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YUN INTERVIEW  
ALEXI ROSCHIN  
MOSCOW, RUSSIA  
MAY 25, 1990  
INTERVIEWER, SUTTERLIN

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JSS           Ambassador Roschin, I want to first thank you for giving the time and participating in this Yale University Oral History Project on the United Nations. If I may I'd like to begin by asking you to indicate what you were doing in connection with the San Francisco Conference where the United Nations was founded. You were part of the Soviet delegation, I believe.

Roschin       I was advisor of our delegation. It was only three persons who were advisors of our delegation. At the same time the American representatives were several dozen of advisors as well as the British delegation too.

JSS           And you only had three advisors.

Roschin       Yes, but particular two advisors only and one, Arkadiev, was the expert. And all now gone away, unfortunately.

JSS           Including of course Mr. Molotov who was there.

Roschin       Yes, Mr. Molotov, Mr. Gromyko was there, yes, and also the leader of the trade union, Kuznetsov. He is still alive, yes, probably the only person, but at any rate persons who signed the Charter now are all gone away.

JSS           Did you travel to San Francisco with Mr. Molotov?

Roschin       No, we chose the so-called Eastern way through Siberia, Alaska, and Canada and was 4 Douglas Airplanes. For Mr.

Molotov was sent the plane C-54, especially for him. He came directly to Washington to see Truman. He twice had an audience with Mr. Truman, and unfortunately the first was very well and the second was very, very so-called angry.

JSS It was a very very angry interview, as I understand. So that Mr. Molotov arrived in San Francisco in a bad humor.

Roschin Rather bad humor, but he was, generally he was not an open-minded man.

JSS I believe that initially Stalin did not intend to have Molotov come and it's my understanding that Truman and Churchill both urged the Soviet Union to be represented at the senior level, at the foreign minister level, at San Francisco.

Roschin There are three reason why Molotov was not being sent at first. First reason was the negotiations of the American and British with the German general Karl Woelf about the end of military operations. Our people and Stalin, personally, were for these negotiations but he asked to send a person who would follow the negotiations but he was refused in this for the reason that the negotiations only pertained to Italy - military operations in Italy.

The second reason [not to send Molotov] was the question of Poland. For instance, we insisted that the Polish representative be admitted to the San Francisco Conference and unfortunately it was not, because the

question of the Poland government was not settled up to now and the Western side, particularly United States and Great Britain, refused to accept the Polish delegation. The third question was the question of the admission of Ukraine and Byelorussia. Why? Because in the middle of March, 1945, we received from our ambassador Gromyko the cable when he spoke with Mr. Dunn, Mr. Dunn was at the time the deputy...

JSS Under-Secretary of State, that was James Dunn.

Roschin James Dunn said to our ambassador that he never thought about the Ukraine and Byelorussia and it rather irritated Stalin, too, and it was decided that the delegation would be headed by Gromyko with persons from the Foreign Ministry and the Ministry of Defense, too. But Molotov was excluded as well as the head of the trade union, Kuznetsov, and Patyonkin who was at the time Minister of Education of the Russian Federation, and Lavrentiev, who was Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation. All these persons were excluded and only after the death of Roosevelt (which took place the 12th of April, 1945) it was decided that Molotov should get in contact with the new administration headed by Mr. Truman. And it was decided after the special request from Truman and Churchill to send Mr. Molotov to San Francisco.

JSS I see, that's very interesting. So the three points

really were the negotiations with the German general in Italy, the question of Poland, and then the question of Byelorussia and Ukraine.

Roschin But negotiations with Wolff took place in Berne, in Switzerland, that's why this is a rather particular thing, and at any rate Hitler had in mind at this moment to completely eliminate the Western allies in this war.

JSS Yes, Stalin was afraid of that.

Roschin Stalin was afraid, very much, and he was very much against this enterprise.

JSS But as far as the founding of the United Nations was concerned the Soviet attitude was positive still, was it?

Roschin Yes, it was positive at the Moscow conference on foreign affairs in 1943 when Molotov, Hull, and Eden met. In principle it was decided that a [founding] conference should take place and the organization was set up. The second stage was at Dumbarton Oaks when the Charter was outlined, except the voting in the Security council and some particular question of inviting countries and convocation of the San Francisco Conference, as well as the colonial situation was not settled; that question was not settled in Dumbarton Oaks. And it was settled only in the Yalta conference in February 1945.

JSS When you got to San Francisco did you think that the question of the entry of the Ukraine and Byelorussia was

already settled, or did you realize there was still some problem when you got to San Francisco?

Roschin When I got to San Francisco it was a problem about Ukraine and Byelorussia. It was only [on] 25 of April 1945 that the meeting between the American and English military personnel, as well as our personnel, near the Saxonion town of Turgau. It was declared only on 27 of April by Stettinius. During this time the problem was settled, the problem of the presidency of the conference, as well as the problem of admission of Ukraine and Byelorussia. These were settled only 27 of April, 1945. From this time the conference was functioning more or less normally.

JSS What were your general impressions of the conference in San Francisco?

Roschin I was rather impressed by this conference. But unfortunately I do not share the behavior of our chief of delegation, Mr. Molotov. Unfortunately, there are four questions on which I did not rather share the opinion of our people. The first question was the invitation of France as a sponsoring power. I would say there that our attitude toward France should be more or less favorable because France was our ally. Our problem lay with the militaries from Germany, and that's why the attitude of our government, and especially our chief of delegation, not to accept the position of sponsorship for

France was not right. The second question is the struggle for presidency in the conference. The Western side insisted that Stettinius should be president from the host country. But Molotov insisted rather strongly that Soviet Union should also serve as president - and all sponsoring powers, four powers, should rotate in the presidency. I rather considered this as doubtful. The third question was the question of the invitation of Argentina. I was present during the preliminary session when Stettinius and other Western powers accepted Argentina despite the fact that, strongly speaking, Argentina could not participate in this. But the Latin American countries put [acceptance of Argentina] inviting as a precondition to invite Byelorussia and the Ukraine. Molotov should at any rate have accepted this condition which was put by the Latin American countries. But he did not accept and he voted against and he explained even his position in the press conference. I do not share this attitude. The fourth was the question of the competence of the General Assembly. The question of competence of the General Assembly was even sent to Moscow and where Ambassador Harriman especially asked the audience of Mr. Stalin and proposed to find some compromise, some solution of this question. And the solution was practically the same as proposed by the Western Powers, by the Western countries. It was said

that the competence of the General Assembly encompassed the competence [scope] of the Charter, that is, the fields of responsibility of the councils reporting to the General Assembly - that means the Economic and Social Council and Trusteeship council, as well as the SC. The scope of the competence of the General Assembly was accepted as it was presented first by the Western side.

JSS What did the Soviet side originally want?

Roschin The Soviet side originally wanted only the question of security problem. And Western side enlarged this position accepted in Dumbarton Oaks and said that the General Assembly should consider that every international problem in the sphere of international influence. Yes. We were strongly against this, motivated by concern that this would be mixing in the internal sphere of influence of each country. But finally we accepted the Western side. Molotov, in this particular case, for my point of view was mistaken.

JSS Was Molotov the decisive figure in the establishment of Soviet policy toward the founding of the United Nations?

Roschin No, I doubt it. The decisive factor was Stalin who wrote all the instructions and received all the [reports]. Molotov was very punctually following these instructions. This was also his drawback, if I may say so. Why? Because if he had been more flexible he would have gained much more substantial results in the

conference.

JSS Yes, he did, I believe, manage to alienate all of the Latin American countries. They became rather hostile to the Soviet Union because of the position taken on Argentina.

Roschin Rather, rather, yes, and especially the Latin American countries were strongly against the principle of the veto. They tried even to eliminate the principle of the veto from the Charter of the United Nations. But at any rate our ambassador, Ambassador Gromyko, was the head of our delegation after Molotov left the conference. It was if I'm not mistaken the 10 of March after the signing of the treaty with Germany, and he as well as Kuznetsov, the head of the trade union delegation of our country, he left San Francisco at the time and we were at San Francisco with a very small number. Unfortunately I had taken two committees, as representative of the Soviet Union.

JSS You were on two commissions?

Roschin Two committees. There were twelve committees under four commissions. I take two committees, committee 1 and committee 2.

JSS What were they concerned with?

Roschin They were concerned with the General Assembly. The first committee was about the structure and procedure and the second, political factions and the competence of the

General Assembly. The first committee representative from the United States was Sol Blum, and ..... (inaudible) representative of Great Britain, and in the other was Vandenberg, Senator Arthur Vandenburg, and Charles Webster was from Great Britain. My relationship with Sol Blum and Charles Webster was good.

JSS And there were not serious differences between the Soviet side and the Western side with regard to the General Assembly at this point, I think.

Roschin No, there were several difficulties. Especially the appointment of the Secretary-General. Sol Blum contended that appointment of the Secretary-General does not enter into the sphere of the veto. And despite the fact that I noticed that he was mistaken, he insisted that he was right and later the American delegation said that he had committed an error. I don't know whether it was right or not. Concerning the competence of the General Assembly, as I have said to you, it was a very acute question and Senator Vandenberg was for the enlargement of the right of the General Assembly and that the Security Council should present a report to the General Assembly, and General Assembly should have the right to accept or reject report. It was decided that the Security Council should only present the report without acceptance from the General Assembly. The next question which was even more important was the question of the revision of

treaties. Senator Vandenberg was of the opinion that the General Assembly should have the right to revise the treaties, the foreign treaties concluded with different countries. It was rather the position of the United States at the time of the Treaty of Versailles when it was against the treaties the Western Allies had concluded during the First World War, for instance the treaty of Sykes-Picot which divided the Arabian countries which at the time belonged to Turkey. Finally, we were strongly against the revision of the treaties. We had concluded the treaties of mutual assistance with Czechoslovakia, Poland, Yugoslavia, and France. We had at the time four treaties of mutual assistance.

JSS

Which were already in existence...

Roschin

Which were in existence at the time and fortunately I was against Vandenberg proposal very strongly despite the fact that formally it was presented by the Bolivian delegation and the Bolivian representative was the head of our second committee, committee 2. And fortunately this proposal was rejected by the majority of the committee and was not accepted by the San Francisco Conference. But taking this now I doubt that it would be rather positive result if it was accepted because it was impossible to reject the treaty taking into consideration that the General Assembly had no positive right, only the right of recommendation.

JSS Yes, exactly. I would think today the Western side would actually also oppose any such provision. You mention the question of the election of the Secretary-General. One of the things included in the Charter is Article 99 which gave the Secretary-General a political function which the Secretary-General of the League of Nations had not had. Was this a matter of concern to the Soviet delegation or had you simply accepted that already.

Roschin Unfortunately this question was considered by the committee 1-2. I was not present at this time but at any rate we were not in favor of enlarging the capacity of Secretary-General; we were not in favor of enlarging his power concerning military matters, international sanctions, and so on. This was our stand.

JSS But basically you accepted the provision that was included in the Charter, the Article 99.

Roschin Oh yes, we at any rate voted for the whole Charter, and the Charter was accepted unanimously, by the way.

JSS Now the Charter also provides for enforcement measures, it provides for the establishment of a military force. How seriously did you take that on the Soviet side? Did you expect that there would really be a military force available to the Security Council?

Roschin I rather doubt it because enforcement measures would be very much a miracle, if I may say so. Why? Because it was rather difficult to envisage that the Western

countries and the Eastern side, the Soviet Union, would be at the same level as the other Western countries. That's why the enforcement measure was never [realistic], rather the use of these in practice. And that's why I rather doubt it, and the Military Committee up to now does not function at all.

JSS It doesn't function at all - I was going to ask you that question because I have seen some charts that were developed and were used at the San Francisco Conference after Dumbarton Oaks. It shows the Military Committee in a very important position, almost the same as the Security Council. Did you on the Soviet side expect that the Military Staff Committee would be a very important instrument?

Roschin By the way, during the Dumbarton Oaks we had a different position than later in the San Francisco on this matter. In Dumbarton Oaks we insisted that the Military Staff Committee should be established and should function and later we, rather under the influence of the Cold War at that time, at the change in administration in the United States and so on, we rather tried to reconsider our attitude towards the Military Staff Committee. We were against the activity of this body.

JSS Really. That's interesting because as you know now the Soviet Union, 45 years later, is proposing that the Military Staff Committee be given more responsibility.

Roschin Unfortunately I don't know the present position of the Soviet Union in this particular side.

JSS Well this is interesting because I had not heard before that there was a change in your attitude between Dumbarton Oaks and San Francisco.

Roschin Between the Dumbarton Oaks we insisted that the Military Staff Committee should function as a regular body and we even proposed the creation of international army in order to mix in the different part of the world to establish a guarantee of security. Later we changed this position we considered that our attitude concerning the presidency of Truman and his administration was rather complicated and here it was the beginning of the Cold War.

JSS This is a slightly different question but to what extent do you think that the atomic bomb, the possession of the United States of the atomic weapon, influenced Stalin's attitude at that point on questions such as this?

Roschin This is a not so easy to answer now but my impression is that the atomic weapon influenced substantially the foreign policy of the Soviet Union. At any rate in the Berlin question, the Berlin crisis in 1948 - the first Berlin crisis - taking into consideration that at that time we do not possess the atomic weapon we rather tried to find peaceful solution on this problem. And generally the absence from our side of the atomic weapon and the possession of this weapon by the United States influenced

the whole situation in foreign relations.

JSS Now at San Francisco, was the Soviet delegation aware of the existence of the atomic bomb?

Roschin I doubt it, I doubt it. I doubt even the United States

JSS That's right, the U. S. delegation was not aware of it

Roschin .....was not aware

JSS No, Stettinius did not know

Roschin Stettinius did not know about it, and as well, even the President didn't know because it was not proved, the proof was only in the first of August, or something like that.

JSS I want to ask you about the actual drafting of the Charter itself. On the American side there was a man named Pasvolsky who was actually of Russian origin

Roschin Yes, I know him. I knew him at the time.

JSS And on the Soviet side, Arkadiev, as you said.

Roschin No, it was Sobolev at this time. Arkadiev was not taking an active part in these negotiations with Pasvolsky. With Pasvolsky, Sobolev was the same rank, if I may say so, as well as from the British side was Gladwyn Jebb and Pasvolsky, Gladwyn Jebb and Sobolev created at the time a triumvirate of specialists in the particular things concerning the Charter of the United Nations.

JSS And a good bit of the wording was developed between these three, right? And especially between Sobolev and Pasvolsky?

Roschin And Sobolev at any rate knew English more or less well, more or less well.

JSS And that was a very good relationship, I believe.

Roschin Yes. At the time, by the way, the relationship with all delegations, with the American delegation as a whole, was quite good. After the San Francisco Conference I received a special letter from Stettinius thanking me for participation in the United Nations organization at the San Francisco Conference, and so on, but I don't know where this letter is now.

JSS Let me just ask one quick question. Is Mr. Sobolev still alive, or is he dead?

Roschin He passed away long ago.

JSS So did Pasvolsky?

Roschin So did Pasvolsky. Pasvolsky was not a young man at the time.

JSS What was your impression of the functioning of the Conference? Mr. Alger Hiss was the Secretary-General of the Conference at that time, and did you feel that it functioned effectively, was it done well, did the Soviet side have any complaints?

Roschin No, we had not any complaints concerning the activity and organization of the San Francisco Conference. Alger Hiss, because of his ability, was a rather effective man. Only at the Preparatory Commission, he was not the head of the organization because the Preparatory Commission

was convened in Great Britain, in London, and it was Gladwyn Jebb who was much closer to the British government. He was the executive secretary, so-called executive secretary, of the Preparatory Commission. Alger Hiss, despite the fact that he was a very able man from my point of view, he was not the head of consecutive action in the creation of the convocation of the first session of the General Assembly and first preliminary meetings of the Security Council.

JSS Right. Were you in London for the Preparatory Commission?

Roschin Yes, I was in the Preparatory Commission. It was Gromyko who was the head of our delegation and I was his deputy at that time.

JSS And Mr. Adlai Stevenson was there on the American side

Roschin From the American side Adlai Stevenson was the deputy of Stettinius, and he invited me once for a lunch party and I was in the same capacity, if I may say so.

JSS Right. You were the opposite number, as we say, of Adlai Stevenson. There are several principles in the Charter that were relatively new and one of them was the concept of self-determination. How did you interpret the provision for self-determination that was in the Charter? Was it considered important, did you foresee that it was going to be a rather major aspect of United Nations functions in the future or not?

Roschin For me it's not so easy to speak to you on this topic because the question of trusteeship, which was closely connected with self-determination, was rather in the scope of Mr. Sobolev at the time. Only I was once invited in the committee, the Stassen committee, in Fairmont Hotel which was the residence of the American delegation. I was very glad to meet Lord Cranbourne as a British representative, Paul ..... was representative of France, and, I don't know if there was a representative of China because China had no colonies and no pretension for colonies at all. At any rate China was not presented. That's why the question of self-determination was very important from our point of view. We insisted that in a colonial question where self-determination was the main object of the development of the trust territories, and we insisted that the independence and the self-determination was the main purpose of the Charter of the United Nations. In the article 76 we incorporated the aim of trusteeship as independence and self-determination of the trustee colonies. This is a very important point from our side. It was at the time.

JSS And I suppose you were aware that it was a point that the British were sensitive on...

Roschin The British were very strongly against the consideration of colonial problems despite the fact that the American

side was strongly for consideration of this question. The American side tried to open the colonies for the right of exploitation if I may say so, these colonies. But the decision of Churchill, and I have read the correspondence between Churchill and Eden, and he stressed that he was against consideration of the colonial problem. If America would like to receive the Marshall and Caroline Islands in the Pacific territories they would support them for this but not as [a precedent] for acceptance of British colonies by the United Nations. He was strongly against it.

JSS And of course the Trusteeship Council was established from your point of view. From the Soviet point of view, this Council would have an important function then in taking over the territories that were the result either of German occupation or that had come down from the League of Nations, this was the idea.

Roschin We were at any rate for the Trusteeship Council very strongly first of all because the proclamation of the independence and self-determination of the trusteeship territories was our aim in this way and our participation in this Council was fixed at any rate by the Charter. We were for the Trusteeship Council very strongly. The question of colonies was at any rate attracting public opinion in the whole world. We were in favor of this kind of approach.

JSS Now the other element in the Charter which had been discussed but not very much at Dumbarton Oaks was the provision for cooperation on economic and social questions as being one important element in the maintenance of peace in the future. The Soviet side at Dumbarton Oaks I think had not been enthusiastic on this. What was the feeling on the Soviet side in San Francisco on introducing this element of economic cooperation into the Charter?

Roschin We considered that generally that the United Nations organization should mainly [be concerned] with the problem of the security and we were not very much enthusiastic to enlarge these in the Economic and Social Council. But as it was accepted by the Dumbarton Oaks conference as well as by the San Francisco Conference, we only tried to combine these two councils [economic and social] in one council - one council, and we tried to create in the General Assembly a subsidiary body - one economic and social committee - but unfortunately it was not accepted.

JSS So you would have preferred to see a committee of the General Assembly rather than a separate council which would have somewhat decreased its importance.

Roschin Yes, yes. But at any rate I was not present at the Dumbarton Oaks Conference; I don't know what deliberation took place at this conference. At any rate in the Moscow

meeting of the three foreign ministers we accepted consultation of this matter. We accepted the dumbarton Oaks Conference. We published all documents concerning these bodies and our attitude was rather favorable in this. Despite the fact that the Western side tried to enlarge the activity of the United Nations on the economic and social problems, we were not strongly against it.

JSS Now the third question refers to human rights. Human rights were given considerable prominence in the Charter. How did the Soviet side interpret this? Obviously there were differences between the Western interpretation of human rights and the Soviet interpretation of human rights. Did this cause a problem for the Soviet side in dealing with the Charter and the wording of the charter?

Roschin At any rate the decision about the Declaration of Human Rights was accepted at the third session of the General Assembly. It was in 1948. Our attitude was that we accepted this Declaration. We signed this Declaration of Human Rights. But later, from my understanding, that we tried rather to avoid the problem of human rights in the Soviet Union. this was our drawback which concerned all the Stalin epoch. We were not in favor of human rights in Stalin's era.

JSS But you didn't try to change the wording of the Charter in San Francisco as it had been developed at Dumbarton

Oaks in this respect?

Roschin No, not at all, not at all. Despite the fact that this was the competence of my colleague Mr. A (inaudible) who was in the committee II (3) dealing with the economic and social problems. It was outside my competence. I don't know his instructions exactly but at any rate my understanding as of today is that he was not against anything which was proclaimed in the treaty [Charter] and that was proclaimed at Dumbarton Oaks.

JSS Now this is a more general question, a philosophical question. How high were the hopes on the Soviet side at the end of San Francisco that this new organization was really going to be effective in preserving peace?

Roschin From a philosophical point of view I may say to you that our attitude was not very favorable towards the United Nations organization. At all the first sessions during the Stalin period we were not even represented by our foreign minister except the second part of the first session of the General Assembly because it was convened at the same time the Council of Ministers for Foreign Affairs - if I'm not mistaken, the fifth meeting of the Council of Foreign Ministers. It was concerned with the attitude of the satellite countries of Germany in Europe: Hungary, Italy, Rumania, Bulgaria and Finland. But I understand that our attitude at the time was rather more or less skeptical, and I understand the attitude

of Mr. Vishinsky who visited all the sessions from the first until the seventh and later on, that he was rather very much skeptical and outside of the international law. Outside of the international law. And I understand that he was very negative concerning the people who were from the Western side. By the way he mentioned the Philippine representative, Carlos Romulo, do you remember, yes, that he was speaking much but without any result. I met later Mr. Carlos Romulo. I remember when he was president of the General Assembly - if I'm not mistaken the fourth or fifth session of the General Assembly. He rather took me and said, go with me to the delegates' hall. I was not very comfortable because I knew the attitude of my country towards him. Vishinsky also mentioned the French representative, it was Ivan Delhosse at the time, he mentioned that he said we must run, run despite the fact that the cards were taken by the cockatoo. At any rate he was very much negative towards the delegates and towards the activity of the General Assembly. He was rather Stalin's representative at the time. Stalin was very much negative towards the United Nations.

JSS He did not put great faith in the United Nations?

Roschin Yes. He much more considered his own power in all foreign policy and he proclaimed his attitude towards the Eastern side of Europe, and despite tentatives from American side and British side rather to smooth the

situation in the Eastern part, to take some part, to take some voice in the attitude of Rumania, Bulgaria, Hungary, and so on. But it was without result.

JSS That's right. That was very influential in the development of the Cold War. I think it began then.

Roschin The Cold War began from the end of the San Francisco conference. Even at the San Francisco conference I could feel the trend of the Cold War.

JSS You could feel it already?

Roschin Very vaguely, but at the Preparatory Commission and in the second and third sessions of the General Assembly and even in the first session of the General Assembly, very, very substantial.

JSS Yes, well by that time Poland had become a major issue, I think.

Roschin Poland was not the major issue because on Poland there was agreement. In the summer of 1945 it was settled, the Polish question.

JSS That there should be a government that would represent both the Lublin Poles and the London Poles.

Roschin Not the London Poles. From the London Poles only Mikolajczyk was included in it; but Lange and all others were excluded including from outside of London.

JSS From the Western side, the American and the British felt that this was not really an implementation of the agreement that had been reached at Yalta.

Roschin I quite agree with you. But it is not so easy now to understand the differences between the East and West in the Polish problem. But at any rate the Polish problem was not settled in a good way at the time.

JSS Ambassador Roschin, I think you have put down a few notes of some other impressions that you had of San Francisco. I wonder if you would just like to summarize some of your thoughts on the beginning of the United Nations.

Roschin I would only say to you how I was included in the delegation. I may say that at the end of February, 1945 I was walking in London and I returned very late in the evening. I was told by our ambassador that the next day I should fly to Moscow at 6:00 because a telegraph was received that I must go to Moscow. I was very much surprised but at any rate we made arrangements without any visa that I should follow, I should fly to Moscow.

JSS You were in London for the European Advisory Commission?

Roschin I was at the time in the European Advisory Commission and the British government, British Foreign Office, said I had no right to transit other than British airports on the way. It means Marseilles, Cagliari, Sardinia, Castel Benito, Cairo, Habana, in Iraq. But I had quite the same right as Mr. Sobolev who was with me to fly to Moscow. When we arrived five days after in Moscow I immediately came to Molotov, the Foreign Minister, and the Foreign Minister asked me two questions.

JSS So you saw Mr. Molotov?

Roschin Ah yes, and Molotov put before me the question - whether the conference should consider the peaceful settlement as a whole? I said to Mr. Molotov that I doubt it, and he answered, so do I. And this was rather finished. At the same day I received the instruction to write an aide memoir concerning the trusteeship problem. But I received the dossier in which was only one list of papers. In this one list of papers was written the decision of the Crimean Conference. I was puzzled and was in a very awkward situation, how to escape from this attitude. But at the same time I understood well that this is rather the problem of a test to know what I am in substance. Yes.

JSS You were being tested, you mean.

Roschin I was tested and I understood that I was tested at that time.

JSS You must have been still quite young, if I may interrupt - how old were you at that time?

Roschin But I was not so young, I was at the time 40 years, yes. I wrote the aide memoir concerning the mandatory system which existed after the First World War, only about the mandatory system at the time. It was considered that I very good - that I found very good answer on this question. That is why my aide memoir was found very good and why I was included as number one in the list of

advisors. At this conference I don't want rather to mention that Mr. Truman gave the introductory speech by the radio because he did not fly to San Francisco. He was at the time in Washington. We heard in San Francisco a simultaneous translation, by the way. It was only two working languages - French and English, and I used to speak in French because my French was much stronger than the English.

JSS The work could not be conducted in Russian?

Roschin Not at all, not at all. I don't know how the other persons dealt with the problem of speeches. I took a rather active part in the San Francisco conference in French and my people decided that I knew French very well and since then my reputation was very high from the point of view of my knowledge of French language. Yes. When it was considered what committees were taken by the different delegates and advisors, unfortunately I was [placed] on two committees. Because my knowledge was very limited. Before the [European] Advisory Commission, I was in the pedagogical work. That's why I didn't know foreign affairs at all. And I take the II (1) and II (2) two committees where I established good relations with Sol Blum despite the fact that once we were in a quite different point of view about the nomination of the Secretary-General. And later I noticed that Sol Bloom was a rather cynical man. Our chairman in the committee

II (1) was the Turkish representative, Hasan Saka, and after we finished the work all delegates gave speeches favorable towards Hasan Saka. Hassan Saka was very much impressed by these speeches and Sol Bloom returned to me and said that he [didn't take at] face value all that was spoken here. That's why he was very much considered cynical with regard to the pronouncements concerning Hassan Saka. And in the second committee, I established good relations with Charles Webster, a representative of Great Britain, because he was an historian and a very good historian. He sent me his historical exercises. He was the so-called [follower] of the Metternich attitude.

JSS You used the Metternich approach, then.

Roschin At the same time my relationship with Arthur Vandenberg, who was the representative of the United States was very negative. But we had little contacts. And he was a rather unpredictable man and he was not bound by the instructions of his government. He was very much a self-conducting man. He was raising the question of the revision of the treaties, I was very much surprised, I was speaking against his proposal, against his attitude, against his conduct of these questions. We were on opposite sides. I visited also the committee III (1) dealing with the veto because this was very much important. The most important question was the problem

of the veto. And I remember the British were very skeptical about the veto and they sent the whole problem to Evatt, the representative of Australia. They eliminated themselves and they would consider whatever may be produced as a result of his negative attitude.

JSS Yes, Evatt was a very strong spokesman against the veto.

Roschin He was for enforcement measure falling under the veto. But a peaceful settlement should be settled without veto. We couldn't accept such attitude, our instructions didn't permit us to. The Latin Americans were generally against the veto, and when the problem was voted, only Colombia and Cuba voted against the veto. 33 for the veto, and 15 abstentions.

JSS Were you aware, by the way, that Mr. Nelson Rockefeller had considerable influence in terms of Latin American votes and attitudes?

Roschin I met Mr. Nelson Rockefeller only during the second session of the General Assembly when he presented the check dealing with territory for the United Nations. I was very much disillusioned with the new residence of United Nations organization. It was a very uncomfortable place for the United Nations delegates. We could not do anything at the time.

JSS You were unhappy with it because of the way it looked in New York?

Roschin I was very much disillusioned with the lack of territory

in New York and that United Nations organization should be located in the New York City in the United States. I was much in favor in my heart for Europe, and I remember that during the Preparatory Commission it was Noel Baker who made a speech for Geneva, for Europe. I may say I welcomed him very greatly during this time. I was in favor of Copenhagen, taking consideration that it was very near to our country. Our advisor, Krylov, probably you know him, he was our first representative - judge - on the International Court of Justice from our country, he was in favor of Monaco. At that time the prince of Monaco was not married and it was the question of open-mindedness - was there a possibility to situate the United Nations in Monaco at that time? But unfortunately our instructions were in favor of the United States. We were in favor of the United States and even tried to persuade the Uruguayan representative, who, at the time, was in favor of Europe. We tried to persuade him, and taking into consideration that Yugoslavia was voting as well for United States and voted as well for Czechoslovakia. Jan Masaryk who was at the time the Czech representative, was Ambassador in London at that time. By our vote, the question of the site of the United Nations was decided for New York.

JSS

Why do you think that Moscow actually favored the United States?

Roschin I may say that Stalin considered that if he voted in favor of the United States in the problem of the United Nations the United States would consider favorably our requirement for a peace settlement in Europe. And that's why Stalin was strongly against Europe as a seat of the United Nations. I consider this rather a mistake from his side. At the time the Palais des Nations was built, the Palais des Nations was considered the right place as the site of the United Nations. Noel Baker stressed this very strongly and he said that it is much nearer to all member states of the United Nations. But unfortunately at the time Europe was represented by only a few countries, only 14 including Ukraine and Byelorussia, and we started the San Francisco Conference when Europe was represented by ten countries. But at the same time the Western hemisphere was represented by 21, excluding Argentina. When the San Francisco Conference started there were only 46 members of the United Nations organization, and four were added: Byelorussia, Ukraine, Argentina, and then Denmark. The problem of government in Denmark at the time was settled. 50 countries participated in the San Francisco Conference and Poland signed the Charter in October, 1945.

JSS But it was considered an original member?

Roschin It was considered as an original member because he signed and he participated in Preparatory Commission. What else

may I say on the problem of the veto? I explained to you that the attitude of Evatt, the attitude of Latin American countries, the attitude of the Soviet Union, rather not in favor of Evatt's attitude, it goes without saying, Latin American countries. Finally it was accepted by the 33 countries against 2, Cuba and Colombia, and 15 abstentions. Yes, it was accepted.

JSS But there was no difference really between the Soviet Union and the United States on this issue, both favored the veto?

Roschin But the attitude of the United States and Great Britain was not very much enthusiastic. They considered that their attitude would permit them at all times to follow the procedure, the decision, that would emanate from their part.

JSS Let me interrupt you, I just want to ask a question that has occurred to me. At Yalta, the Soviet side - Stalin, actually, personally - proposed that there would be four representatives, four states from the Soviet Union, so to speak. The Soviet Union itself, Byelorussia, the Ukraine, and the fourth that he proposed was Lithuania. Do you have any background on why he proposed Lithuania?

Roschin Because it was rather a country that had an access from the point of view of frontier, outside the Soviet Union.

JSS It, in other words, was not totally surrounded by the Soviet Union.

Roschin No, it was surrounded by the Soviet Union at the time. Poland, even for instance the question of Koenigsberg and so-called now Kalingrad, all these territories were outside of Lithuanian territories. I don't know but at any rate, at the first stage we proposed that each republic should be represented.

JSS That was at Dumbarton Oaks.

Roschin Yes, Dumbarton Oaks, and finally we accepted three, four and secondly three accepted. Even Roosevelt accepted three votes for the United States and he rather took this proposal back, but at any rate he mentioned the possibility of three votes belonging to the United States, too.

JSS Hawaii, I think, was one and possibly Alaska. But on the American side in the end this could not be accepted because of the principle of equality of sovereign states in the United Nations Charter and it was obvious that from the American point of view, Hawaii was not a sovereign state.

Roschin Oh yes, yes, and it was not mentioned what kind of state should be represented but we generally said that the United States had three votes without qualifying to which country belonged these votes. This is all what I would like to add to my interview to you.

JSS Good. I do want to ask you a couple more questions very quickly. What was the Soviet impression, what was your

impression of Stettinius?

Roschin My impressions were very good about Stettinius. He was a rather comparatively young man. Secondly he was a very accessible man and he was knowledgeable from the point of view of the system. But unfortunately I feel that his attitude was not very enthusiastic concerning his own position in Truman's administration, because he received the post of representative to the United Nations organization, it was thought a not very high post comparatively with the secretary of state.

JSS And you were aware of that already in San Francisco, that he did not have great favor with Truman...

Roschin Oh, I don't know about that, at the time I don't know. My attitude is very favorable towards him because he was very much open-minded towards me personally, he sent personal letter, rather big letter towards my participation in the conference, and generally I was very much in favor of Edward Stettinius.

JSS Were there any other figures who stood out in your mind as outstanding personalities in San Francisco?

Roschin I was rather very much impressed by Governor Stassen who was at the time representative for the Republican Party but who was in a very good count with President Delano Roosevelt. Roosevelt was very much in favor of Governor Stassen. He was recalled from the Navy. He put three Republicans on the delegation of the United States. It

was Governor Stassen, it was Arthur Vandenberg, and it was, if I'm not mistaken, Eaton.

JSS Yes, it was Eaton.

Roschin At the same time was Stettinius and from the side of Tom Connally was also on the Democratic side, Sol Blum was from Democratic side, and wife of Roosevelt, Madame Roosevelt, Eleanor Roosevelt, was not present at the time at the conference because it was very close to the death of her husband.

JSS But of course she was in London, and later.

Roschin She was in London, she was in the first session of the General Assembly, she was active in all stages, she handled the problem of social and human rights problems at the time. I remember that our people felt not favorable towards her, but rather I may say that Vishinsky was in favor of her activity.

JSS He was in favor?

Roschin He was in favor.

JSS Why was that?

Roschin This is difficult to explain to you but I remember because of our relationship at the time. I participated in all sessions of General Assembly. During the first session until the second session of the General Assembly, during the life of Stalin, and later from tenth session of the General Assembly and later on.

JSS Now, a final philosophical question. You were there at

the beginning, and as you say you were part of the small Soviet delegation. So you were one of the important people on the Soviet side. How do you judge the history of the United Nations since? What do you think of this organization that you helped to create? Has it been a disappointment?

Roschin Well from my personal point of view, this is a very expensive organization - unfortunately much more expensive than we expected. When I was at San Francisco I warned our ambassador that we have no defense concerning the expenditures of the United Nations organization.

JSS You mentioned that already then?

Roschin I mentioned that already at the San Francisco Conference. But I may say unfortunately he did not pay enough attention to this question. He said to me that it is not important at all. And through this time we were obliged to pay enormous sums of money to the United Nations organization. From this point of view I was very closely connected to the problem of expenditure and I don't very much like this problem. I abstained even to participate in the Fifth Committee because we always voted against the budget of the United Nations organization and at the same time we had no possibility to influence the increase of the expenditure of the United Nations. From this point of view I was very negative. The substantive

problem I feel is that United Nations was a very ineffective organ concerning the problem of foreign policy and regulation of problems. All wars, all crises that took place after the signing of the Charter, for instance the Berlin crisis, the Austrian crisis, the war the near East, the war in Korea, and all other wars - it was not possible to settle all these problems through the United Nations. That's why from the point of view of substantive activity of the United Nations organization I was not very much in favor. But all my life I was very closely connected with the United Nations. First of all I participated in the many sessions of the General Assembly. I was also the head of the department of the United Nations, I was once even the political advisor of our delegation in the New York. All this I was closely connected with the activity of the United Nations; but I was not very favorable towards the site of the United Nations, towards the expenditure of the United Nations. Towards the start of the United Nations, unfortunately we were very poorly represented in the start of the United Nations because we had very few people acceptable to the staff of the United Nations. And secondly, and most important, I was not very favorable towards the possibility of the United Nations in the settlement of the international problems. This probably did not coincide with the policy of our

government because our government I understand has a very favorable position toward the United Nations. But I consider the activity of the United Nations through the angle of the past years when I took an active part in the United Nations.

JSS Ambassador Roschin, I don't want to keep you any longer. I had one question though on a totally different subject and that is Korea, the Korean War. Who was in charge of United Nations affairs in the Soviet Foreign Ministry at the time of the Korean War, do you recall?

Roschin Yes, Mr. Malik was representative of our country.

JSS I know he was in New York and for the purposes of this history, I am very anxious to find someone on the Soviet side who had an influential position at that time. Mr. Malik is dead, of course, and I have not been able to identify who was in Moscow at that point influential on Soviet policy.

Roschin I could not even imagine, because all the people who were at the time in the United Nations are dead. I am not in favor of our attitude in this war, unfortunately; I was at the time also not in favor. But I could not pronounce my attitude.

JSS Because you were not directly involved?

Roschin I was not directly involved, but at any rate I was at the time - it was 1950 - I was the deputy head of the United Nations department - I was the head of the United Nations

Department.

JSS

If I could just ask you one question in that respect, then. The Soviet Union was not present in the Security Council when the basic decision was taken. It has been often said that it was the Soviet Union that encouraged North Korea to attack the South. The question in my mind has always been, if indeed the Soviet Union encouraged North Korea to attack the South, why was it then absent from the Security Council when the attack actually occurred?

Roschin

I can explain to you why we were absent: because we insisted that China should be represented at the United Nations body but China was eliminated and the representative of Kuomintang - Taiwan - was presented at the time as the Chinese representative. We were not in favor of such a situation; Stalin was much irritated by this situation and he said that we do not participate in the United Nations. It was Tsarapkin who was the deputy of Mr. Malik, he was deputy of Mr. Malik, and he was also withdrawn from all activity. But at the same time he was present when the Security Council was seated at this moment and when in August 1950, it was considered one of the questions (I do not remember, I probably can remember much more exactly after some period of time), he occupied the place of the Soviet representative and he voted against the decision of the Security Council.

JSS He did?

Roschin He did.

JSS How was that possible?

Roschin But at any rate it was, at any rate he took the place of the representative of the Soviet Union and he voted against, this is quite normal procedure.

JSS Well, there remain unknown questions about the Korean situation. The Soviet files have not been opened on that period of history.

Roschin If they exist now. I doubt whether they exist because some documents were destroyed after the death of Mr. Stalin; immediately were destroyed, and I am not quite sure that these documents exist even now.

JSS But looking back, do you think it was a basic Soviet mistake to have been absent from the Security Council at that point?

Roschin I think so. I think that this is a definite mistake, that we withdrew from the Security Council despite the fact that the Security Council may make very substantial decisions towards our country and towards China. This was definitely a mistake that we did not participate at this time at the Security Council.

JSS And looking back, did you have any anticipation that the Chinese might in fact intervene in Korea?

Roschin China, if I am not mistaken, intervened definitely.

JSS I know it did, but in the Soviet government did you have

any anticipation that it would intervene?

Roschin I don't know, I don't know. I imagine that we may have rather envisaged this possibility and even we may rather have advised the Chinese government, Mao Tse-tung, that they take a more active part in the Korean War. But tried to avoid our participation in the Korean War.

JSS It was too dangerous.

Roschin Too dangerous because it lead to the conflagration with the United States.

JSS Thank you very much, Ambassador Roschin.

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