationship later on. But at this time period, were his relations with John Foster Dulles friendly?

RM: They were friendly. They had both been associated with churches and religious. They both were very much interested in foreign policy. John Foster Dulles had hoped to be appointed to the United Nations Charter Conference, and he wasn't. He was
disappointed. And Stassen got it with Vandenberg instead as Republican representatives. They were moving into the international scene together at the same time. I think Dulles wanted--his life ambition was to be secretary of state, and he saw Stassen was possibly a threat. He knew that Stassen was very able. He knew the great work he'd done on the United Nations Charter Conference. He knew that Roosevelt thought highly of him. Everybody thought highly of him. And he knew what he'd done in San Francisco in the Willke campaign.

Allen Dulles, his brother, was different in that Allen Dulles was more on a Stassen line on foreign policy than John Foster Dulles was.

**AK:** Stassen began his run for the presidency in 1952 by taking another trip to Europe. Did you do the same function for this trip, as you had for the 1947 trip. Did you provide research and do the same things?

**RM:** I don't remember that trip as well. It wasn't as important and didn't stand out. The other one really stood out.

**AK:** Okay. Then we'll just skip over that. Do you have good memories of the Clarksboro meeting at Amos Peaslee's house?

**RM:** I remember that. I remember that Nixon came to that and then left before it was over. I think he, at that time, made up his mind that he was going to support Eisenhower, and that he was going over to see Eisenhower, that he was going to try to be vice presidential candidate.

**AK:** Nixon, you felt, was angling for the vice presidency?

**RM:** Yes.

**AK:** Is it true that Stassen offered Nixon the vice presidency if Stassen should be nominated?

**RM:** If he did, I don't know.

**AK:** Do you know whose idea the Clarksboro meeting was? Did Stassen organize this?

**RM:** I think so, yes.

**AK:** And besides Richard Nixon, other people who were there were people like Walter Judd and Ed Thye, all his 1948 supporters.
RM: Yes, right.

AK: What was decided at this meeting?

RM: It was decided that Stassen would go over to see Eisenhower, that he would enter his name in the primaries until the time Eisenhower decided, himself, to run.

AK: Was there a great deal of argument at Clarksboro? Was there a great deal of disagreement over what course Stassen should follow?

RM: I don't know as much about that as some, Warren Burger or Fred Seaton. I don't know whether Fred Seaton is still alive or not. But there was, I know, a difference of opinion, but who took what position, I don't know.

AK: Now, in the 1952 campaign, you provided research for the Stassen candidacy, is that correct?

RM: Yes.

AK: Many people have suggested that Governor Stassen was moving toward a more conservative line in 1952 on some issues. Do you agree with that or do you disagree?

RM: I think that there's some truth in that. He didn't want to be considered to be off in left field someplace. He was very careful about the image that he projected, and he knew that his chief opposition would be conservative.

AK: Meaning Robert Taft.

RM: Yes. So he may consciously have moved more on some issues in that direction, but I don't really know.

AK: Some people have been critical of Stassen's role at the 1952 national convention. Now, you are not there, were you?

RM: No. When August rolled around, I usually went with my family to northern Wisconsin, and I don't think I ever made--well, maybe one time I made an exception to that. Come hell or high water, that was the period I was going to take off with the family. He invited me to go, but I didn't.

AK: I'm sure you've heard stories about what happened on the first ballot at the convention. Do you remember being persuaded that Stassen really was trying to achieve a first ballot nomination for Eisenhower? Some people have suggested that Stassen was
playing for a deadlock in the convention.

**RM:** Yes, I've heard that. You can argue that one either way.

**AK:** If I might ask you just one more question about that 1952 campaign, the Minnesota primary that year engendered a lot of controversy. Were you at all involved in the Minnesota primary in 1952, or were you in Pennsylvania at that point?

**RM:** I was in Pennsylvania.

**AK:** Okay. So you had no involvements in that controversy?

**RM:** No.

**AK:** Starting with the Eisenhower years now, very generally, very broadly, how do you characterize the relationship between President Eisenhower and Harold Stassen? Was it a close relationship?

**RM:** It was a close relationship, not as close as it could be. But given their different positions--by that I mean their backgrounds and how they looked on the world--it became very close. Stassen was closer to Eisenhower as an advisor than most people think. Eisenhower appreciated it. He had great admiration for Stassen. As he told me, that Gettysburg talk, that Stassen, at times, could be over-enthusiastic. But I think their relationship was that Eisenhower always had Stassen on the list of presidential possibilities and people that he had the greatest admiration for in terms of that kind of thing.

**AK:** You are referring to your meeting in 1964 with President Eisenhower, a memorandum about which is located in the Minnesota Historical Society in your papers.

**RM:** Yes.

**AK:** You mentioned, I believe, just a second ago that they had slightly different outlooks on the world.

**RM:** By that I mean they came from different positions, different backgrounds, and that it is understandable that they would see things as anybody does, from a different perspective. Not that they didn't agree, but I think that they agreed pretty much on both domestic and foreign policy. At first, I think that Stassen always had a high regard for Eisenhower, but not as high as he ended up with.

**AK:** His regard for Eisenhower increased over the years.
RM: It did. The more he got to know him, the more he admired him.

AK: Was this because Eisenhower was hopeful that an arms control or reduction treaty with the Soviet Union was a good idea and indeed possible?

RM: That was important, yes. I think that Stassen, as most people did, thought of Eisenhower as being just a military man. But he found that he was much broader than just a military man.

AK: He had great leadership qualities.

RM: Right.

AK: As you've noted very well in your War College paper that is in the Historical Society, one of the great dramas of the Eisenhower administration was the difference in perspective and personality between Stassen and Dulles. Both men were part of the internationalist wing of the GOP and yet had markedly different orientations in foreign policy. I wonder if you could just summarize, as you've done before, the difference between these two men in terms of their personality and in terms of their policy views, the differences between John Foster Dulles and Governor Stassen.

RM: In terms of their personality, Dulles was a very Calvinist, austere, not particularly outgoing kind of a person. Stassen was not that way. I remember when I went swimming with Dulles in the Sea of Maramara, I was very much impressed by his jovialness. Taken out of his role of secretary of state and just being one of the boys going swimming, that was a different Dulles. It was the kind of Dulles that came out when he went to Duck Island up in Ontario and got away from the hurley-burley of the world and was relaxing and taking a vacation.

On foreign policy, the difference, the way I've characterized it, is between Stassen's policy of bolder exploration and relaxation of tension concept, negotiation, dialogue. Dulles' was confrontation, increased pressure, turning the screws on the Soviet Union until we could force them to collapse—in that underlay, but were two different. It's too strong, probably, to say two different foreign policies, but it came close to that.

AK: The first extended time that Governor Stassen and John Foster Dulles spent together that I am aware of is on the trip to Europe on which you accompanied them in January and February of 1953. Did any personality or policy conflicts emerge during that trip? Would you characterized their relationships during that European trip as smooth? This was the trip, as I recall, that you went swimming with Dulles that Sunday.

RM: The Sea of Maramara swim was on the Asia trip and the Middle East.
AK: Of course. Sorry.

RM: I think they had seen each in different gatherings. One was in 1947 at the foreign ministers’ conference in Moscow, and then Dulles had been very, as I think I mentioned, hat in hand, coming to see Stassen. But it is true that they never had had before the kind of experience together that they had on the European trip. That was the first time they were really thrown together for a considerable period of time, traveling and eating together. Stassen's bearing during that trip was one of deference to Dulles, making sure that he didn't cross over to him, realizing that it was Dulles' trip and not his, and that he was playing sort of the second fiddle. He would, at one time or another, speak up and indicate in a very indirect or soft way that Dulles should give consideration to whatever it was.

I think when they came off that trip, Dulles was less worried about Stassen as a competitor. Dulles had been worried that Stassen might become secretary of state, which was Dulles' chief objective in life. Dulles didn't want to be president. I think he was offered the chief justice of the Supreme Court, and he didn't want to be that. He wanted to be, above all, secretary of state. But he saw Stassen in his area, in his arena. Stassen and Lodge were the two that I think he was worried about the most in terms of the possible appointment by Eisenhower to be secretary of state.

AK: You say that Stassen's perspective toward Dulles during this European trip was one of deference. Did Stassen ever encourage Dulles to be more sensitive to regional disputes as opposed to superpower disputes, Cold War disputes?

RM: Stassen knew before he started on both trips they both had the same purposes. One was a better understanding of countries' positions. Another was meeting the leaders of the countries. But most importantly, from Dulles' standpoint, was pressing the leadership of these countries to join together in a band around the Soviet Union--NATO, CENTO, and SEATO. Stassen could see beyond that. He saw the necessity for doing something like that. He also saw that regional issues to people in the region are more important than the anti-Soviet one.

AK: Stassen could see beyond the Cold War to regional issues.

RM: Yes.

AK: From an historical perspective, I feel obliged to ask you a question that I'm not sure you will be able to answer. I'm not sure you witnessed this particular event. But it was on the trip to the Middle East in May of 1953 that apparently Dulles passed on a quite significant message to Zhou Enlai. Were you aware of this message at the time?
RM: No.

AK: It only came out later?

RM: Yes.

AK: If we could bump up a bit moving toward the Geneva summit idea. Are you aware of the source of the idea for the Geneva summit? Can you tell us a little bit about how you believe the concept of the Geneva summit was put forward and gained acceptance by the president?

RM: Good question. I may not be able to recall the beginning source, but maybe it's in the book. Right now I remember that Eisenhower always expressed desire to meet with the Russian leaders, and he believed strongly in face-to-face meetings, not just doing it by telephone or document. He felt that he had abilities in that kind of a context, that could be persuasive of other people with different points of view. He had great faith in his own abilities of that. He had great abilities in that. That's why he was chosen as the supreme commander in Europe. I think he felt that if he could get one-on-one with these people in the same room that he might influence them some. He didn't exaggerate that. He didn't think that night would change to day, but he had the feeling that he, at least, would get to know them better, see it from their point of view, and be able to be in a better position to mediate differences and come to agreements. But some small step he was looking toward.

AK: This is somewhat off the topic, but it occurs to me to ask you this question. Do you believe that Governor Stassen had the same abilities in meeting with people and believed in his ability to meet personally with people to resolve problems? Stassen, of course, had been meeting with world leaders since at least 1945.

RM: I do. That's why he got into this later in 1957, into these thirty-five bilateral sessions with Zorin, which were the most extensive that were carried on by the United States with the Russians up to that time.

AK: I certainly would like to talk to you about that Zorin meeting in those London talks in just one second. Taking first things first, the big show-stopper, if you will, at the Geneva summit was the Open Skies proposal. Now, there is, of course, as you know, a great deal of controversy about the source of Open Skies. You attended Stassen's first Quantico session. Was what came to be known as Open Skies discussed there, and do you recall who initiated it?

RM: The words "Open Skies" weren't used in the Stassen Quantico session, but the idea was expressed coming out of the [James] Doolittle task force on aerial inspection. But this was always coupled with ground inspection, too. A little later, about a month later,
you had the Nelson Rockefeller Quantico sessions.

AK: After the summit, of course, progress toward disarmament seemsto have been slowed by his heart attack. You have characterized Dulles' influence in foreign policy as increasing after the heart attack. Am I correct in saying that you believe that progress toward disarmament essentially was put on hold while Eisenhower recovered from his heart attack?

RM: Yes. Particularly during 1956. It wasn't until, I think, the fall of 1956 and then the beginning of 1957 that it was taken off hold. By that time, Eisenhower had recovered enough to come back and support Stassen in his exploration with the Soviets on an informal basis, without commitment of either side, to find out where the Soviets stood.

AK: I take it that Governor Stassen was quite aware that for the time being he had to play a waiting game in the London disarmament talks.

RM: Yes, that's right.

AK: By the way, you were there in those London disarmament talks. What was your function at those talks?

RM: I was thinking about that. You were asking me about 1948 yesterday, and in 1948 my role was just research. I was younger and one of the new boys on the Stassen team. It wasn't until later, beginning, I guess, at the University of Pennsylvania, that I began more to be an advisor, and it certainly increased during the Eisenhower period. I was his director of what was, in effect, during the Mutual Security Administration and the Foreign Operations Administration, head of the Office of--it had an awkward name--Research, Statistics, Reports, and Evaluation, and backstopping him on the National Security Council in the cabinet meetings. You were thrown more into a role of policy staff and being the advisor that I had been during the '48 campaign.

AK: In your role as an advisor to him, did you sense any discrepancy in outlook or orientation between yourself and the governor, or did you both see pretty much eye to eye?

RM: That's a good question. I saw the big picture pretty much as he did. We had differences, except in a couple of instances. There was one I remember where I sent a memorandum--maybe this came later to the president--through Sherman Adams without putting it through Stassen and then told Stassen I had done it. He told me to get the memorandum back right away. It's in the book there someplace.

AK: Yes, you do mention the two cases in your book where Governor Stassen disagreed with actions you had taken. But I was just wondering about something a little less
dramatic. You felt that you could discuss freely your ideas with Governor Stassen, and he would evaluate them. You felt you could be completely honest and forthcoming with the governor, I take it.

RM: Well, almost completely. You felt that he had sensitivities and perhaps blind spots. I don't think I discussed with him those things of a personal nature.

I remember playing chess with him on a trip. I didn't really played chess much except with my children. He played chess with his children. This was on the Russian part of the European trip in '47. He was way out in front at first in the chess game, but he was so much on the offensive that he didn't cover his back door, and I went in the back door and won the game, checkmated him. It was the only time we played chess, but I'll never forget it because it was sort of symbolic of Stassen. He was always on the move, always looking ahead, always on the charge, always tremendous energy and intellectual creativity and capability. But he sometimes was so much that way that he forgot to guard his flanks. I've never mentioned that to him. I think it came from the farm, from almost a peasant view of things, an extreme suspicion of the city slicker and a fear of communism that was, when coupled with the other, I do believe that he thought of the communists as being much more capable of doing us in by insidious and unexpected and diabolical moves.

AK: I am surprised. And yet Governor Stassen was the one who was always encouraging dialogue and negotiation with the Soviet Union.

RM: Yes, it's hard to couple those. But his backing of McCarthy on the communist issue, and his taking the stand in the Oregon debate on outlawing the Communist Party, and when we had to weed out personnel under that drastic order to reduce the number of people in the first years of the Eisenhower administration and FOA--I have forgotten what the percentage was, 20 or 30 percent--he had these criteria. He took all the folders of the whole agency there--I don't know how many--hundreds of folders into a room and spent the whole weekend going over them to come up with his final decision on which people should be cut off the payroll, using things like an intelligence test, which has never been done before, and the FBI record. There were four things. His performance ratings were the third. But he put, I thought, heavier emphasis on the security factor than any. People whom I knew like [unclear] Hansen, who was a correspondent in China who had gone to Carleton College when I was there, and his wife Beverly Hansen, he considered them to be, I think, not secure people, might be fellow travelers, and I thought it was extreme.

AK: I'm surprised. There was a later case, and off the top of my head I can't remember the gentlemen's name. You discussed this in your book. This was during the Eisenhower administration. An individual, I believe he worked in the Agriculture Department and was accused of being--I can't remember the gentlemen's name, but as I understand it, Stassen did bring him into FOA.
RM: That's right. You're right.

AK: So he does seem to be a man of contradictions on this issue.

RM: Yes, it is, and it's hard to explain.

AK: Going back for one second. If I understand correctly, when you refer to Stassen's blind spots, it's what you meant earlier about his practice of charging ahead to get things done and not always covering his flank. That's what you mean by that?

RM: Yes.

AK: One case where that would seem to me to be true would be the effort at the 1956 Republican National Convention and before, to remove Richard Nixon from the ticket. Now, of course, until May 4, 1956, Stassen and you were in London for the disarmament talks. Then after that when you came back to Washington, Stassen became involved in that. There are many questions about that. Some people have speculated that individuals like Sherman Adams, especially, and perhaps Lodge were encouraging Stassen to move on this to get Nixon off the ticket. Are you aware that Sherman Adams, in particular, had any role in encouraging Stassen to undertake this initiative?

RM: There may have been, and it may be in the book. But I can't remember it now.

AK: If we can move ahead, then, to the pivotal 1957 events. At the London disarmament talks in 1957, which are regarded, of course, as a watershed in Governor Stassen's career, it was even before this that Dulles had succeeded in bringing in Stassen by moving the disarmament office into the State Department. Many people--in fact, I believe you are among them--believe that Dulles was determined to avoid an arms agreement. Is this a fair characterization of Dulles' position?

RM: It was during that period. After Stassen left, he changed. But when Stassen was there, it was definitely my opinion that Dulles was not wanting a disarmament agreement.

AK: Once the disarmament office was placed within the State Department, do you believe that Dulles felt a little more secure? He realized that Stassen could not now become a colonel House, if you will, or a force within the White House.

RM: I think that Dulles may have felt, when he succeeded in getting Stassen moved into the State Department, that it was a little easier, that here he was, he could have people like Loy Henderson watching him. But he soon found out that it didn't make any difference where Stassen was and that that had really no effect on Stassen and that Stassen was out to get an agreement, and this was what Dulles feared.
AK: You, at some point, encouraged Governor Stassen to make clear to Eisenhower that he, Stassen, had deferred any presidential ambitions and was only going to focus his energies on serving the Eisenhower administration. I believe you did this as a response to information you had heard from other White House staff that Stassen was regarded as too ambitious, too self-serving. Do you think that that was a major problem in Stassen's relationship with the White House staff and the cabinet, that he was viewed as too ambitious, too self-serving?

RM: Yes. I think they all felt that to one degree or another, and it went back to the '52 campaign. A lot of them felt that Stassen was really out for himself, not really for Eisenhower. This carried on, and it never left the atmosphere.

AK: Well, focusing now on the London talks in 1957, Stassen, of course, arrived at these talks, to some degree with his wings clipped because his office had been put under Dulles. At this point, the United States and Russia began to come together due to the efforts of Stassen. Stassen poured it on, as you seem to say in your book. What were some of the obstacles that Stassen had to overcome in trying to reach an agreement with the Soviet Union as 1957 opened?

AK: The obstacles were that he had the opposition of Lewis Strauss and the Atomic Energy Commission, the opposition of Radford, the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. He had the opposition of Charles Wilson, the secretary of defense, and George Humphrey, the secretary of the treasury. These people were key people on the National Security Council. He had the support of Lodge, who was the U.N. ambassador. He had the support of Rockefeller, who was the coordinator of the information. He had, I think, the support of--it wasn't stated that way--Sherman Adams. He had the support of C. D. Jackson, who was very much liked by Eisenhower and was also on the information end. But those key people on the National Security Council and cabinet was a major obstacle, and he was walking on egg shells always during that period while he was in London.

To him it didn't make any real difference whether he was sitting in the White House or in the State Department. What was important was getting away from all that into a foreign country where he wasn't under the eye of all these people who opposed him except through their staff who were assigned to the White House disarmament staff who became part of the negotiating team. He was always aware that these people on the staff were there as the eyes and ears for the people back in Washington who were opposed to him.

AK: So his obstacles in the United States government were the opposition of people like Humphrey, Wilson, Dulles, and there is also, of course, some opposition from the Soviet Union. Now, the Soviet Union had moved closer toward the U.S. position on a test ban on air inspection, but they insisted on a "no first-use" clause, I believe, and they were beginning to agree to the idea of ground inspection, as I recall. Now, Stassen was
desperate, trying very hard to move the negotiations along. Did he consult with anybody on the disarmament delegation about passing his informal memorandum or talking paper, however we call it, to Zorin?

**RM:** Yes. He brought them all in the day that he did it in the morning and went around the table, and they were unanimously against it.

**AK:** Now, this included people like you and the representatives from--

**RM:** He never asked me on that kind of a question to state my opinion. I was the director of the staff that had a special relationship with him. So he didn't ask me to state my viewpoint. But he went around the table and asked the others.

**AK:** And they were unanimously against it.

**RM:** Yes.

**AK:** But that did not deter him. He pressed forward anyway. How would you characterize his goals in doing so?

**RM:** In getting a first-step agreement with the Soviets on unlimited nuclear test ban and on surprise attack zones in Europe and Asia. He felt that by doing this that from his standpoint he was within the bounds of what Eisenhower had told him and Dulles, that Stassen was free to explore with the Russians personal ideas without commitment of the U.S. government. It was a new technique that he could advance ideas on a personal basis and then report back what the Soviets' reaction was, and then see if they were positive to them, write them up in a more formal way and send them back to Washington to see how the people in Washington saw it.

Of all of the five powers, Great Britain was one that was closest to the United States. Usually they would consult with each other and get agreement with each other on anything that was being presented to the five powers. In this case, he didn't do that. The British were not happy.

**AK:** That morning he distributed copies by messenger, I believe, to the Allies, but just an hour later began to read it into the record. So there was no time for the Allies to consider his talking paper or his informal memorandum.

**RM:** No. He had gone over these ideas before, but it was putting them into a piece of paper. He knew pretty much that there was support for the ideas.

**AK:** The ideas of a limited test ban in zones.
RM: There wasn't any real disagreement on any of that. What was disagreed with was the tactic of handing a paper with all of this in it to the Soviet Union without people seeing the paper in advance.

AK: What happened then? I believe there was a break in the deliberations.

RM: The British called up and wanted him to come down immediately. He asked me to come with him, and if it was just going to be the British negotiator and him in the same room, that I would stay out. If the British negotiator had anybody with him, I should come in. The British negotiator had nobody with him, so I didn't go in. It went on for about an hour. As we were driving back, I asked him what went on. He said they were upset, but he said it very calm. He said nothing really had happened, and actually, it was a time bomb. It was an explosion. They were angry, and the prime minister then wrote the president.

When Dulles found out about it, he thought he had the weapon to cut Stassen's head off with. Eisenhower later said that he never saw Dulles so irritated, so upset, that he wanted Stassen fired. Stassen was recalled to Washington. He went back. He told me to stay in London and hold the fort there and, if necessary, if the heat got too hot, to disappear, take off for the continent. He would call me about once every day to find out what was going on, and I'd ask him what was going on.

AK: Stassen indicated to you that, if the heat got too hot, you should just disappear into the continent?

RM: Yes.

AK: By that he meant pressure, criticism from within the delegation or from the Allies?

RM: Yes. If you listened to what Stassen was telling me on the telephone from Washington, you would have thought that there was nothing happening, everything was okay. He never mentioned any problem. It was only later that I found out what had happened and that Dulles wanted him fired.

AK: Do you believe that had the United States government, meaning people like Dulles, responded differently and then cooperated with Stassen's efforts, do you believe that a treaty with the Soviets dealing with at least a limited test ban was possible at this time?

RM: Yes, definitely. We could have had an agreement then. I understand that Eisenhower thought that that was true, too. He held a press conference and they asked him and he had indicated this then. Dulles got Lewis Strauss to get Mark Mills and Oppenheimer, I guess it was, somebody else, some other scientist to come in from the Livermore Labs and show how testing needed to be continued to get the clean bomb.
Eisenhower didn't have enough confidence in his own knowledge of the subject to stand up against these experts. So he backed off. That was the end, really, of the negotiation on the test ban.

AK: And some have said the end of Governor Stassen's effectiveness in the Eisenhower administration.

RM: Yes. I believe that's true, although Eisenhower never fired him, never ask that he leave.

AK: Yet Stassen remained in the administration until February of 1958. He had actually made the decision to run for governor of Pennsylvania several years before that, hadn't he? Wasn't this a longstanding idea with him, to run for governor of Pennsylvania in 1958, which is, as I understand it, the first year he was eligible to run, having registered to vote in Pennsylvania in 1950?

RM: Yes, I think that's true.

AK: How did you feel about Stassen's decision to run for governor?

RM: I thought that it would have been better if he could have stayed on and secured Eisenhower's blessing to run, because everybody knew that Eisenhower didn't like Nixon very much during that period. Later on, after his grandson married Nixon's daughter, there seemed to be some change in the Eisenhower-Nixon relationship. But in 1956, Eisenhower had given Stassen free rein to go out and try to dump Nixon. It was only when he got to the convention that Eisenhower came in, with about two or three days to go, and he told Stassen he'd have to support the ticket of Eisenhower and Nixon. But Eisenhower might very well have supported Stassen for the presidency in 1960. I thought that it would be better if he stayed on and tried to earn that.

AK: Eisenhower might well have supported Stassen for the presidency in 1960, even in the absence of an arms control treaty?

RM: Yes.

AK: And yet Stassen felt he had to go out and rebuild his political base.

RM: Yes, that's true. [Tape recorder turned off]

RM: I guess this is all written up in the book anyway. But when Stassen left on February fifteenth--again the timing was by accident--on February eighteenth I was going to give this speech at the University of Minnesota in which I compared the differing viewpoints of Stassen and Dulles. This was picked up by Chalmer Roberts of the Washington Post
and put on the front page of the Washington Post. There was a winter snowstorm during
that period, so there was a delay. But Dulles read that going down in his car to a staff
meeting, the account by Chalmer Roberts. I had not used the words "Dulles" or
"Stassen," but it was obvious what I was talking about.

Dulles went into his staff meeting, and he said, "Who cleared the Matteson speech in the
State Department?"

Christian Herter spoke up and said, "It was cleared by your own office, by Ron Spires." He
was assistant to Dulles, and he was a disarmament expert. He's had a long history
since then in the government of being under secretary of state and ambassador, and a few
other things.

**AK:** When you gave this speech at the University of Minnesota, you were still an
employee in the State Department? This is before you moved?

**RM:** I was still director of the White House disarmament staff. So Dulles found out
out from Christian Heard it had been cleared in his own office. I found this out through the
John Foster Dulles papers at Princeton. In a telephone conversation that Dulles had with
Loy Henderson, who was his assistant secretary for administration, he called up and said,
"What is the status of Matteson on the payroll?"

Loy Henderson said, "He's waiting to receive his orders to terminate at the end of June,"
which wasn't true. I wasn't waiting for that.

But Dulles then said, "I understand that Sherman Adams would like to have him kept on
and that Herter would like to have him kept on."

Henderson said, "I'm shocked and surprised at that." Henderson sent over his man to put
a padlock on all of my files. It was like Nazi Germany. I refused to give up the files to
the State Department, because there were two State Department men on the White House
disarmament staff. I made them assured that their views, if spoken frankly and
objectively, would not harm their career status. If these documents had gone back to the
State Department, these two people, their careers would have been in jeopardy. But the
result of that was then Sherman Adams asked me to stay with him, and I stayed with him
until he got knocked off because of the racoon coat and the Oriental rug.

Then Allen Dulles, during this period, came to a party they gave for Stassen when Stassen
was leaving. I remember he went up to the five pictures of our children, which were
paintings. They were over the fireplace. He looked at them for a long time, and then he
came over to me and he said, "Now that Sherman Adams is gone, how would you like to
go with me?"
I said, "What is the job?"

He said, "I'd like to talk to you about it. Come out on Monday." And the job was to be on the Board of Estimates for national intelligence estimates.

I said, "I'd like to think about it." But I didn't want to do it right away. I wanted to write up the Stassen period for a bluebook or something like that, that they had some name for, to write up this negotiation with the Soviets.

AK: You mean as a government document?

RM: Yes. Which I did, and it was put out as a White House or a State Department document. Then, as of January 1, 1959, I went to work on the Board of Estimates, which was the day it happened that Castro came to power in Cuba. That's another story that goes on from there. It was interesting but led to these five trips to Cuba in these last few years, which we raised a cultural exchange and brought the Cuban baseball team up, much to the surprise and horror of the State Department, to play the University of Minnesota.

AK: In 1985?

RM: The trips began in 1984, and this last one was in 1986 when they came to play in the General Mills Wheaties College National Championship Team, a tournament at the Metrodome. That's another story, but it's fascinating.

But, anyway, before that, because I was the newest member on the Board of Estimates and because they usually gave a new member a small country, they gave me Laos and they gave me Cuba. This is in '59, because Castro was coming to Washington in April—he had come into power in January—his first trip outside Cuba. He was coming to sense the situation and reaction to his coming to power. The Board of Estimates was asked to come up with a special intelligence estimate, which we did. I had on my panel of the board Admiral Sherman, who had been head of naval intelligence, and I had Horace Van Syke, who was an old OSS man. We agreed, the three of us, that Castro, at that point, was not a Moscow-dominated Marxist or a communist.

AK: This was in January of 1959?

RM: Yes. We had the support of Bonsell, who was a guy that I had worked under back in '43 when I had that six-month job as a desk officer, to support our paper. But the head of the Board of Estimates, Sherman Kent, who was an old [unclear], a professor at Yale, called me in. He said, "An assessment is coming up before the full board tomorrow. I have a feeling in my bones, as an old intelligence hand, that you're wrong. But I can't dispute your facts." He had tremendous influence within the board. The board overruled
us. The estimate really followed the line of the covert side of CIA, the hard line that wanted to kill Castro, and they later made six attempts to try to kill Castro. But after the Church hearings in 1975, assassination of a foreign leader was outlawed.

AK: You have mentioned in your books that you believe the United States has driven small countries, potentially nonaligned countries, into the arms of the Soviet Union. You mentioned countries like Guatemala and Cuba. I'm curious as to whether in January of 1959 you were aware of the CIA's involvement in Guatemala in 1954.

RM: Yes, I think I was.

AK: It's interesting, because you also then became involved in Vietnam, and yet you disagreed with government policy during that time period.

RM: That's right.

AK: Could you just tell us briefly how you became involved in Vietnam?

RM: The way that I became involved in Vietnam was that Robert Comer, during the period that I was on the Board of Estimates, was then in CIA as special assistant to Robert Amory, who was the deputy director of the CIA for the overt side. Dick Bissell was the covert side. Comer then, when Johnson came in, went over to be special assistant to the president and became then his expert on Vietnam. Comer had known me in CIA. He wanted me to go out. Other people wanted me to go out. First, my name was being considered as one of the three ambassadors.

AK: Ambassadors to South Vietnam?

RM: To South Vietnam. This third ambassador was to be in charge of the other war, civil operations, working out of Saigon. I had the support for that of people like Eliot Richardson, Warren Burger, a number of people who had some weight. But the State Department wanted to control that position, and I wasn't a foreign career officer.

AK: Did you want the job?

RM: I would have taken it, because my position was that I disagreed with the policy, and I thought I could do more by going over there on the scene and bringing it around to the right policy.

AK: What year was this when your name was being considered for this position of the third ambassador?

AK:  So that didn't come through, but you got a position in Vietnam and the pacification program.

RM:  So Komer, when I was not appointed to that, then came back a second time and asked me if I'd be interested in going over and taking over the II Corps area which ran from north of Saigon to south of Da Nang, from South China Sea to Laos and Cambodia, which had half the land area of Vietnam and about a quarter of the population. I said yes. But what happened then was that the State Department dug up my physical records and found out that I had a history of an ulcer at the beginning of 1949, when my accident happened. I happened to be in the National Health Service in Britain, investigating for Stassen the National Health Service, and I fainted dead away. They wanted to know what hospital I wanted to go to, and I said I wanted to go to a National Health Service hospital. They found all the beds were taken, and so they put me in a London clinic. All this appeared in the record.

So when I wanted to go to Vietnam, they said no, they couldn't approve me for going. I said, "Well, I'll get my doctor to give me the okay on that, and I will absolve the State Department of any responsibility if anything happens to me over there." So Ambassador Lodge, whom I had known, said he wanted me over there. If I was willing to volunteer and make that kind of statement of not holding the U.S. government responsible, he would welcome me. So I went. Komer took me over on his plane, and we landed in Saigon, but then we flew up to Due Trong, which was the headquarters.

AK:  Pardon me. Could I interrupt for just one second and ask you if you believe, because you were a CIA man, this was a deliberate attempt by State to keep you from going, by raising questions about your health? Do you think it was a deliberate attempt to keep you from taking the position?

RM:  I don't think so. I don't know of any reason to believe that.

AK:  I didn't mean to interrupt.

RM:  So when we got over there, it was like landing in the middle of a jungle. I remember the first night I went to bed in some Vietnamese house and hung my clothes up on a pole. Somebody had reached in with a long bamboo pole and taken all my clothes. That showed how rudimentary it was. What I was supposed to do was to create an organization in the middle of all this that would have the State Department, CIA, AID, USIA, and a number something like 2,000 military advisors under me. We were to set up what was called the OCO [Office of Civilian Operations], which would then be headed up by Komer, himself, then who came over as that third ambassador, and he was in Saigon. He had John Paul Van, myself, and Barney __________, when he didn't get the
ambassadorship in Saigon, was put in charge of the I Corps. I had the II Corps. John Van
had the III Corps, and some State Department guy had the IV Corps, which was not as
important as the other three corps. John Van was the guy who Neil Sheehan wrote a book
about, The Best and the Brightest. Later he wanted to come up into my area and take that
over, and that's where he was killed.

I had the feeling that it was the wrong policy, and by being on the ground in Vietnam, you
do more to change the policy than if you're sitting behind a desk in Washington.

AK: What were you hoping to change?

RM: Hoping to get the United States to get out.

AK: I'm thinking back to when Dien Bien Phu fell in 1954. Governor Stassen, as I
understand it, looked favorably upon the use of ground troops and, perhaps, stronger
measures to protect the French in Dien Bien Phu. Did you discuss this with Governor
Stassen at the time about what actions, if any, the United States should take to preserve
the French position at Dien Bien Phu?

RM: It may be in the book, but I can't remember that. I know the position that I would
have taken, was to do with doing away with colonialism, and that you should look on it,
just as in the Middle East, they should look on the nationalities there that affect their
regional position and differences and not be overwhelmed by this idea that there's going
to be a communist horde sweeping down over Southeast Asia to the Philippines and to
the doors of San Francisco, which was pretty much the Dulles point of view.

Then, as I stayed for a year and a half, I found that Westmoreland's
reporting--Westmoreland I liked as a person, and we got along well. Komer I liked, but
not as well as Westmoreland. Bunker I liked the best of all, and I had long talks with
him. But Komer's reporting was too optimistic, Westmoreland's was too optimistic, and
they were leading Johnson to believe that a victory was possible. Johnson in 1968
wanted what he called "a coon skin on the wall." He wanted a victory in Vietnam as he
entered the 1968 presidential year. When these people were reporting optimistically these
elaborate formulas that made no sense back in Vietnam--figures on body counts and
villages freed and all that, agricultural projection, all the statistics were exaggerated--it
led Washington to believe that things were much better than they were until the Tet
Offensive hit, and that illuminated the sky over Vietnam.

AK: Were you still in Vietnam at the time of Tet?

RM: Yes. When the Tet Offensive hit my headquarters area first, they came right by
where I was sleeping. They didn't bother me. They moved on down the street to hit the
province headquarters.
AK: What was the reaction among your colleagues? You say Tet hit your area first.

RM: It was coordinated to go off simultaneously everywhere a certain hour during the lunar Tet New Year celebration. But the communications were not good enough to make it simultaneous, and by accident again, it happened that our area got hit first. But we thought it was a local attack. When I went into the briefing that morning, GIs were running around with flak vests. I was driving a military car with a civilian chauffeur, a Vietnamese. They wouldn't let this Vietnamese chauffeur come in. I went in, and we had a briefing. The briefing indicated it was a local attack.

I was going up that morning in my plane to see the general that was in charge of the Koreans, to Qui Nhon. I could see down in the streets fighting going on. And in the airports, they were fighting there, too. So I told the pilot to take off for Pleiku. We got up there, and the airport wasn't being bothered, but it was outside the city. In the streets of Pleiku you could see the fighting going on. So we landed. We were about to run out of gas.

I went up to see General Von Loc [phonetic], who was Prince Von Loc. Von Loc was down in Saigon playing with the girls at the Tet lunar New Year. General Jack Barnes was there, a U.S. general. As I came out of the building, Von Loc came up in a motorcade up the hill to his headquarters, and Barnes came out of his office. Von Loc was about 6' 2" and weighed 210 or 220 pounds. He was a big Vietnamese. He picked General Barnes up by the coat lapel of his uniform and shook him like a dog. He said, "This is my country. This is my command. You reported that I was down in Saigon, and I'm going to have you cashiered." He ran up the stairs, hitting his fist into the wall as he went, got up to the top of the stairs, and he came down, picked him up again and said the same thing. Then I asked him if I could see him—this was on a Saturday—if I could see him on a Monday. I went in to see him, and Barnes, who thought his career was ended by that, asked if he could come with me. He did and Von Loc turned his back on him, but allowed him to come into the room and didn't address him. After that, Von Loc was removed.

But out of all of this came Komer after, particularly, a briefing. I guess it was the time of the Kassenbach visit, who was under secretary of state. Anyway, I was with Kassenbach and a guy named Bill somebody, who was working with Komer, and I had known him. That's another story, but it goes on. Anyway, out of the Kassenbach visit came the report back to Washington that I was critical of the reporting from Vietnam. So Komer sent his deputy up to General Rossen, who was the military commander in II Corps and asked to see him and asked how I was doing. Rossen refused to see him without me in the room. When I heard about this from Rossen, I called up Komer and said, "I understand you sent Wade Latham, one of your deputies, to see Rossen because you were critical of what I was doing." And I said I'd like to come down with Rossen and see him. That's another story,
but it goes on.

Finally, my year and a half, which was the term that I was supposed to be over there, was up, my term in Vietnam, and I went back. Komer had to write up a performance evaluation of me. Westmoreland wrote one up that was one of the best I have ever received. He was the military commander.

AK: General Westmoreland had a high opinion of you, even though he presumably knew that you were critical of military reporting on events in Vietnam?

RM: He had a high opinion. I don't know how well informed he was. Yet he must have known.

AK: Vietnam came up later. Just to pursue this while we are on the topic, it was the subject of Vietnam that led to your leaving the Nixon administration. Could you tell us the story about how you were drawn into a discussion of Cambodia? Could you relate that story for us?

RM: What happened was I was invited to dinner in Georgetown by a man named George Bell, who was in the Nixon White House. George Bell's wife was a good friend of my wife. They both went to the Christian Science Church, and George Bell went, too. In fact, Haldeman and Erlichmann were all Christian Scientists. He had a group of conservative East Shore Republicans in for dinner, along with me. Nixon had just, after much soul-searching and writing himself a memorandum of the pluses and minuses of going into Cambodia, decided to go into Cambodia in 1970. I disagreed with that. It was extending the war and wasn't in line with getting out of Vietnam, as I saw it.

So Bell went around the circle (with men out in the garden after dinner, drinking coffee, and the women in another part) and asked them how they saw the Nixon decision to go into Cambodia. He came to me last, and he said, "Bob, what do you think about the president's policy?"

I said, "George, you've asked me, I'll tell you. I disagree with it."

Within a week, I was called over to the White House and, with two people taking notes, they asked me a lot of questions. I went back to where I was. I was director of the Office of International Training. Governor Dwindell, who was Nixon's man in New Hampshire, called me in. Before that, he wanted me to take what he thought was a higher executive position, but he was under orders from the White House. He said, "You are considered to be not to the proper degree a supporter of the Nixon administration, and you will have to move out of here." But he didn't say I would be moved out of the government entirely. They were thinking of putting me in charge of the Vietnam Training Center over in the Pentagon area, and that was a non-job by this time, because it was becoming clear that the
war was winding down. I told him I didn't want it, and so then they moved me over to
this other job, Foreign Affairs Executive Seminar, and I stayed down there. You knew
that you didn't have any future in the Nixon administration, and I began to think about a
second career, life in the north, and going back to where I'd come from and getting into
the environment business. When Nixon was nominated again in '72 and was certain he
was going to be elected, I decided to leave then and told them. When I told them, they
weren't unhappy, and I wasn't either.

At that point, I knew--that was in '71--that there was a college called Northland, and I
knew Sigurd Olson. I had met him in 1958 in the Canadian Embassy. He was
Northland's most illustrious graduate, and he was a man who had written a number of
books, about six, a few wonderful books about the wilderness. He was the one who
inspired me to start taking my children across Canada by canoe from Hudson Bay to the
Bering Sea. I went up in 1971, in August, when I was out there for my vacation period, to
hear a lecture by Sigurd Olson at Northland and got the idea during the lecture of creating
a job for myself and, at the same time, getting closer to the environment and to Sigurd
Olson by suggesting the idea of a Sigurd Olson Environmental Institute. I talked to the
president, Malcolm McLean, who had just come on three months before that, who had
been a Foreign Service officer in Guatemala, whom I'd met on one of my trips through
there. Actually, it was the Office of International Training. Sig was all for it, but he was
very modest about his name being used. Malcolm said, "It's a radical idea. Let me think
about it."

The end result of that was, after much misunderstanding and back and forth, the faculty
were upset at the idea at first, because they thought it meant turning the college from a
liberal arts college into a vocational school and they would lose their jobs. But it wasn't
the idea at all. The thing was approved, and I got the initial funding to support the
first-year budget, and on July 1, 1972, I started there.

AK: And yet you and Malcolm McLean did have different ideas about how Northland
should proceed.

RM: Did we ever. He wanted a little Yale in the Upper Midwest with a fine arts center
in the middle of the campus. I wanted a liberal arts environmental college looking on the
environment in the broadest terms. I directed the institute, not the college, directed
toward problem-solving and getting the environmentalists together with the economic
developers, sitting down in the same room, leaving their guns at the door, and coming to
some sensible agreement on how they both could be satisfied. The same with the Native
Americans up there who wanted spearfishing rights, a lot of other rights under the
original treaties of the Indians. I wanted to press the Native American studies program,
the problem-solving workshops. I wanted them to have a relation with Canada, which
was on the northern side of Lake Superior. Lake Superior was the region called "the
golden circle" by Sigurd Olson, that Northland College and the Sigurd Olson Institute
would address. We had working relations between the Canadians and the Americans on preserving the quality of Lake Superior.

**AK:** Sigurd Olson did?

**RM:** I did. Sigurd Olson did, too. He agreed to all of this.

Malcolm McLean began to feel that I was threatening his own position. He began to feel that I was wanting to be president of Northland. We had an advisory board that had Weyerhaeusers and Pillsburys and all the big names from Minneapolis and St. Paul on the advisory board, because they had second homes in the north, and they loved Sigurd Olson. He began to feel as if he was going to be moved out, because the college board of trustees was sort of average in terms of wealth, wisdom, and work average. Our advisory board was half of the second-home people coming up north, who had the wealth and were willing to do the work and had some wisdom. The other half were environmentalists who had jobs in the North in forestry or fisheries or hatcheries.

**AK:** You moved to smooth relations with Malcolm McLean by announcing your resignation one year in advance and only one year after you formally began these duties. One of the things you wanted the institute to focus on was regional problems as opposed to world problems. This was due to the necessity of establishing these working relationships you referred to?

**RM:** Yes, and because a small college like Northland, with a limited endowment, couldn't be all things to all people. It couldn't cover the world. I thought that there were something like 2,500 faceless, invisible colleges in the United States, liberal arts, small, and that what you wanted was a distinctive liberal arts environmental college that had a particular role and would work as a regional college rather than having students going abroad and everything else that they had.

**AK:** If I can just ask you about your relationship with, and view of, Sigurd Olson. You initially met him and discussed with him, had in common with him, your interest in canoeing, and you began to very quickly develop an interest in his philosophy, as I understand it. Can you tell us what it is about Olson's philosophy you found so impressive? Is there anything that stands out in your memory with being impressed with his philosophy?

**RM:** His reverence for nature and the beautiful way he could express himself in his books—they were almost poetic—and the man himself in terms of how he saw the world. He wanted to go out into the world, but he chose at one point in 1955 or '56 not to do that, but to stay in the region and use his influence to get through legislation, particularly the boundary water canoe area. The boundary water canoe area was in the Quadio Superior, areas that I'd been canoeing in since 1930. I was a counselor at Camp Okanzi, north of
the boundary water canoe area in Canada. I had grown to love the area, and we loved the North, loved to go on canoe trips, and he brought it all together. He had been to Northland, and his wife was from a farm south of where we had a summer place at Seeley [phonetic]. She was another beautiful person, who had the same ideas that Sigurd Olson had, and who is ninety-three today.

I've just been up at Northland, and the amazing thing is that after the battles I had at Northland with the faculty—they banned me from the campus at one point. They wanted me banned.

AK: What? When?

RM: In 1974, but I refused to be banned. The president said it was either him or me going to be chairman of the board.

AK: This is when you served on the board of trustees for that one-year period.

RM: And I was chairman of the Environmental Committee. I was also chairman of the board committee to revise the bylaws and tighten the management and strengthen the board, which had become a rubber-stamp board. Instead of the president being the agent of the board, the board became the agent of the president. It should be the other way around, because the board has the legal responsibility for the college, not the president. The president should not be a voting member of the board.

AK: How did local business people react to the founding of the institute? Did the relationship between local business people and the institute improve or stay the same or get worse? What can you tell us about that relationship?

RM: Well, there were some that were approving and some that were disapproving. It was sort of divided. But some of the business people were important members of the board of trustees, and they finally came to the position they had to. The college was on the rocks almost, and you needed some radical thinking to save the college. George Struther, one of the more influential members of the board from Madison, who was a professor at the University of Wisconsin, one day at one of the board meetings, the annual meeting, said, "Radical thinking is necessary." So that afternoon, I think it was, I wrote a memorandum to the president saying that we should change the college from being a liberal arts college to a liberal arts environmental college. The president pocketed the memorandum, didn't do anything about it. So I brought it up again in the fall. Other members of the board asked me to develop it. Finally, they all approved it.

AK: That was in 1974, I believe. They officially changed the name.

AK: Mr. Matteson thank you very much for your time.