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WASHINGTON, D.C.

JEAN KRASNO, INTERVIEWER

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Founding of the United Nations

Location of the UN . . . . . 1,3

Participants at San Francisco . . . . . 2,7,8

Atmosphere of Enthusiasm . . . . . 3,9

Military Staff Committee . . . . . 4,5

Role of Secretary-General . . . . . 5

UN Memembership . . . . . 5,6

UN Military Force . . . . . 5,6

Human Rights . . . . . 6,7

ECOSOC . . . . . 7

JK: Senator Pell, could you explain what your role was at the San Francisco Conference on the founding of the UN?

Pell: Certainly, and I would preface this interview by saying how glad I am that you are doing it. I have always believed in the United Nations. In fact my father offered our place in upstate New York in Dutchess County, almost one thousand acres of land, for the UN as a free gift and if you are doing research on this you'll find that offer and the reply by Trygve Lie, who was then the Secretary-General, in the files of the United Nations. You might want to dig that information up. The question was whether it would be in South Dakota or whether it would be in New York at Turtle Bay, which is where it is now, or whether it would be in Dutchess county where my father offered our house, and there were other sites. So, you can see my family's belief in the United Nations by the willingness to offer our home. So, I do hope that in your research work that you will get that correspondence out from the UN. I know it's there. I don't have it.

You asked me here what my job was. I was assistant secretary of committee three of commission three, which my recollection is dealt with military enforcement arrangements out of article 43, 44, and 45 of the Charter. You undoubtedly have the handbooks set up by the UN showing the different committees. That shows

all the different people involved.

JK: Were you a part of the State Department?

Pell: No, I was assistant secretary of committee three of commission three which means I was a Coast Guard officer on detached duty wearing civilian clothes for the first time in four years, I guess, during the war. The whole secretariat was made up basically of young officers from the various united nations particularly the United States. Our chief of the secretariat was Alger Hiss, who had, at that time, a reputation for having a pretty hard line on the Russians. That reputation has changed.

JK: Right, and I understand that he considered himself in that role as an international civil servant. Would that have been your role, too?

Pell: Yes, that's right. And another thing at the Conference I remember I collected the pink slips of paper in the final signing ceremony where everybody signed their name and I turned those over to Providence College in Rhode Island which has them all framed. And my recollection is that I miscounted by one and that had to be corrected.

JK: The United Nations is also very interested in information about the founding of the UN because the fiftieth anniversary is coming up.

Pell: After the UN came into being they moved to Hunter College. Then I was Assistant Secretary of the Committee of Experts of the Security Council at Hunter College.

Then it moved from Hunter College to Sperry and then from there to Turtle Bay.

JK: What was the atmosphere in San Francisco when they were working on the Charter? Were people optimistic?

Pell: Yes, we felt that we were creating a new organization, a new structure. The basic thought was that anything the League of Nations did we tried to do a bit differently or the opposite and learn from the mistakes of the past. The atmosphere was one of indescribable enthusiasm. We saw to it that all the delegates who came there and the Secretariat went by train across the United States and the effect of this trip crossing the rich farming lands and the factory towns of the United States had a tremendous impact on all the delegates and left us with a feeling of moving and shaking things in San Francisco.

JK: I wanted to ask you about some of the controversies and concepts that came up involving the structure of the UN. What were some the discussions evolving around the big power veto?

Pell: It was so long ago now. It was more than forty years that I don't recall the different individual squabbles. I remember the one about the big country veto, but, I can't recall how that was resolved. I had focussed my own work on committee three of commission three on the military enforcement arrangements.

JK: Why don't we go on to that subject, then. Was it felt in the Conference in San Francisco that the United Nations would have its own military force?

Pell: Yes, we had set up what we called the Military Staff Committee -- you really have caught me cold; I really haven't thought about this for more than forty years -- the Military Staff Committee would be set up which would presumably have international components with some sort of force under it. Unfortunately, with the veto the Military Staff Committee has never been able to exercise its authority. It was set up and became the last resting place, retirement home, for senior officers of the five permanent members of the Security Council.

JK: At the time when you were involved in the planning for a military force was it really believed that the UN would have its own forces?

Pell: My recollection is that it was either to have its own force or forces under it that would work together. As in Korea, for example, where the United Nations had different troops, English, Canadians, Americans, as well as others. So whether those would be in a single unit or whether they would be separate units under UN command I do not recall.

JK: When the United Nations was being formed at the time the role of the Secretary General was established and he was given a fair amount of power. Was it envisioned that he

would become the kind of mediator that has evolved today?

Pell: My recollection is that he was envisioned as having a stronger role than the equivalent individual had in the League of Nations.

JK: There was some controversy about Argentina being able to join the Conference.

Pell: Yes, it had started out on the question of who belonged, being those among the "United Nations" that had declared war and Argentina had been among those who had not declared war. But, we wanted to keep it open. So, the idea of universality was, if I remember correctly, accepted at San Francisco. Obviously, Germany and Japan would not be given an invitation, but later they worked their way in.

JK: Also, in terms of membership the Soviet Union was eventually given three representatives. What were some of the discussions on this issue?

Pell: Right, there was quite a lot of discussion about it. But, it seemed to be the price of Soviet admission. And some of these things were agreed to beforehand at previous meetings, at Dumbarton Oaks, for example.

JK: In setting up the military force was there discussion about setting up a UN naval force?

Pell: Yes, there was. It was assumed that all of us in the army, navy, and airforce would be involved.

JK: Over the years the UN has become very involved in the

issues of human rights and of arms control and yet there was nothing in the Charter that provides for that. Why was that so? [a buzzer goes off calling the Senate to the floor for a vote]

Pell: --That's the bell. I'm going to have to go in a minute--  
. The reason for that is that we were not as conscious of human rights, in those days, as we should have been and General Smuts, the head of South Africa played a leading role there. This was even before South Africa had developed apartheid. Apartheid came afterwards in the fifties or sixties. So, human rights was not a big deal at that time. It should have been, but was not. We ourselves had human rights problems right here in the nation's capitol. Blacks couldn't go to the movie theater. Jews couldn't buy land in certain parts of the District of Columbia. So, human rights was not on the front burner at that time.

JK: Was self determination a major issue?

Pell: That was more of a major issue during World War I under Woodrow Wilson.

JK: There were some provisions made at that time for economic and social development, for the United Nations to become involved in those issues.

Pell: That's right, we set up the Economic and Social Council just like we set up the United Nations Education, Scientific, and Cultural Organization.

JK: Was this something that the US was particularly interested in? Was the Soviet Union as interested?

Pell: Well, I think it was felt at the time that just like the Security Council you ought to have an economic council. ECOSOC as it's known.

JK: Was it felt that economic development would somehow help develop peace?

Pell: No, it was just felt that this was one area of possible collaboration.

JK: Who of the people there were particularly influential?

Pell: There was a Russian Admiral who played quite a role. In the Secretariat I remember Eddy Hambrough. From the old League, Martin Hill. Those are two that I particularly remember. We palled aroud there. I had known Martin Hill before. Nelson Rockefeller played a very big role?

JK: What were his interests?

Pell: Latin America. I remember famous people of the future, I remember John F. Kennedy there. He was there as a newspaper correspondent. My own subcommittee chairman was Bill Fox. Ernest Rathbone was the overall boss of the Secretariat reporting in to Alger Hiss.

JK: Are there any particular items that you remember that you'd like to add?

Pell: I just remember the excitement and the final signature ceremony and how lucky I was to be the man who collected the signatures. We worked hard for several months trying

to develop the Charter. French and English were spoken. Those were the two working languages. I want to emphasize how glad I am you are doing this because I for one have been a tremendous believer in the United Nations. I was a delegate to it in 1970 and I have followed it closely through the years. If I had a little more time and could refresh my memory more I'm sure more thoughts would come out.

JK: Well, we appreciate your taking the time to do this. One other question, was Truman as supportive of the United Nations after Roosevelt's death as Roosevelt had been?

Pell: Well, I didn't know either one of them personally. I wish I had. But, one had the feeling that our whole government was interested all up and down the line because this was the means to avoid war in the future. There was tremendous enthusiasm.

JK: Thank you very much.

Pell All right.

INDEX OF NAMES

Fox, Bill	8
Hambro, Eddy	7
Hill, Martin	7, 8
Hiss, Alger	2, 8
Kennedy, John F.	8
Rockefeller, Nelson	8
Roosevelt, Franklyn	8
Rothwell, Easton	8
Smuts, Field Marshall	6
Truman, Harry	8
Trygve Lie	1
Wilson, Woodrow	7

UNITED NATIONS ORAL HISTORY PROJECT  
ORAL HISTORY AGREEMENT

I, Claiborne Pell (Interviewee) hereby agree to participate in the United Nations Oral History Project, sponsored by the Yale University Institution for Social and Policy Studies, and consent to the recording by magnetic audio tape of (an) interview(s) with Jean Krasno (Interviewer) on 2/20/90 (Date) at Washington, D.C. (City), D.C. (State).

It is my understanding that a typed transcript will be made of such tape(s) and returned to me for any necessary corrections. I hereby agree that if for any reason I have not returned the transcript with my corrections to the Institution for Social and Policy Studies within three months of the time it was sent to me, the Project Staff may edit the transcript and make it available for research and other use as provided here below.

In the understanding that the tape(s) and transcript(s) will be preserved at the United Nations and made available for historical, scholarly and (as deemed appropriate by the United Nations) public information purposes, and that copies will be placed on deposit at Yale University for research and study, I hereby grant, assign, and transfer legal titles and all literary rights in the tape(s) and transcript(s) to the United Nations. However, it is agreed that neither the United Nations nor Yale University will publish or authorize publication of the transcript(s) or any part thereof during my lifetime without my written permission.

Claiborne Pell  
(Interviewee)

20 Feb 90  
(Date)

Jean Krasno  
(Interviewer)

Feb. 20, 1990  
(Date)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(For the Institution of Social  
and Policy Studies)

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(Date)