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INTERVIEW WITH GOVERNOR W. AVERELL HARRIMAN

by

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[NOTE: Governor Harriman had been in Europe since May 1948 supervising the aid to the European countries under the European Cooperation Administration. He was in London when he heard of the North Korean attack on South Korea. He returned to his headquarters in Paris on Monday and on Tuesday he called President Truman to ask if he could be of help back in Washington. The President agreed that Governor Harriman could be of assistance to him and should return at once. He arrived in Washington that same day.]

CONNERT: What sort of jobs did the President give you when you came back?

HARRIMAN: Well, I don't know whether you want to make this part of the permanent record or to keep this in a special file. I knew of course, the general job he wanted me for was as his special assistant to coordinate the activities of State and Defense and help develop a coordinated policy throughout the administration which everyone could support for the conduct of the war. But I went to him and said: "Is there any special matter that you want me to give attention to," and he said, "Yes, Dean's in trouble and I want to help him." Now, I think you want to keep this in a not-for-general-publication category, but that was his word.

You remember at that time there was a great deal of criticism of Acheson because of his so called "softness on Communism," his statement which was misunderstood. After Alger Hiss had been convicted he said he wouldn't turn his back on a friend. I think if he'd said, I won't kick a man when he's down, there wouldn't have been any problems, but this was misunderstood. It was a matter of great conscience with him. Whatever his views were, he thought he should, regardless of his responsibilities

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as Secretary of State, state his position. He was a great friend, not of Alger Hiss, but of his brother.

In any event, Louis Johnson did not get along with him and seemed to be determined to undermine Mr. Acheson's position. One of the problems the President faced was the constant demand of Senators of both parties for Acheson's resignation. This was an election year, if you remember, 1950. Democratic Senators running for reelection would have liked to see Acheson removed, and Louis Johnson was exploiting that. What Louis Johnson's objectives were, I don't know, but he was joining the cry, perhaps not openly, but he was stimulating it.

In any event, I undertook my job which was to coordinate policy. I brought in as assistants about half a dozen extremely experienced people. I didn't consider it my job to keep the Secretaries away from the President but to keep the President fully informed so that he could deal with the problems that the Secretary of State and Secretary of Defense brought to him. I had on my staff General Frank Roberts who had been with me in Moscow and then Turkey. First I had General Deane, John R. Deane, who came for a short time. Then I got General Roberts to deal with the military matters, I had Lincoln Gordon on economic matters, Sam Berger on labor matters, and Charles Collingwood on the general problem of public information. Then I had Ted Tannenwald who was generally my chief of staff and George Elsey whom I got from the White House to coordinate with the White House and be a general assistant.

One of these men attended all of the Interdepartmental committee meetings and I found that I could exercise a great deal of influence. In the

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first place, the men that I assigned to these jobs were able. They did their home work, they discussed the policies with me in advance and were authorized to speak for me at the Interdepartmental committee meetings. Therefore, we exercised a great deal of influence in those Interdepartmental committees. I'd learned this from the period when I was Secretary of Commerce. I found most Departments sent people who had no authority to speak and all they did was to find out what other departments wanted at these meetings and then undertook to see how they could frustrate them. I looked upon Interdepartmental Committees as a way to get decisions, or rather consensus, or at least clarify the issues so that the Secretaries, members of the Cabinet, and the President could act. So, much of my influence was not in my direct relations with the President and the Secretaries but rather in seeing that the organization of government which had been established, functioned, instead of interfering, as Kissinger did, with the relationship of the Secretary of State and Secretary of Defense with the President. I didn't encourage it, I didn't interfere with it in any shape, form, or manner, but I either got them to agree in advance to policies that I thought were wise or else inform the President of what the issues were so that he could develop them.

CONDIT: Was Secretary Johnson receptive to this kind of approach and helpful?

HARRIMAN: I don't know. Secretary Johnson was a very extraordinary man, and, as you know, President Truman relieved him. I think he relieved him perhaps largely because he wouldn't cooperate with the State Department. In any event, the relationship between Johnson and the President was an

interesting one. Johnson had been chairman of the Democratic finance committee during the '48 campaign. Truman was very short of funds. He got the money necessary to keep him on the train and on radio, and he was very grateful for it. Johnson, I'd known in the later 1930's. He'd been a very strong advocate (I'd respected him for this) for increase in Defense expenditures by contrast with Secretary of War Woodring, who was quite an isolationist, or rather didn't see the danger.

CONDIT: Johnson got Marshall his job.

HARRIMAN: I don't know whether that was entirely true or not, but in any event I respected Johnson very much for pointing out the weakness of the United States. I was Chairman of the Business Advisory Council of the Department of Commerce at that time. I got him to talk to the members, and he pointed to the strength of Nazi Germany, the weakness of the Allies, and the weakness of the United States. We became very strong in support of him. On the other hand, he was so abrasive in his relationship with Woodring that when the President looked for a successor, I think that Henry Stimson insisted that he be permitted to choose his own deputy. Johnson was not an easy man to get along with, but I respected his position at that time. I had no reason to have any personal differences with him, but he did join the cry to undermine Acheson. That was at least one of the reasons that President Truman had for relieving him.

Then, of course, the President wanted to get a cabinet that had great public respect. I was among those who recommended General Marshall to take Johnson's place. From then on, my problems between the Defense and State Department were very much reduced. There was a disposition to work together. At the same time it was still necessary to coordinate the thinking

of the staffs on both sides.

I did find that Secretary of Defense Johnson was in touch with Taft and other Republicans who were leading the cry against Acheson. How his personal antagonisms with Acheson started I have no knowledge. But he did join and encourage the cry against Acheson.

CONDIT: Your man Elsey wrote a very interesting memo in the files at the Truman Library. Apparently after he fired Johnson, President Truman came out of his office and told Charles Ross that he had been through the most difficult day in the White House, or the most difficult thing, and Ross described the personal appearance and reactions of Secretary Johnson, in stark contrast to what Johnson later told a Senate committee. Elsey recorded it all.'

HARRIMAN: I'd forgotten that. I wasn't present so I can't contribute to this.

CONDIT: President Truman did not say, however, anything about the reasons for the firing except that Secretary Johnson, and this is almost a quote, "had no idea of why he was being fired. He thought he had been doing a good job." So what you're saying is very helpful here because the President didn't pinpoint his real reasons. Would you like to go back to the Acheson statement of January '50? I believe you said that it probably helped to tip the scale in favor of the North Korean aggression.

HARRIMAN: That was the Acheson speech at the Press Club. I must confess that I have consistently denied politically the attacks that were made on Acheson for the speech because there's no proof that his speech had any influence. It's an interesting fact that it wasn't until, I think over six months after the Korean War started, that Walter Lippman, I think it

was, picked up this speech as being a possible encouragement to the North Koreans. I've forgotten just what he said. But I think he was the first one that called attention to it. And then the Republicans took it and used it and, I thought at the time, way out of proportion to its importance.

In retrospect, and in analyzing why it was that Stalin approved the move by Kim, or encouraged Kim to attack the South, it's perfectly clear that the Russians armed and trained the North Korean forces. Stalin didn't do that for nothing. He had something in mind. As I thought back over it, I couldn't help but come to consider the effect of the Acheson statement. It's perfectly true as he contended, and I contended, that the Joint Chiefs had taken a similar position as to the perimeter of our defenses, but that was a military matter of defense. But Acheson went further and spoke in that speech, as I recall it -- I can't remember the exact words -- but the gist of it was that those countries outside of the defense perimeter would have to depend upon their own defenses in the first instance and then upon the full force of world opinion through the United Nations. It was a very strong statement about the United Nations. I'm quite sure that reference to the United Nations didn't move Stalin. I don't think he felt that was a very effective medium.

I'm inclined to believe today that if we saw the Kremlin records of the time, which I doubt we'll ever do, we will find that the Acheson speech coming from a Secretary of State as a political decision, not a military line of defense, but as an indication of what we'd do if there was an attack outside of the line of defense, that it may have given encouragement

to Stalin and his advisers to believe that we would simply take his attack on South Korea to the United Nations, that they would debate it, and by the time they got finished debating it, it would be a fait accompli and that would be that. Similar to the Czech coup in '48. I can't help but feel that it had an influence, but I don't think it's fair to speak of Acheson's speech as the only indication that we had no intention of defending Korea. Their intelligence may have gotten the information that the Joint Chiefs recommended that we not do so, and one can't tell what other information the Kremlin had. But Acheson's speech may well have been one of the factors that encouraged Stalin to give the nod to Kim. We have it directly from Khrushchev's memoirs that Kim came to talk to Stalin and Stalin gave him the nod. I don't know how else to report it. Obviously Kim was not averse to doing this. The Communists wanted to take over South Korea.

I've also thought that Stalin was unhappy that he was not given an area of occupation within the Japanese Islands. He had asked for Hokkaido in his talk with Hopkins and me in early June 1945. I was utterly determined that he should not get it, and I did everything I could to prevent it. Mr. McCloy has told me that he agreed with the positions that I took when Stalin asked for the right of a Russian General to accept the surrender of Japan along with MacArthur. That was the first move in demanding Hokkaido. General Deane and I both were quite determined that it should not happen, having seen the devastating effect that it had in our other relations where we had established military missions in a Russian area, as in Rumania, and their unwillingness or their inability, perhaps, to cooperate in the manner in which Western nations cooperate. The whole history of

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Japan would have been so utterly different if Hokkaido had been given to the Soviets. I considered that to be one of the important contributions that I made while I was ambassador, the fact that I contributed to discouraging it.

I'm not sure that the fact that Stalin was frustrated in Hokkaido didn't contribute to his desire to get control of all of Korea. I've no basis for saying that except a hunch. Stalin was quite a cautious man militarily. President Truman asked me to stop and see Tito in 1951. I had military advisers with me to consider Tito's military request for tanks and aircraft. He laid out his plans. He was spending a great deal of money on his defense and developing an effective military establishment. I asked him what his plans were. He said he wanted to have enough so that he could defend against attack by the satellites, which would be Bulgaria and Rumania, I suppose. I've forgotten whether Hungary was included. I asked, "Well, if the Red Army attacks, do you go to the mountains again?" He said, "Oh no, I'll never go to the mountains again. We'll fight in the plains." Then he said Stalin would never use the Red Army outside of the nations immediately adjacent to the Soviet Union. He was not concerned that Stalin would use the Red Army. Now if Tito didn't think that Stalin would use the Red Army against him, I think it's pretty good evidence that he wouldn't have done it in Korea. Of course, as things developed, when Kim got in trouble, Stalin turned it over to the Chinese and didn't intervene himself.

GOLDBERG: Khrushchev said in his memoirs that Stalin was terrified in this postwar period about possible attacks by the imperialists, and this explained much of his behavior. Did you have this impression, either while you were Ambassador or after?

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HARRIMAN: No, I did not. I see no basis for that except that Stalin was very suspicious. In my recent visit to Moscow, I was representing President Ford at the thirtieth anniversary of the VE-Day celebration. Brezhnev made a speech in which he said they'd been subjected by the imperialists to nuclear blackmail. And then he said something else about Vietnam which has no bearing here now. When I saw Kosygin the following morning, he brought up the speech, fortunately for me, and I was able to say that I objected, took real exception to what Brezhnev had said about nuclear blackmail. I said that I knew that President Truman never gave any serious consideration to the use of nuclear weapons and certainly never threatened the Soviet Union. Then, Kosygin rather lamely said that the existence of the nuclear monopoly made it a threat. I can't tell you whether they considered it a threat, but as late as May 8, 1975, Brezhnev speaks of nuclear blackmail. So it may well have been during the period when we had a monopoly, that Stalin was afraid of blackmail. I deal with this subject in my book with Elie Abel being published by Random House in November.

Now, of course, the Soviets exploded a nuclear device in the autumn of 1949, as I remember, so by '50 they had a nuclear weapon, but they had nothing that they could retaliate with against the United States. So, it may well be that his fear of nuclear retaliation was something he bore in mind.

I have somewhere, a conversation with Stalin in which I asked him about the future of nuclear weapons. I knew that he'd given orders to his scientists to make every effort to develop a nuclear capability. Then, he

learned a lot from Fuchs and the Germans that the Soviets were able to take. When I asked Stalin what the future of nuclear weapons would be, what effect it would have, he said that it would make war impossible. That was in the autumn of 1945, sometime in '45. His statements to me were not always the same as his statements to his own people, but in any event, he was talking about the period when he quite confidently would get a nuclear capability, and I'm sure he had in mind a period when each side would have nuclear capabilities. But I've no idea whether he was afraid of nuclear attack from us or whether he wasn't. I've no evidence to that effect, but it is interesting that the subject crops up as late as 1975, so it does lend some evidence to what Khrushchev indicated.

CONDIT: Was there any feeling among subordinates in the White House, that the atomic bomb might be used?

HARRIMAN: I didn't hear any discussion of it.

CONDIT: No discussion at all.

HARRIMAN: I didn't hear any discussion of it myself.

CONDIT: Even off the record.

HARRIMAN: What annoys me is this talk in the press now about assassination plots, the CIA. When people are working on every conceivable possibility in dealing with a situation, almost any extreme may be mentioned, but mentioned and discarded. My own belief is that in these assassination plots the people whose responsibility it was to develop all the conceivable possibilities did talk about assassinations, but there was no serious thought given to it by the President of the United States. I can't tell whether someone in the White House may have talked about the use of nuclear bombs;

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it was so completely out of line with anything that I thought was the right thing to do.

The President took the decision to use the bomb in 1945, and I thought he was right in doing it in order to end the war. I think there's every indication that the war would have dragged on for a long period of time, possibly even more Japanese would have been killed. I've never fully understood the reason for the second bomb, and I've never tried to analyze it. There is some evidence that the Japanese wouldn't have acted unless the two bombs were used. In any event, it did bring the close of the war with Japan, and that wouldn't have happened as quickly without the bombs. But after that I personally was so strongly opposed to the use of this weapon that I would not have been one of the people they would have come to in the White House. I'm quite satisfied that President Truman never gave any serious consideration to the use of the bomb, and I'm quite satisfied that he never threatened Stalin with the use of the bomb.

You know, Churchill, when he was on the Riviera on vacation once, said that we ought to threaten the destruction of Moscow with the bomb if they didn't behave. It was one of those casual remarks, Churchillian remarks, which I think if he'd been in power he never would have made, but when he was in opposition he made all kinds of statements. I only recall it as being recorded in the press. But I'm indicating that it may well be that Stalin was worried, and if we'd had an irresponsible President it may have been considered seriously, but we had a responsible President.

By the way, to repeat what I was saying about this May 1975 protest on my part to Kosygin, I later on saw Brezhnev for about a ten minute talk

during the reception and he didn't apologize for it. But he said, "I know you took exception to some of the things I said, but these things have to be said." He didn't apologize but he recognized my right to object. But that's a different story. So that what I said was registered at the highest level in the Soviet Union.

CONDIT: One interpretation of events in Korea is that North Korea went into the war a satellite of Russia and came out of the war a satellite of the Communist Chinese. Do you think that this was with the willing help of Stalin, or do you think he felt a certain disappointment that his desire to attain some kind of role in the Korean peninsula might have been hindered rather than helped by the war?

HARRIMAN: I think he was ready to accept the inevitable. Stalin was a very practical man, ruthless but practical. The Chinese had come to the assistance of the North Koreans, which Stalin did not want to do. He had bowed out, so there was nothing he could do about it. This whole question of the satellite relationship is one that I don't know very much about because I've never talked to Kim or anybody else. I do know that in North Vietnam Ho Chi Minh was not a satellite of anybody. He was as determined to be as independent as Tito, and this whole conception that North Vietnam was a part of the world Communist revolutionary plot is absolutely untrue. If Roosevelt's idea of not letting the French back into Indo-China had been followed, we would have had ~~an~~ ~~Hbi~~ ~~Chi~~ ~~Minh~~ some sort of an Asian-type of Tito. That's a complicated statement, but I think you know what I mean.

The Vietnamese were very friendly to the United States, very friendly

for what the OSS had done for them during the war. They used, as is well known, the phrases from our Declaration of Independence or our Constitution, I've forgotten which, in connection with their own constitution. Not that they would have followed our type of democracy, but it would have been a very livable situation as far as they were concerned, and I believe from my contacts, nine months with them in Paris, the whole group, not just Ho Chi Minh, were dedicated to independence from China and the Soviet Union. But they used the Soviet Union to balance off China, and obviously they had to appeal for help to both of them, but the tragedy of Vietnam is we didn't understand that and that we didn't come to some compromise agreement.

That we ever got involved in Vietnam is a great tragedy. I opposed it as early as 1949, when I sent a telegram to Mr. Acheson that we ought not to be giving the French aid to carry on their war in Indo-China. Most of what we were giving them in the Marshall Plan they were using in Indo-China, and that didn't seem to be the right thing to do. I got, I think one of the very few rude answers back, something to the effect that your field is Europe, keep out of the Far East. Acheson was anxious to butter up the French in order to get them to agree to the European Defense Community, and that was the reason for his doing it, which I thought was a very great mistake. We aided and abetted the French. Truman got blamed for it, but it was Acheson who should get blamed for helping the French, as one of the early steps.

Also, I want to say that Truman gets blamed for his Truman Doctrine as a forerunner of Vietnam. I think that's utterly unfair; the legislation

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to carry out aid to Greece and Turkey specifically provided with his full approval that no American troops would be used. It was to be limited to military and economic aid and military advisers, but it was never to go beyond that. In addition to that he refused to follow the urging of many people to give military assistance to Chiang-Kai-Shek in Mainland China, and he was bitterly denounced for having lost us China, you remember. So you can't blame Truman for having lost us China and then blame him for Vietnam. If you wish to, you can blame him for one or the other. As far as I'm concerned, I think that the policies in China were wise. He acted on General Marshall's advice. President Truman would never have become involved in Vietnam.

CONDIT: Do you see any causal connections between our strategic thinking in relation to Korea and our later help in Indo-China?

HARRIMAN: I never saw it if it was. I think the great blunder in Vietnam was that Dulles, having failed to get President Eisenhower's approval to intervene in North Vietnam, subsequently went ahead and pushed the French out of Saigon. General Ely was there representing the French, and they were ready to give some assistance to President Diem, but Dulles literally pushed the French out and we took over military, economic, and political responsibility for Diem. That was the beginning of our involvement. I'm satisfied also, that President Kennedy would never have become as deeply involved as President Johnson and later President Nixon did. He was already concerned that we were too deeply involved before he died. I was then in the State Department as Under Secretary for Political Affairs, and I knew very much what his thinking was. Others such as

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Mike Forrestal and Arthur Schlesinger, and I'm sure, Bob MacNamara, would agree that we would never have gone the route that we did. Just how Kennedy would have handled it is very hard to say, but you remember President Kennedy made the statement not very long before his death that this was a Vietnamese War, and they had to fight and win it themselves. I think that he sincerely believed that.

Militarily, Korea was so completely different. It is a peninsula. The only way the North Koreans could attack was down the narrow peninsula. There was no Ho Chi Minh trail. Any idea you could block the Ho Chi Minh trail was nonsense because if you blocked one trail, they could move farther west, and this was the way I felt at the time. They could've gone as far west as they wanted and still gotten the stuff down. There was no way to isolate it. It was a militarily impractical proposal unless you were ready to do what no sane person was ready to do, which was to use nuclear devices -- what I think Curtis Le May said -- to knock North Vietnam back to the Stone Age. But we couldn't have lived on this planet as decent people if that kind of policy had been adhered to. Anyway, I'm glad to have this opportunity to denounce the people that blamed the Truman Doctrine for events in Vietnam, which is entirely different from Korea. Korea was a threat to Japan. I think if the Communists had gotten control of Korea it would have very much weakened Japan. After all that's a very narrow strait, the distance between the principal Japanese island and Korea, I've forgotten the exact mileage, but it's 100 miles, or something of that nature. South Korea has been a very important adjunct to Japan in economic development. I don't want in any way to condone the increasingly dictatorial

methods of President Park, and I think we should be far more vigorous in refusing to give him aid as long as he continues these policies. He has done an extraordinary job in developing the economy of Korea, and I suppose, next to Japan, it is the most striking development in Asia, along with, of course, Taiwan.

CONDIT: I'd like to get back to Congress. When you first came aboard as the Special Assistant to the President did you ask him, or suggest to him that a Congressional resolution would be useful or helpful to tidy Korea up?

HARRIMAN: Yes I did, I did suggest to him that we should give consideration to a joint resolution supporting the Korean intervention. I was under the illusion, for some reason or other, that Acheson had agreed with me on it. I don't know why. I'd mentioned it to him, and I got a wrong impression. I spoke to the President about it, and I found he was vigorously opposed to it. He said: "If I do that it'll weaken the position of the President and it'll make it more difficult for another President to function in an emergency again." I later found, much to my amazement, that Acheson had strongly recommended against the resolution. I thought he'd gotten his information from other sources -- he was very close to Chief Justice Vinson. Anyway this was a very highly legalistic question, and I didn't pursue it any further because I found the President was so very strongly of that opinion.

Later on, when I was Director for Mutual Security, some of the Congressmen proposed a Watch Dog Committee, and I went to the President and said, "Let's accept it. I know these men, we can get along with them

and might just as well talk to them about policy ahead of time as afterwards, and we can get the appropriations through more easily." He said, "No, Averell, my principal responsibility while I'm President of the United States is to protect the authority of the President. If the Congress ever takes over the President's authority, weakens the President's authority, we'll have chaos in our country. They represent different sections of the country, the Senators from different States, the Congressmen in Congressional districts." This fell on rather understanding ears, because I'd seen the situation in France where there was a very weak executive and a very strong French Assembly, and they'd had about five governments in three years, so I accepted his view at that time. But I thought the President was wrong at the time about a joint resolution in Korea and was utterly amazed that Acheson had taken that position. I felt it was a great mistake and that the President had received bad advice. I think Acheson made a very great mistake, I don't know why. The thing was over and done, and we had other things to think about.

The war was going on, and I never delved into the exact reasons, who had advised the President, and whom he had consulted. I do know he consulted Acheson, and Acheson gave him the bad advice. It would have been entirely different from the Tonkin Gulf resolution. The Tonkin resolution was under very excitable circumstances and gave very broad authority for unknown future action. The Korean Resolution would have been for very specific actions and specific objectives.

CONDIT: There seems to have been some thought that if it were not unanimous it would be worse than none, no resolution.

HARRIMAN: Well, I don't know, but I think it would have been very nearly unanimous and it might just as well have had the critics then as later. I think a lot of people that criticized it later wouldn't have dared not vote for it at the time.

CONDIT: As a matter of fact, the issue didn't completely die in the White House because I found a study done by David Lloyd, in which he addressed this question and came to the final conclusion which supported Corwin's contention that the President needed Congressional support to send troops abroad. And so, the White House was still actively, at some level, thinking about it. It was a very interesting point.

HARRIMAN: I don't know whether Lloyd spoke to me about it, or not, I can't remember. If he had I certainly would've encouraged him in that view, but I had other things to think about, and when you're in the middle of a war, you don't think of yourself as a historian, nor do you try to dig out all of the facts around it. All I can give you is my own personal comments.

CONDIT: They're very helpful. Now, on the Congressional relationship again, do you feel that there was anything that Mr. Acheson could have done which would have improved his relationship with the Congress?

HARRIMAN: I don't recall anything he could have done. I do know, as I've said, that the Democratic Senators running for office were hoping that the President would replace Acheson, and the President was very firm as I've indicated. I don't know what Acheson could do. I think he had the respect of a great many people, and he had very good relations with some. But that unhappy phrase had gotten to the press and the public mind about not turning your back on a friend. He lived with it and, of course, he had

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Truman's support, so he didn't try to mend his fences and was counting on the support of the President as well as mine. He did tell me that he appreciated greatly the support that the President was giving him and that I was giving him and that we seemed to be the two people that were his unqualified friends at the time.

CONDIT: You seem to have done what the President asked. You helped him. Did Secretary Marshall also aid him?

HARRIMAN: I don't think Secretary Marshall got involved in this at all. Marshall came in as Secretary of Defense, so of course, he had very close relationships with Secretary Acheson and Truman, and then he brought in Lovett. Lovett replaced him, and Lovett, Acheson, and I were old friends from Yale time days. I don't suppose that in any other period three people worked more closely together. My need to coordinate the two departments was then no longer important, and that was when I went over and undertook the job of heading up the Mutual Security Agency. If you remember, that differed from the other aid programs because it had complete control of the military aid as well as the economic, and my job was principally major policies and to coordinate the military and economic. I had as my deputy John Kenney, who did most of the running of the economic aid. I kept my office in the White House, the extension of the White House, the old State Department building, so that I maintained my close relations with the President.

CONDIT: Governor Harriman, I'd like to ask you about the effect of the war upon Mr. Truman's domestic program and how he viewed that in terms of his plans, his place in history, and so forth.

HARRIMAN: I don't know. Of course, he wasn't able to get his domestic program through. Congress was against him on it. I do know that he was very much concerned about inflation. I was very much concerned about inflation in the summer of 1950. I was very strongly for the use of Regulation W of the Federal Reserve Board, which permitted the Federal Reserve to fix the terms of consumer credit on such items as automobiles and washing machines. They could insist on a larger or smaller down payment, a shorter number of years to repay. There was a wild buying spree. People thinking of World War II, that they'd be short of these things, were buying them. Also, I thought the Federal Reserve was right, that interest rates should be increased so as to reduce the pressure. I found the President, on advice from the Treasury, John Snyder, had the idea they ought to keep the value of the bonds up. His experience in World War I, his personal experience, was that he bought a \$1,000 bond and found out it was only worth \$800 and some dollars after the war. This was a very great shock to him. He didn't realize that it didn't do you much good to have a thousand dollars if the dollar wasn't worth much. But in any event, it took about six months for that difference between the Treasury and the Federal Reserve to be composed. An agreement was reached, but in the meantime I think there was a 13% increase in the cost of living.

That inflation could have been avoided, in my opinion, if there had been more prompt action on the part of the Treasury and the Federal Reserve. There was an attempt by the Federal Reserve to work with the Treasury, and it took time to come to an understanding. President Truman didn't really understand the effect of inflation. He knew his own reaction, the soldier

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who came home and found that his 1,000 dollar bond was only worth 800 and some dollars. He didn't want to have that happen again. It was very unfortunate, I thought. I tried to use my influence to get some action,, and that didn't help until the horse was out of the barn. We did check it after the inflation was 13%.

GOLDBERG: There was an even higher inflation for military goods.

HARRIMAN: There was a big buying spree for automobiles, washing machines, and all that sort of thing. That, in competition with the demand for military hardware, created increased prices.

GOLDBERG: Mr. Lovett pointed out that by the spring of 1951, military prices had gone up 20 percent.

HARRIMAN: I suppose I knew at that time, but I don't recall.

CONDIT: I'd like to go back to Korea now if we could. You seem to have played a particularly important part in regard to General MacArthur.

General Collins I believe, said something about the fact that you thought General MacArthur should have been relieved in 1950.

HARRIMAN: Oh no, I didn't think General MacArthur should be relieved. I thought General Walker should be relieved.

CONDIT: What date is this?

HARRIMAN: Along about the 6th of August 1950, when I went to Korea with General Ridgway and General Norstad and had long talks with General MacArthur. That was during the period when we held only the Pusan bridgehead.

General Ridgway, General Norstad, and I each came to the conclusion as a result of our day at Pusan that General Walker was inadequate and that the headquarters was a shambles. Shambles may be the wrong word. But it was not adequately organized, and when I got back, I did recommend to the

President that General Walker be replaced by either General Ridgway or General VanFleet. I didn't want to make it only one man, but I thought Ridgway was the right man. The President said to talk to General Bradley about it, which I did. And Bradley took no action, except to send Walker a new colonel as his chief of staff. They thought that it would be corrected in that way.

But I think I told you, I don't know whether you want me to repeat it, but when General Ridgway and General Norstad and I returned we'd been given the proposal from General MacArthur for the landings on Inchon. There is a memorandum in the files in which the three of us recommended the adoption of it. I went to see President Truman as soon as we landed, about 7:00, because I knew that nobody else would be there, and I knew that he would be available. I outlined General MacArthur's program and he immediately accepted it, and said I should talk to Secretary of Defense Johnson and General Bradley, who was Chairman of the Joint Chiefs. I went home and got breakfast and a bath, so I don't think I got over to Johnson's until about 10:00. But in any event, Johnson said, "What have you been doing to the President, he's been on the phone to me several times, wanting to know what action is being taken." The Joint Chiefs approved the proposal within 24 hours. There was Naval objection to it, and very sound Naval objection to it, because of the extraordinarily high tide and the fact that if we got men ashore and they got in difficulty they could not be reinforced. But all in all, the President was ready to take that risk, and certainly the three of us had been completely sold by General MacArthur's eloquence.

Inchon was a brilliant conception. The great tragedy was that after

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this brilliant and enormously successful conception which broke the back of the North Korean Armies, General MacArthur was reckless, didn't obey his orders, in the north. He went north of the neck with American troops. His orders stated as a matter of policy that no troops other than the Korean troops should be allowed to the north, but he broke that policy and was not picked up on it. He should have been. General MacArthur was always in a special category. Even President Roosevelt and General Marshall had a certain respect for him. Since he was older and senior to everybody, General Bradley and the Joint Chiefs were a little bit awed by him, and they didn't treat him as an ordinary commander. That rather encouraged MacArthur to be a little bit independent. I think I should say that when President Truman sent me out in early August to see MacArthur, he asked me to do two things. One was to find out what General MacArthur wanted and to assure him that the President would try to do everything he could do to support him. That led to the Inchon landings. The second was that he wanted to have it understood that General MacArthur would leave Chiang Kai-shek alone. He did not want to encourage him, he did not want, he said, to have him get us into a war with Mainland China. That was as early as August, and he foresaw that.

I don't know if you recall that General MacArthur, without specific instructions, had gone to Taipei and had been photographed kissing Madame Chiang Kai-shek's hand. That had created a great deal of comment in the press to the effect that General MacArthur was there to try to get Chiang Kai-shek to enter the war. I can't remember the detail of it, but anyway I was to warn MacArthur as early as that, and it shows that President Truman saw the dangers and saw the need to be very careful. Of course, at that

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time, he ordered the Seventh Fleet to prevent any military action in either direction through Taiwan Straits.

Now about the Wake Island Conference, which I attended. I have the record, because these are my pencil notes, made at Wake Island. There have been misstatements about what happened at Wake Island, but it was correctly reported in President Truman's book. I arrived at Wake Island on the plane before President Truman. You know, I've been a friend of General MacArthur's for many years. He was Superintendent at West Point; my farm is close to West Point, and I used to know him in the early 20's. We were personal friends. When I arrived, I walked toward General MacArthur's headquarters (these are my notes) to talk with him. He met me half way. He asked me, "What is this meeting about?" I told him that the President wanted to discuss with him how political victory in Korea could be attained now that MacArthur had won the brilliant military victory. Also, the Japanese peace treaty and all matters in the Far East would be raised. He seemed relieved, saying, "Good, the President wants my advice." After a word or two of greeting to General Bradley and Secretary of the Army Pace, who then came up, we had a further talk. He took my arm and walked toward the President's incoming plane. I explained to him the strong support the President had given him for the Inchon landings operation. MacArthur said that though the action was now successful, he, MacArthur, had taken a grave responsibility. I pointed out that perhaps the President's was at least equally grave in backing him. MacArthur showed keen interest.

In conversation after the conference, General MacArthur stated he was much impressed by the President; newspaper accounts and articles did not do him justice. Those were MacArthur's words. MacArthur expressed high

regard for Rankin, our Charge in Formosa. His messages were objective and not biased as was the case with the former Charge. You know, MacArthur didn't get along with him at all. In answer to my question, MacArthur said that he would come home after the Japanese Peace Treaty was concluded. He would remain in Tokyo until then. He hoped it would be over within a year. That's the Peace Treaty, of course, as well as the war. I commented on the scene of the returning proconsul. I asked him, and he agreed to let Ross, the Press Secretary of the President, give out his statement at the conference. I have a note to the effect that he made the statement at the conference that "No commander in the history of war has received more complete and adequate support from all agencies in Washington than I have." Now, I don't remember the exact wording, but that was what I know. Now, this was the talk that came after and indicated MacArthur's attitude and President Truman's.

CONDIT: I believe you were the one who called President Truman's attention to the fact that the letter to Congressman Martin was being circulated.

HARRIMAN: I don't think so. I think he got that from other sources.

CONDIT: He got it from other sources?

HARRIMAN: I don't know. Does it say that he got it from me?

CONDIT: No, I thought I had read that somewhere.

HARRIMAN: I don't remember. I don't remember doing that. My recollection is that after the President had a cabinet meeting on Friday morning I came down from New York, at Secretary Acheson's suggestion. He told me that there were difficulties, so I did come down and attended the meeting. Then the President asked the four of us [Acheson, Marshall, Bradley] to come to

his office, where he raised the question. President Truman has recorded those talks. I don't have to go over them. The four of us were in consultation with him several times over the weekend, and he consulted a number of people. I don't know who they were. I've always thought that he consulted Chief Justice Vinson. There's nothing in his calendar which indicates the President did that, but I think it would have been like him, and I think he might likely also have consulted Sam Rayburn, in whose judgment he had a great deal of confidence. The President was living in Blair House at the time, and there's no indication on his schedule. There is a young man who's studying Chief Justice Vinson's life and writing a book about him, and he told me he would look this up. He did know that President Truman consulted Chief Justice Vinson on a number of occasions, in quite an appropriate way, on matters which he thought were of special moment. He had great confidence in Chief Justice Vinson's judgment, so I wouldn't be surprised if on Sunday, which was a quiet day for us, he didn't arrange for Chief Justice Vinson to come and see him, and possibly also Sam Rayburn.

The handling of the MacArthur situation, I think, is very typical of Truman. He has the reputation of making snap decisions, when actually, in my experience, he was very careful to read everything available about the question and to consult everybody whose judgment he thought was good. I think the manner in which he took the MacArthur case up from Friday until Monday before he definitely made up his mind bears this out. I felt he'd made up his mind Friday, but he wanted to be sure that he was right. The extraordinary thing about President Truman was that after he had given all the attention and study that he could give, he faced up to the fact that he

had to make a decision. He always used to say, "Well I did what I thought was right, I did the best I could," and then he went home and went to sleep. He didn't rehash it. We all have a habit, I think most people have a habit, of rehashing our decisions, wondering whether we're right or wrong. That was not Truman at all. But he didn't make snap decisions, as is generally thought. Give 'em hell Harry, the buck stops here, snap answers. Not at all. He would give it the most careful consideration. I could give you other cases, but I think the MacArthur case is the most important.

CONDIT: Would you like to hazard a guess or an opinion about why you think the Chinese came into the war. Did our crossing the 38th parallel actually trigger anything? Or were they already determined?

HARRIMAN: It was very hard not to go forward and destroy the armies. North Korea, as you look back on it, you think it might have been wiser not to have crossed the 38th parallel. But there was great pressure to stop at the neck. Bevin was very strong for it, the British, and there was very strong opinion in this country I think, among our military. I've always thought it was clear that if MacArthur hadn't divided his two armies, the Eighth Army and the Tenth Corps, it might have been different. He put General Almond in command. Among the newspaper men that was called Operation Three Stars. It was to get him the extra star, wasn't it? MacArthur left a gap between the two armies, and I still remember, he recklessly sent the Capiŋon Division up to the North and the Marines into the mountains and reservoirs. It was the Marine Commander who had sense enough not to go too far. I think MacArthur sent the 7th Division up to the Yalu River. If he hadn't done all those things, and if he had protected himself, the

Chinese might never have been able to break through. When they decided to attack, I don't know. It's always been my opinion that if MacArthur had not divided his command and had stayed at the neck it would have been different. After all in these northern mountains, even the Japanese were never able to thoroughly subjugate the Koreans. He was very reckless about this and disregarded all of the intelligence which we got. Willoughby was undoubtedly partly at fault.

But also I remember that at Wake Island, MacArthur said something to this effect: "I know the Chinese, they will never attack, and should they attack, it would be the bloodiest massacre in history." He thought of the Chinese as being non-fighters, as they had been as mercenaries to the war lords. He didn't realize that under the Chinese Communist discipline, they had become a very strong fighting force. It's always been my experience, anyway, that the soldiers of almost every nation fight if they have leadership. The Chinese Communists gave them that leadership. MacArthur wouldn't accept that.

In answer to your question, I've always thought that if MacArthur had stayed at the neck, had not divided the command, and had been prepared for the attack, we could've held. It is certainly true, that his armies were defeated, and if it hadn't been for General Walker's death in the jeep accident and General Ridgeway's appointment to take his place, it might have been a disaster. General Ridgeway took command, gave completely new leadership, new spirit, turned that defeated army into an effective attacking force, and drove the Chinese back to the 38th parallel. I think it was one of the most remarkable tactical jobs that any general has done, in

our history. I give Ridgway tremendous credit for that. General MacArthur had more or less accepted the defeat and had been talking about evacuation. It did confirm my opinion of Walker, and also my very high regard for Ridgway, so perhaps I'm unduly prejudiced in this case. But I think that military analysis will prove that to be a fact.

GOLDBERG: Why do you think that the Chinese came in?

HARRIMAN: I think they came in because they saw the opportunity to clobber us. They knew about the division of our forces. They knew what they were up against. They didn't want to see the Americans so close to Manchuria, which was a very important industrial base, and they didn't like to see their sister socialist country, North Korea, overrun by the Imperialists. That's all I can say. Certainly Stalin must have encouraged them.

Also, there was the most terrible nonsense that was talked about at that time -- that if we had dropped a few bombs on Manchuria it would have made the attack impossible. That's nonsense. It was an overestimation of what could be done, but people don't recognize that we had a sanctuary too. We had three air fields, I think, in South Korea, and our planes were wing to wing. If there'd been a serious air attack from the North those airplanes could've been blotted out. As the Japanese did in Manila, if you remember. So that that sanctuary was very important to us. We had several hundred miles from the Yalu River to the 38th parallel, and our air force had every opportunity to do everything it could, and it did everything it could, to stop this advance, but it wasn't effective. This idea of bombing Manchuria -- the President was very wise not to get us into

that because that would've gotten us into a major situation.

I always felt that after this brilliant victory at Inchon, General MacArthur suffered the most humiliating and unnecessary defeat in the North entirely because of obstinacy and contempt for the Chinese capabilities. He certainly was warned by the Chiefs of Staff. Of course, the Chiefs of Staff didn't order him back. They should've, but this is part of the mystique of General MacArthur. These men were all so junior to him. I don't know what it was -- they had a thing about him -- or whatever you call it.

By the way, I'd like to say this. I had a last friendly talk with General MacArthur, in spite of all the comment that there had been in the paper about my having told Truman that he ought to fire him and so forth. I saw General MacArthur at the dinner given for the Times Front Page People, about 300 of us. I suddenly saw him quite close. I thought, well, he must know I'm here, so I decided to go up to General MacArthur. I went up to him, and even before I could shake his hand, he said, "Oh, Aversall, I'm so glad to see you. I remember you came to my headquarters, in, when was it, in December, 1945 and were the first one to advise me about the difficulties we were going to have with the Russians." I said, "No, it wasn't December, it was January 1946." He said, "Yes, I've always been grateful to you." Now, he chose to disregard the incident in Korea. That was my last talk with him, and we parted with mutual respect. I certainly had great respect for him, in spite of the blunder that he made.

GOLDBERG: In the years immediately following World War II, did you and

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other leaders in the American Government have the feeling that we were engaged in a competition with the Soviet Union?

HARRIMAN: When was this?

GOLDBERG: From 1945 on.

HARRIMAN: From 1945, did I think we were engaged in a competition with the Soviets? Well, my position has not changed since the statement I made in 1945, and I say it today. We had to recognize that our ideological objectives and the Soviet ideological objectives were irreconcilable. But we have to find some way to compose our differences in different parts of the world, in order to live without war on this small planet. They want, they are determined to foster what we call Communist dictatorships; they call them dictatorships of the proletariat, whereas we believe our interest and security will best be furthered by encouraging governments responsive to the will of the people. This we cannot compromise, and they won't compromise, and there will be this competition. I think I was relatively one of the earliest to point this out.

I've forgotten when peaceful coexistence was first mentioned. I wrote an article, in which I said that it's not peaceful coexistence, it's competitive coexistence.

I made the above statement in an off record talk to editors, columnists, and publishers in San Francisco in May 1945 at the U.N. Conference. Two men got up and walked out, saying they wouldn't listen to that war-monger anymore. One of them was Raymond Gram Swing, and the other was Walter Lippmann. Raymond Gram Swing came and apologized to me a year later. He recognized that I was right, but needless to say, Mr. Lippmann did not.

My position has not changed. I was warning people as early as '44, that we were going to have difficulties, warning the President, but I was never negative. I was never what they called a Cold War Warrior, I was never for giving up. In the winter of 1946, in an interview with Quentin Reynolds on radio, I said that our posture should always be to hold out the friendly hand but keep our guard up. That's about all I can tell you about my position, but the records and telegrams to Roosevelt are very clear in '44 and '45 that foresaw increasing difficulty, and then my verbal report to President Truman in '46.

Let me just say that I say the exact same thing today. People who think that detente means that the Soviets are going to stop furthering their Communist objectives just don't understand. I talked to Brezhnev about it, and he has a similar understanding, the one that I described. It's a step by step proposition, he said to me, settling those points of conflict where there can be a possibility of difficulties between us leading to military action. They're determined to avoid becoming involved again. The celebration I just attended commemorating the 30th anniversary of VE-Day, was a celebration of peace, 30 years of peace. It gave great credit to the Red Army and the heroism and the determination and sacrifices of the Russian people under the great leadership of the inspired Communist Party for the 30 years of peace. Brezhnev commented that the solidarity of the so-called Socialist Bloc, will be expanded, that the socialist countries are bound to expand. They're going to go ahead in all of this, and they assume we will do what we can to hold the line on Communist penetration.

To me, one of the great tragedies today is the fact that the CIA's Action Programs, of which the important ones were approved by the

President of the United States, seem to be no longer possible. We very much need actions to help where we are asked to help counter the Communist undermining and subversive actions which are going on. Of course, the CIA needs more effective supervision by the administration and Congress. I just want to give you one case in point. In Italy, we used to give money to the non-Communist labor unions in order to help them conduct their operations. The Russians give a great deal of money to the Communist unions. We no longer give the Italian non-Communist unions money. Therefore, the Communist unions are increasing. You may ask why the Italians don't support their own non-Communist unions. They don't pay dues, in the way our union members do. Why don't they? I don't know, but the Italians don't pay taxes. It's very much to our interest to do that sort of thing.

We've seen these events taking place in Portugal. Nothing is done to check this. A small group of military men have taken over in a country that we thought was NATO military-minded. It's neglect on our part. If we open up the world to Communist infiltration and subversion, without any countermeasures to help those democratic parties that ask our help, we're going to see the kind of thing that happened in Portugal repeat itself in other countries. I will gladly get this on the record, because I feel this very strongly. (See copy of excerpts of my testimony of July 15, 1975 to House sub-committee attached)

GOLDBERG: Do you think that in the years after World War II, the same period that we've been talking about, President Truman and other leaders felt threatened by the Soviet Union?

HARRIMAN: I think we had too much confidence in ourselves. I didn't

show

know that we felt threatened so much as that other countries were being threatened whom we felt were vital to our security. But I do remember that the Marshall Plan was being considered by Congress and it was running into very considerable difficulties. The coup in Czechoslovakia was one of the things that helped materially to get the Marshall Plan through. Nobody, I don't think anybody, felt directly threatened at the time. The people generally didn't realize the need for action of the kind that President Truman proposed until the Czech coup. He got the cooperation of Congress through the cooperation of Senator Vandenberg, the Republican chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee. He deserves our full credit. I didn't feel that there was a feeling of threat so much as a feeling of necessity to do something to prevent Soviet action from being taken that might threaten Western European countries. If we didn't do something, then there would be a threat. I don't know whether you see the difference here. The Marshall Plan was protective action.

I felt at the time and still believe that Stalin broke his Yalta agreements, No. 1 because he found out that the Communist Parties were not as popular as he had been led to believe, and they could not win election victories as he'd been led to believe. He allowed an election to take place in Hungary. 53% of the people voted for the Smallholders party, I think, and only about 17% for the Communists. The small peasant party took over the control of the Government, but it wasn't very many months before they were squeezed out and the Communists took over. We see what is happening in Portugal. There's no doubt in my mind that Stalin foresaw in Europe a complete disruption of the economy, not only the destruction of factories, but no money to finance the necessary imports of raw

materials and food. He saw hunger, great unemployment ahead. Stalin once said to me that Communism breeds in the cesspools of capitalism, and he saw conditions developing in Western Europe which would give them a great chance to take over. Now, of course, the Communist parties were very strong in both Italy and France because they'd been active in the underground, and I think if it hadn't been for the Marshall Plan, Stalin's influence in Western Europe would have been very much expanded. But, as I say, it wasn't a feeling of a direct threat, so much as it was the feeling we must take constructive action or else there would be a threat if Western Europe fell under Stalin's control.

GOLDBERG: When did we perceive the possible military threat?

HARRIMAN: I think the first real feeling of military threat came from the blockade of Berlin. That was in June '48, as I recall. And that of course led rapidly to NATO. Vandenberg made a speech, and I think NATO started the following year. I know that I was very strongly for it. The War Department sent, I think, General Lemnitzer over to work on how large a military establishment the European economies could support. My office worked very closely with the War Department group to analyze what could be done. I felt that important as recovery was, there needed to be protection against the threat of attack. It was insurance we were taking out. Hoffman didn't want to have anything to do with war, and he was probably pretty much opposed to military aid. He wanted to avoid any contact with it, he wanted to have the Marshall Plan entirely pure. I didn't feel that way about it. I felt that we ought to see to it that military protection was developed, and then, of course, later on I was chairman of the first Three Wise Men, if you remember, which analyzed the capabilities of the European members of NATO.

GOLDBERG: You mentioned the Berlin Blockade as a major turning point in perceiving a possible military threat from the Soviets. What other threatening turning points of this kind in our relations with the Soviets did you see during these years?

HARRIMAN: I of course, saw the details, while I was still Ambassador. The Warsaw uprising in 1944 and the refusal of Stalin to let us use our air shuttle facilities to permit dropping supplies on Warsaw was a very desperate period for me. We finally got him to agree to do it, but it was too late. He very disarmingly said later on that he misunderstood what had caused the Warsaw people to rise. He had thought it was "adventurism" in the beginning, but he discovered that the Germans were going to draft all the male Poles and put them to work, and it was either being slaves or fighting. Then, in the last days, when the Russians took Prague, which was the Eastern part of Warsaw, on the eastern side of the Vistula River, they did give assistance, but it was much too late. One thing that is true however, is that the Red Army was stopped by the Vistula. They didn't have the landing craft to go across; they were way ahead of their supplies. They galloped through Poland, driving the German forces in retreat. They were way ahead of their supplies of all kinds, heavy artillery, and other equipment. General Deane knew about this. His book which is a most excellent book, called "Strange Alliance", published in '47, gives a picture of the Red Army advancing, and the supplies coming along as best they could. If a truck broke down, they commandeered peasant ox carts, and put as much of the stuff as they could in them and on they went. They were way ahead of their supplies. It is folly to think that the Red Army could have walked across the Vistula at the end of July 1944. Incidentally, Hitler, I think,

diverted three divisions, for the defense of Warsaw, which had not been expected. Three of their good divisions.

Anyway, I was going to say that I was conscious of the differences that would arise and continue to arise and that was why in May 1945 I made that very plain off the record to the American press, who were then under the illusion that we would be working with gallant allies for peace for all time.

GOLDBERG: What other events in addition to the Berlin Blockade would you include in a list of turning points in our relationship?

HARRIMAN: As far as I was concerned I was trying to give you the view during the war time period.

GOLDBERG: What about after the war?

HARRIMAN: After the war, the Czech coup and before that all the difficulties about Poland, Rumania etc., at the Foreign Minister meetings.

GOLDBERG: You mentioned earlier the explosion of the atomic device by the Soviets in August 1949.

HARRIMAN: That came a couple of years earlier than most people thought.

GOLDBERG: What was the reaction of the President in the White House?

HARRIMAN: I've no idea. In '49 I was in Paris. I was in Paris from May '48 until the end of June 1950.

GOLDBERG: Do you feel that the biggest event affecting the view of the President and the people around him toward the Soviets was the coming of the Korean War?

HARRIMAN: I think he pretty well understood the situation after the Czech coup and then the Berlin Blockade. I don't think he needed any more convincing than that.

GOLDBERG: But the reason I keep raising this is that the President still continued to sit on the Defense budget during these years. He kept it down. No matter what was happening, he insisted on a lid, on a very rigid ceiling.

HARRIMAN: He wanted, of course, his domestic programs to go through. But, you're quite right. As far as the Defense budget is concerned, the Korean War was the thing that broke the inertia. Part of that, of course, was that Louis Johnson behaved very badly during that period. He talked about taking the fat out, he didn't take the fat out, he stopped procuring essential military hardware, and he took away the sinews which made our forces effective. It was a great tragedy.

GOLDBERG: What do you think the President would have done about the Defense budget absent the Korean War?

HARRIMAN: I have no idea.

Of course today, I do believe that this group, Brezhnev and his colleagues, are dedicated to peace, to avoid war in every possible way. I think if you'd have been at the celebration, you would have seen it as a most unique celebration. One thinks of marching soldiers and tanks rumbling to celebrate a victory. There wasn't a soldier in sight except the guards, and not a piece of hardware of any kind, shape, description. Red Square was used to honor the veterans who walked by in their own civilian clothes, and the Komsomol children were there with flowers. That was the celebration of Red Square. And then the speeches, and the whole atmosphere was glory to the great sacrifice that had been made, that had brought peace. I do want to underline that we're overemphasizing

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the military and underestimating the political and subversive actions which the Soviets are using to undermine the so called Western countries. We're particularly overemphasizing the strategic nuclear, when we're still well ahead of the Russians. Of course, both sides have more than enough to destroy the other in a second strike.

GOLDBERG: You think we still are ahead?

HARRIMAN: Oh yes, we have 8,000 or more warheads; they have only 2500. They, of course, can MIRV and they can catch us in a decade, but they're not there now. We ought to concentrate on coming to agreements, not at the level of Vladivostok but reductions below that, and I think we can do it if we're reasonable. But we are neglecting, I think, our conventional forces, and we must keep up the quality of our equipment and adequate conventional forces. One of the great tragic losses of Vietnam was the draft. Now, we've come to a point where the cost of our conventional forces is so great. We must have adequate forces to prevent a Korean type of operation again, not by the Red Army but by other Soviet supported people. And also, an adequate and proper action program for the CIA under careful supervision.

GOLDBERG: To what extent did President Truman see foreign aid and U.S. rearmament as directly competitive?

HARRIMAN: I have no idea. I know that in the world as a whole, he felt that the two should be kept in balance. He didn't want to put too much military weight on the recovering countries or on the developing nations, and that was why he established the Mutual Security Administration, which gave me as the administrator the control over both the military and the

economic, to make sure that the demand for the military expenditure or our encouragement of military expenditure on the part of other nations, whether it be NATO or others, would not weaken their essential economical development. I know how he felt about international affairs, but domestically, I don't know.

GOLDBERG: In the period when you were in the White House and at the Mutual Security Agency, do you have any knowledge of the extent to which the President was getting regular information about the Soviet armed forces, their atomic capabilities and delivery systems? Did he get information of this regularly?

HARRIMAN: I don't recall. I know when I was in the White House I knew the information that was there, but I don't remember the details.

GOLDBERG: Is it your recollection that during the period of the Korean War that there was in Washington a very considerable fear of Soviet intentions with particular reference to military action?

HARRIMAN: Well, I don't see how you could possibly avoid being concerned when you saw what happened in Korea, and that certainly did alert the country to the dangers of aggression on the part of the Soviets. I think that Tito's comment to me, which I described is very interesting -- that Stalin was very cautious about using the Red Army but very ready to use his satellites, when he thought he could get away with it.

GOLDBERG: The point is that the Soviets did not have an ability to strike at us directly during this period. So that our concern was for elsewhere in the world rather than the United States.

HARRIMAN: You mean, as far as the nuclear is concerned.

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GOLDBERG: Yes.

HARRIMAN: But then, I don't think President Truman gave very much thought to using nuclear power for offensive actions. He didn't in Korea.

GOLDBERG: But this is a matter of possible Soviet aggression. You remember there was concern by the Joint Chiefs and by others about a period of maximum danger as a result of the Soviet buildup of atomic capabilities.

HARRIMAN: Yes, I know, and then there was the tremendous wave of civil defense. When I became Governor of New York in '55, I found there was a civilian defense operation, which I continued, and there was a fear that the Soviets might use nuclear attack at that time. Rockefeller continued it. Now I understand the Chinese, the Peking Chinese, are telling us that they are protecting their people with air raid shelters, and we should be doing the same thing. But it is in their interest to fan the conflict with the West, to keep the Russians off their neck. There's a very real fear between Moscow and Peking. It is somewhat more relaxed at the present time on both sides. A few years ago, the Yellow Peril was on the lips of everyone in Moscow. On the Chinese side, there was a fear of preventive attack, nuclear attack by the Russians, and they were prepared to face it. But I don't believe that the Russians have now any intention of using nuclear weapons in a first strike; they know how destructive it would be. I don't know whether this is a good thing to talk about. When will this interview become public?

GOLDBERG: It is not going to be made public; it is simply going to be used as a source for our histories.

HARRIMAN: I had a very interesting talk with Mikoyan. He's retired, you know, in Moscow. He came to the dinner given by the Ambassador, and he

was put next to me. He told me some very interesting things about his relations with Khrushchev. This is an amazing revelation of the intimacies of the Kremlin; I've never heard of anyone talking so freely before. He said that Khrushchev had a flair and ability but was a very ignorant man who knew nothing about foreign policy. He'd only had four years of education. Mikoyan had opposed Khrushchev's proposition to make a separate peace with the East Germans. He had said that was very dangerous and would lead to difficulty. He was opposed to the putting of nuclear weapons in Cuba and gave great credit to President Kennedy for making it possible for Khrushchev to withdraw. Mikoyan said that as a reward for being opposed to the operation, Khrushchev sent him to Cuba to convince Castro that the missiles should come out. At one point, which was typical of Khrushchev's ignorance, Khrushchev said, "Well, I know how the answer will be, we'll give these weapons, these missiles, to Castro." Mikoyan claimed he had told Khrushchev that "that was the worst thing in the world to do. Castro would then be able to use them against the United States and the United States wouldn't care about Cuba, but they would send their attack against us [Soviet Union] and we would be destroyed. We would be in the hands of Castro. Khrushchev said he guessed I was right about that, so he dropped that one." Mikoyan gave great credit to Kennedy for the steps he had taken for making it easy, as easy as possible, by accepting the suggestion to agree not to invade Cuba. This made it possible for Khrushchev to say that that was his only reason for giving the missiles to Cuba. I think this was unusual for a member of the Politburo to talk to a foreigner about his intimate relations. I think this ought to be kept in-house, certainly as long as Mikoyan and I are alive. Don't you find it fascinating?

GOLDBERG: Indeed I do.

HARRIMAN: Of course, he was very unhappy that President Eisenhower didn't go to Moscow. I was there when General Eisenhower came at the end of World War II and he had a tremendous welcome.

GOLDBERG: That was in 1960 because of the U-2 incident.

HARRIMAN: Yes, because of the U-2 incident.

GOLDBERG: When was this discussion with Mikoyan?

HARRIMAN: This was the evening of Friday the 9th of May, 1975, this year.

GOLDBERG: Do you remember in the White House the people who were closest to the President on strategic and national security matters, his chief advisors?

HARRIMAN: Who were his chief advisors?

GOLDBERG: Yes, Truman's chief advisors.

HARRIMAN: Well, of course, he always had Admiral Souers.

Well, of course, I was in Moscow until 1946 and then in London. I didn't come back until October 1946, so I don't have any knowledge of that period.

GOLDBERG: Was Clark Clifford quite close to the President?

HARRIMAN: Clark Clifford had a good deal to do with it; he was his Counsel. He had been a young naval officer; he had no great experience in military matters. Then he had Admiral Souers who was handling the National Security Affairs, wasn't he?

GOLDBERG: Souers, yes.

HARRIMAN: President Truman respected General Bradley highly. General Bradley had influence; that was in 1950. In 1947 I was the one who was

concerned about our exports to the Soviet Union, and as Secretary of Commerce encouraged the legislation that permitted us to set up controls of so-called strategic items. We had the first list. What has appalled me is that it has been perverted since, and now we've been utterly stripped. We've let Europe and Japan take all this billions of dollars of business, and we've had very little of it. It has been a great loss to us. We haven't had the export of our machinery and machine tools. We are still stupid about it. This collapse of the Trade Agreement is most unfortunate from our standpoint as well as that of the Russians. Whoever thinks it's a smart thing to do just doesn't understand the Russians. The Soviets look upon our withholding M.F.N (Most Favored Nation) as a political insult as if we don't treat them as we do other nations. There's no doubt also that trade does in a small way tend to bring them out of their shell. I think that everything we can do to bring them out of their shell, the better it is. That includes cultural exchange, includes encouraging them to come here, and includes encouraging Americans to go to the Soviet Union. And in many ways encouraging contacts between our scientists, our medical people, all that kind of thing. I have felt that during the war and since the war.

Roosevelt had a very strong feeling the Russians were a very religious people and that they would not be controlled for long by an atheist philosophy. I was never as optimistic as he was, but I believed that in time the Russian people would demand more freedom and that the Kremlin would be responsive to some extent at least to world opinion. But I never thought it could be done in public government negotiation. They'd never sell their

ideology for a billion dollars or so of credits anymore than any other people with strong ideologies. I thought that they would gradually change. That has happened, it has been very slow, but there is a big change in the life of the Soviet Union compared to what it was. Instead of letting out a few hundred Jews, they let out 35,000 last year. And they would continue to do so if Senator Jackson hadn't tried to make it a public condition of our trade. As I have told him - I've told everybody -- his amendment would be counter-productive, and the whole business would collapse. They'll go back to more restrictive practices which is going on now.

There is a lot of stupidity on the part of many Americans as to how to deal with them. There's this whole idea you can bang the table and they'll respond. That's nonsense. They are very proud of their newly-won strength and are not going to be kicked around. They can be persuaded to do things if it is carefully handled, and above all else, they want to prevent a direct confrontation with us; they don't want war. If anybody had been there at the victory celebration . . . it was a very fascinating experience for me. You always learn. Every time I go to the Soviet Union -- I've been seven times since the end of the war -- I've learned something. I learned very definitely this time, confirming my belief, that detente is something to which Brezhnev has committed himself, and, in a way, he is in political difficulty if he doesn't succeed. He not only wants but needs some movement of detente, but detente to him is not abandoning the Soviet drive to Communize the world at all, but rather settling specific situations -- getting control of the nuclear arms race, getting a settlement in the Middle East. He wants a settlement in the Middle East in which he has

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a hand in spite of what people say. He wants to have some agreements in Europe which will relieve the tensions so that there won't be danger of a confrontation, for example, the Berlin Agreement. But they are not going to change their ideology, and they are not going to accept the status quo in the West. He wants us to accept the status quo in Eastern Europe, but he won't accept the status quo in the West. Somebody coined the phrase, "What's mine is mine, and what's yours is negotiable." I think we'd better recognize that, but we don't.

It has been their consistent policy, although this desire for detente is something started by Khrushchev in the last years. When he wanted, he spoke about the spirit of Camp David and that kind of thing. It was very interesting, Brezhnev told me that they had difficulties in 1972, on account of North Vietnam, in permitting President Nixon to come to Moscow. Of course those difficulties were mining Haiphong harbor, you remember. I thought that would end the change of the Nixon visit, but they recognized that Khrushchev's overdoing the U-2 incident prevented detente from starting in 1960, and they didn't want to wait another 12 years. So he practically as much as said he waived that because of the importance he placed on detente. Now everybody seems to have the idea that they are the only ones who gain by detente, but I think we have just as much interest as they have in preventing nuclear war and relieving tensions. I am quite ready to accept competitive coexistence, have confidence in the soundness of our ideals of freedom, which I think people have struggled for through the centuries, and I don't believe that Communist dictatorships will sweep the world, if we have what I call competitive coexistence.

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GOLDBERG: One element of that competitive coexistence has been in arms competition.

HARRIMAN: Yes, and I think in the nuclear field we are beginning to get it under control, have to get it under control, and if we can, do more -- I don't know when we are going to be able to do something in Europe -- but there is at least some indication that the Soviets want to do something. But we've got this idea of balanced reduction in force, relating to the distance from the scene. We've got to recognize that they are not going to do that. I think we'd better go with a percentage basis. But this is too complicated to talk about.

GOLDBERG: Do you feel that we forced the strategic arms competition over the years?

HARRIMAN: I would think that that was true, yes. I think that in '68 we were in a much better position to make an agreement. The great tragedy of Czechoslovakia was that it prevented President Johnson's meeting with Kosygin and starting the arms talk then before MIRV. Each one of these advances has been on the part of the United States. Their general attitude has been that we have got to have equivalence, but they are not willing to appear to the world to be behind us, in any technology. So when we get MIRVs, they've got to get MIRVs, not for defense so much as from the standpoint of prestige. And Brezhnev has been quoted as saying that if you go forward with your Trident we're going to have to have the Trident. Now whether he really means that, I don't know, but in any event we have been ahead in every one of the scientific advances, and there is a desire on their part to catch up. The only place where they are ahead of us, of

course, is in the throw weight, which we decided not to go to. We decided to go to adequate explosive power with greater accuracy and penetration, and now, suddenly, we are looking on the throw weight as the great threat. I think we have got to find a formula to equate one against the other. Every time we go ahead with a new weapon system, there is going to be pressure on the Soviet leaders to develop the same thing. It is a matter of prestige, if you want. . . .

GOLDBERG: It may also be a matter of interaction.

HARRIMAN: Of course, people over here don't realize what to them are fighting words. The worst fighting words that we use are "negotiation from strength." That to them means that we are going to try to force on them decisions against their will, due to our military capabilities. We ought to quit using it. They have the same spectrum of opinion on military matters as we have, from the hard-liners to what I would call more reasonable people. Kosygin is one of those more reasonable ones who want to see their resources used towards the development of Russia for the Russian people, both because of the pressure internally and also because they think the Communists after 50 years, ought to do a better job for their people. On the other hand,, they've got the Grechkos who are working for heavier military expenditures.

Every time we strike a grandiose note or issue a challenging statement that pulls the rug out from under the Kosygin's, just as Grechko's statements pull the rug out from under our -- you may call them does if you want to -- I call them reasonable people, it encourages the hard-liners. These are things that people don't understand. I don't know why we have such great ignorance about what makes the Soviet leadership tick.

GOLDBERG: Thank you very much, Governor Harriman. This will be of very great help to us.

HARRIMAN: I am ready any time to draw on my experience for the historical record for what it is worth. I know no one will accept it without weighing it, but I haven't always been wrong in dealing with the Soviet Union. Remember, we reached agreement, the first nuclear agreement, on the limited test ban. That was the result of President Kennedy's announcing that he was not going to make any more tests, we'd refrain as long as the other side refrained. I myself believe that that technique was the right one. If we would say that we are not going to do this provided the other side shows restraint, we'd get much further with them than if we say we are going ahead because the other side is. We are going to keep ahead of them. That kind of bravado is disastrous, whereas the taking of a sensible position in our own national interest and then demanding that they show similar restraint could be effective. I think they'd respond. I've reason to believe that they'd respond.

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